



## Policies and Procedures

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| Title:   | Risk Management |
| Type:    | H1N1 Pandemic   |
| Policy#: | 14.6            |
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### H1N1 Pandemic Policy

#### Introduction:

As you are undoubtedly aware H1N1 ("Swine Flu") has appeared in Canada. In the sporting world, we have created plans to maintain activity in our sport and to ensure business continues as usual during the pandemic stages. To ensure business continuity in a pandemic, short term planning with a health focus is paramount. Succession planning to assign temporary duties may also be required in the event key staff members are unable to report for work for a considerable period of time. Recovery is greatly improved if critical services are available without significant interruption.

To ensure activity in our sport – practicality is the strategy. Early indications are, that young people can be among those hardest hit by this virus. Given that those involved in soccer competitions often live in close contact with team mates and other competitors it makes sense for all of us involved in sport to be aware of how we might minimize the risk of transmission of the flu and understand how to deal with those who might develop flu-like symptoms in the course of participating in events or tournaments.

#### Pandemic Plan Purpose:

As being part of the Administration Centre for Sport, Recreation and Culture, the Saskatchewan Soccer Association has worked with Sask Sport Inc. to create an internal plan to protect its employees and to continue critical operations in the event of an influenza pandemic. The following Policy is consistent with the message forwarded by the Canadian Soccer Association. The provincial association's H1N1 Pandemic Policy is provided as practical advice to the Membership of the Saskatchewan Soccer Association and it maybe supplemented by local policies that will aid in the prevention of the H1N1 Pandemic. This document has been developed by using documents gathered from the Federal and Provincial governments of Canada because of the possible pandemic outbreak of the influenza. This document will help you as districts, clubs and teams ...

1. Identify the symptoms of the H1N1 Influenza virus and who is at risk
2. Learn how the illness is spread and inform you of how to prevent the infection
3. Suggest useful websites and other documents to help you further
4. Provide you with recommendations when organizing events and useful (incomplete sentence)
5. Offer alternative practices to those usually undertaken at large gathering events

There is a threat in 2009/2010 that the H1N1 influenza will become a pandemic, during a pandemic it is expected there will be a greater extent of illness than an ordinary influenza season. The Public Health Agency of Canada states that "during an outbreak in a specific area, it would be appropriate to plan for a total absenteeism rate of between 20% and 25% during the peak two-week period with lower rates in the preceding and subsequent weeks".

The pandemic is expected to come in 2 or 3 waves with about 3 to 9 months separating each outbreak. Although we do not have the ability to stop a pandemic from occurring, planning in advance of a pandemic should help minimize the number of employees who get sick and allow Sask Soccer to maintain critical business operations.

*Pandemic Influenza* is defined as an epidemic that spreads throughout the world. For an influenza virus to be considered a pandemic, it must be a new virus with the ability to spread efficiently among people causing widespread illness and death. There is a threat in 2009/2010 that the H1N1 influenza will become a pandemic.

During a pandemic it is expected there will be a greater extent of illness than an ordinary influenza season. The Public Health Agency of Canada states that "during an outbreak in a specific area, it would be appropriate to plan for a total absenteeism rate of between 20% and 25% during the peak two-week period with lower rates in the preceding and subsequent weeks". The pandemic is expected to come in 2 or 3 waves with about 3 to 9 months separating each outbreak. Although we do not have the ability to stop a pandemic from occurring, planning in advance of a pandemic should help minimize the number of employees who get sick and allow Sask Soccer to maintain critical business operations.

#### The Facts about the H1N1 Influenza:

As the name suggests this is an influenza virus like many others the symptoms include FEVER, SEVERE COUGHING, SORE THROAT, MUSCLE AND JOINT PAIN OR WEAKNESS, SHORTNESS OF BREATH, POSSIBLE VOMITING & DIARRHEA. For further information on the symptoms please visit [www.fightflu.ca/sym-eng](http://www.fightflu.ca/sym-eng)

All members of the public are at risk of infecting the H1N1 influenza virus but younger children are in the high risk category, therefore all mini and youth soccer teams need to be prepared for players contracting the virus.

The virus spreads from PERSON to PERSON through coughing or sneezing and it can also be passed on through indirect touching of contaminated surfaces and objects. For further information on this please visit [www.phac-aspc.gc.ca](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca)

#### Individuals in Competition:

Athletes and coaches need to wash hands using soap and water before touching their eyes, nose and mouth. DO NOT share water bottles amongst teams. Personal equipment or uniforms should not be shared between players and uniforms should be washed and dried thoroughly between games. Alcohol based hand sanitizer should be used frequently.

The following are some practical suggestions:

- Wash your hands thoroughly and often with soap and water or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available – Wash your hands every time you pass a sink!
- Bring alcohol-based hand sanitizer with you to competitions and training where soap and water may not be readily available;

- Don't share water bottles or other drinking/eating utensils with other athletes; Educate players and coaches to bring their own water bottles, suitably identified with name and player number.
- Cough into your arm or sleeve. Tissues can be used to cover coughs and sneezes, but be sure to wash your hands after throwing out the tissue;

Players should be strongly advised to stay at home if any of the H1N1 influenza symptoms are found, if players are unable to stay at home (teams could be on a road trip or attending an event outside their home province) they should be isolated from the rest of the team to prevent further spread of the virus.

#### Tournament Organizing, Competitions, and Facilities:

The following are some practical suggestions:

- If you are organizing an event that could be affected by an outbreak of the H1N1 influenza virus then a decision should be made with the consultation of public health officials and other local authorities regarding the continuation of the event.
- In the facility itself, hand sanitization stations should be set up throughout the event and announcements should be posted and given verbally showing the correct cleaning procedures. Medical services should be available at all times throughout any sporting event.
- Regular cleaning of washrooms and exercise equipment should be undertaken at least twice a day, waste receptacles should be removed regularly as well.
- In residences or hotels ensure that players and coaches avoid mixing towels & face cloths – and try to keep rooms as clean and tidy as possible!

#### If Symptoms occur:

- If a player or official begins to develop symptoms of a flu-like illness (fever, cough, muscle pain, headache) move them to a room of their own if possible.
- Those with such symptoms should stay away from practices, games or tournaments until they are feeling well and able to resume normal activities.
- Anyone with flu-like symptoms should not be participating in, or attending practices, games or other events.

#### And what about sportsmanship practices:

FIFA and the Canadian Soccer Association remain consistent that players can safely participate in the FIFA Fair Play shake hands at the start/end of a game. All normal practices are safe, as long as proper hygiene procedures are followed. As a policy, which is consistent with existing practices, if a referee suspects that a player or coach is demonstrating symptoms of H1N1 or the common flu, they will recommend that the player not participate in the game due to the contagious nature of H1N1.

In general...successful preventive practices consist of "...doing ordinary things extraordinarily well".

#### Further Reading

<http://www.health.gov.sk.ca/Default.aspx?DN=4d9e2ead-5be9-4114-b705-f0c5fa0ae5eb>

<http://www.health.gov.sk.ca/Default.aspx?DN=cfd4a5c2-a333-4e28-bcab-25c13b0d8d8c>

<http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/alert-alerte/h1n1/phg-ldp-eng.php>