

Prevention Connection



Safety resources to protect your world

Don't go viral

Preventing and responding to seasonal illnesses

According to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC), influenza alone costs the United States \$10.4 billion in hospitalizations and outpatient medical costs for adults. In fact, almost 60 percent of reported flu hospitalizations affected adults between the ages of 18-64.

As a business owner or leader, consider that the CDC's figure doesn't even take into account costs associated with:

- Other seasonal illnesses beyond influenza (common cold, bronchitis, strep throat, etc.).
- Time away from work for associate illnesses and dependent care.
- The impact on your company's performance.

Peak seasons

The time to prepare for sickness is before germs hit your team. Illnesses can happen anytime, but flu season generally peaks between December and February, although it can stretch from October through May. Consider how you can prevent an outbreak and how you can respond quickly to limit the impact and costs to your business.

Five tips to help your associates avoid illness

- **Vaccinate**

Encourage associates to get a flu vaccine each year and stay up to date with whooping cough and other vaccinations. It's the single most effective way to prevent illness.

Tip: Ask your health insurance company or a local provider if they are willing to host a vaccination clinic on site at your company.

- **Handwashing**

Encourage associates to wash their hands or use hand sanitizer frequently, even if they're on a job site.

Tip: Make sanitizer available to associates and place it in common areas, where germs are likely to spread.



• Sanitize

The flu virus can continue to infect people for up to 48 hours if they touch it on a surface.

Tip: Before you see an uptick in reported sick time, ask your cleaning service if they offer additional sanitization services or stock up on disinfectants.

• Plan for sick time

Time is money, but offering a generous sick time benefit could help you limit the overall impact of illness on your bottom line. Associates will be more likely to stay home and avoid spreading illness to their colleagues.

Tip: Management can be especially effective in supporting the responsible use of sick time benefits. Encourage managers to monitor teams for illness and support associates who are ill in taking time away from work.

• Communicate

When a high number of associates are ill, communication at all levels can help your teams and projects continue to run as well as possible. Don't wait to establish good communication until you're shorthanded.

Tip: Create staffing contingency plans, so you and your associates know what to expect. Make sure plans, logs, and reports are kept up to date, so people can pick up where others left off.



For more tips for your business, visit secura.net/PreventionConnection.

Related Prevention Connection topics

[Tired of being tired?](#)

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Are you tired of being tired?

When you're tired, it's easy to make an error in your work or, even worse, cause an accident. According to the National Sleep Foundation, "fully awake workers are 33 percent more likely to be involved in accidents than non-awake workers, and workers with chronic insomnia (difficulty getting to or staying asleep) are 66 percent more likely than well-rested individuals to report industrial accidents or injuries."

Here are four quick tips to increase alertness, increase energy levels, and create a safer, more productive day:

- 1. Get enough sleep**
The National Sleep Foundation recommends 7-8 hours of sleep for most adults. A lack of sleep increases the risk of accidents, and it's a leading cause of daytime fatigue. Figure out how much sleep you need to function at your best, and go to bed at the same time every night. Waking in the afternoon can restore weariness, too. Ten minutes is enough to boost energy.
- 2. Listen to your body clock**
Are you a morning person or a night owl? Schedule demanding activities when your energy levels are typically at their peak, and plan ahead to avoid high-risk situations when you're least able to focus and react. Shift work can be especially problematic as schedule changes and set work hours can disrupt your natural clock.
- 3. Rule out health problems**
Fatigue is a common symptom of many diseases (diabetes, heart disease, anemia, thyroid disorders, etc.) Be sure to schedule your annual checkups with your doctor to monitor your health, diagnose any illnesses, and get treatments, if needed.
- 4. Check your medications**
Lots of medications can contribute to fatigue, drowsiness, or dizziness. There are often warnings right on the bottle, or if you start a new regimen and notice a change in energy or alertness, share your observations with your doctor. There may be another treatment option that works better for you.
- 5. Drink lots of water**
Dehydration causes us to feel tired and makes it harder to concentrate. To stay hydrated, drink half of your bodyweight (in pounds) in ounces of water each day. For example, if you weighed 160 pounds, you would need roughly 80 ounces of water each day.
- 6. Get moving**
Contrary to what your brain is telling you, physical activity boosts energy levels. Exercise improves how your body's vital organs function (brain, heart, lungs, etc.). Exercise also gives you more energy for any activity.

