

The Connection™

Marvin's View

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Pandemic or Not... This is a Good Time to Implement Your Plan

Thankfully it looks like the H1N1 Flu is not as severe as expected but don't become complacent...it is still dangerous. And there is little doubt that some worldwide infection will hit us hard in the future. From the number of calls and rush orders we are receiving the spotlight is on our industry. It seems every newspaper is running photos showing a Janitor or Food Service Worker disinfecting a table, desk or sink.

The sad part is almost all cleaning budgets have been cut over the past years and there is little time for those thorough cleaning procedures we all know are necessary. **But now is the perfect time to review with management what you are doing with the resources you have and what your department could do to protect your facility.**

Many of you have excellent programs but here is a three point action plan that could be ready to go in a future pandemic:

First, immediately enhance your cleaning program to increase disinfection of all high-touch surfaces. Mopping and finishing the floor is not as important as frequent cleaning of sinks, lunch tables, push plates, door handles, light switches, etc. This is where the infections spread. **Tell everyone what you are doing and why.** Explain to your staff that the organization is counting on them as their first line of defense.



Most important, put out bulletins to all stake holders and posters communicating your plan. Here is one that a leading school district placed on the inside door of rest rooms. (Click on image to view larger.)

Second, tell management that you would like to establish a "Clean Team" to dramatically increase cleaning frequencies of offices, class rooms, wash rooms, etc., but will need more manpower. These proactive measures will help protect your facility, staff and their families. The easy

answer is two hours of overtime per day or you can ask for temporary workers. Contractors can ask for a surcharge to cover the additional cost. I doubt if management has ever had a better financial and public relations investment. (See [this Connection](#) as an example of how this type of program worked in a Correctional Facility.)

Third, and my favorite subject, Preventive Housekeeping. Get everyone in the facility to support your Janitorial, Housekeeping and Food Service Staffs. For example, in schools desks are a common source of contamination and they used to be cleaned regularly. But with years of budget cuts the frequency has been reduced or totally eliminated from the daily schedule. So why not equip all teachers with Germicidal Detergent? Ask them to spray the solution on all the desks before they leave each afternoon. The extra time involved for the teacher is probably 5 minutes. You can remind them that the illness they avoid could be their own as teachers are in a high risk situation.

Of course, the same plan can be used in an office, nursing station, or correctional facility. Ask them to help you protect them. And ask everyone in the facility to clear their desks at night and do whatever they can to make the Janitors job easier and faster so they can spend more time protecting their health. (Here is an old [article on Preventive Housekeeping](#) from 1978 It is still a powerful tool to use to cut waste and cleaning time.)

This is your ball game. Let everyone know you are in charge.

To view past Connections on the H1N1 Virus, [click here](#)



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