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[Winter slips, trips and falls](#)

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Winter slips, trips, and falls — Plan for prevention

In the winter, slips, trips, and falls are causing potentially dangerous walking conditions for your employees, partners, and guests. According to the National Safety Council, 16 percent of all accidents are slips, trips, and falls. Hazards may result from snow or ice, slick ice, slippery interior floors, unclear sidewalks and pavement, frozen tree cycles, uneven or damaged walking surfaces, poor drainage, dim lighting, transition areas, and other winter-related issues. As an employer, property owner, or manager, you can play a key role in reducing potential injuries.

Plan for prevention:

- Communicate and set standards for your snow removal program. This includes outlining duties for contractor selection, maintaining removal logs (including service date, performed services, and unusual conditions) and developing procedures for claims investigation, reporting, and handling.
- Determine who is accountable and responsible for carrying out the plan.
- Check the program's effectiveness and removal practices by routinely evaluating walking surfaces.
- If working with a contractor, monitor whether minimum levels of snow and ice removal are maintained per the contract. If performed in-house, provide the right snow removal equipment, as well as proper training and PPE (insulated non-slip boots, gloves, jackets, etc.).
- Set up a snow/ice removal kit near doorways for ease of use. This should include materials like ice melt, salt, or sand in buckets with a shovel. Consider how weather conditions affect treatment options. Calcium chloride is very effective in extreme cold, but sufficient time is necessary for full effect. Ice melt products may leave attractive floors slippery, so more cleaning may be necessary.
- Ensure cleanup does not create additional hazards. For example, snow piles should not create frost pools and affect visibility.
- Define and communicate everyone's role for winter safety.
- Wear proper footwear such as high-traction shoes with rubber or composite soles. Try to avoid leather and plastic soles. Snow attachments with gripping surfaces may be helpful or necessary for employees who regularly go out on the snow/ice.
- Push "wet floor" signs that warn of hazards. Establish designated walking areas that are well-maintained and well lit.
- Clean up water, snow, and debris, and report hazards. Use slip-resistant floor treatments or mats to minimize falls. High-quality bonded-edge mats in walking areas are recommended. Change mats regularly to keep areas dry.

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[Family Medical Leave](#)

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SECURA Insurance Safety resources to protect your world

Family Medical Leave (FMLA) — SAMPLE

[Employee] recognizes the importance of personal and family responsibilities and provides time away from work to eligible employees in accordance with the Family Medical Leave Act of 1993 ("FMLA"). Accordingly, this policy entitles eligible employees to either a maximum of 12 weeks or 26 weeks of unpaid leave during a 12-month period.

Definitions

To help you better understand your FMLA eligibility the following definitions are provided:

Family Member includes an employee's spouse, son, daughter, and parent (but not a parent "in law"). A son or daughter is any child under 18 who is the biological, adopted or foster child of the employee, or whom the employee supervises on a day-to-day basis and for whom the employee is financially responsible. A son or daughter is also any child over 18 who is incapable of self-care because of a mental or physical disability. A parent is the biological parent of the employee, or one who stood in the place of the biological parent when the employee was a child.

Serious Health Condition is defined as an illness, injury, impairment or physical or mental condition that requires in-patient care in a hospital, hospice or residential medical care facility or that requires continuing treatment by a health care provider; a period of incapacity that makes an individual unable to attend work, school, or perform other daily activities for more than three (3) days and that requires continuing treatment by a health care provider; or continuing treatment by a health care provider for a chronic or long-term health condition that is so serious that, if not treated, would likely result in incapacity for more than three days.

The definition of serious health condition is not meant to cover short-term conditions where treatment and recovery are brief, routine physical examinations, or voluntary or cosmetic treatments that are not medically necessary, unless in-patient hospital care is required.

Eligibility

To be eligible to apply for leave under the FMLA, the employee must have worked for [Employer] for a total of at least 12 months and must have worked at least 1,250 hours during the 12 months immediately preceding the start of the leave.

Qualifying Events

[Employer] will grant eligible employees a maximum of 12 weeks of unpaid family medical leave if the employee follows the procedures in this policy and requests the leave for any of the following reasons:

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