



Press Release

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Human Resources actions during the epidemic outbreak of Swine Flu

- Mercer performed a quick survey with a group of 25 top consumer goods and pharmaceutical companies in Mexico
- Labor assistance, preventive measures and control procedures are being taken in order to avoid spreading the virus and maintain operations
- 82% of the organizations have suspended internal meetings
- Only 11% of the surveyed organizations has completely closed down their office operations in Mexico City

Mexico City, April 28th, 2009

Mercer performed a quick survey with 25 top companies, mainly from consumer goods and pharmaceutical industries, aimed to identify measures taken by the Human Resources departments in order to protect employees, reduce contagion risks and minimize the economic impact in their operations in Mexico City.

The survey covered 4 basic topics related to their response to the Swine Flu alert: Labor assistance, Meetings/Travel, Cafeteria services and Preventive measures.

Labor assistance: Measures implemented to maintain operation capabilities and reduce risks of contagion.

- 52% of organizations have implemented preventive health checks intended to detect Swine Flu symptoms in personnel. Employees with positive response are being sent home for observation or to a hospital for suitable treatment.
- 41% of companies are consenting employees to work remotely from home when a position allows it and with previous authorization of immediate supervisors. Pregnant women must work from home. This also applies for women breastfeeding until further notice. Some companies are implementing flexible working hours or have established

working turns from 7 a.m. to 1 p.m. during week from April 27th to 30th, in order to avoid rush hours period in public transportation.

- Some organizations, mainly pharmaceutical, have suspended sales force activities in hospitals.
- Only 11% of companies has decided to suspend activities.

Cafeteria: Diminishing risk in public areas.

- Meal turns are strictly implemented in order to avoid rush in cafeteria establishments and elevators.
- Many cafeteria establishments are using disposable dishes and utensils. Some companies serve box lunches instead of granting regular cafeteria services.
- Cafeteria's personnel are obliged to use latex gloves and masks, dishes and other equipment are cleaned with chlorine.

Meetings/Travel: Measures related to face to face contact with clients and vendors, as well as internally among employees

- 82% of organizations has cancelled internal meetings and the use of meeting rooms. Employees are requested to communicate by the means of phone conferences, Internet meetings or to meet in open, non reduced places. Training sessions are allowed in some companies with participation of up to 5 employees.
- The majority of these companies has suspended external meeting with clients and vendors and has communicated this measure to their business partners.
- 29% of companies has cancelled international trips (entry or leaving) and are minimizing personnel displacement between company sites, especially between Mexico City and the provinces.

Preventive actions: Related to employee communication, information and preventive measures.

- Following Mexican authorities instructions, 70% of companies handed over masks to employees.
- All companies keep employees informed by email or notice boards on the evolvement of the situation and the preventive measures they need to take. Some companies have provided a dedicated telephone line for employee's medical questions and doubt solving.
- 27% of companies participating in the survey have decided to switch off air conditioning where this is possible, even as informed by the authorities, the flu is not transmitted through this mean.
- 58% of companies have increased disinfection of the offices, with especial attention to hygienic conditions of telephones, railings, handles and other furniture.
- Increased amounts of cleaners and chlorine were given to cleaning personnel.

Mercer is currently running another survey with a more extensive sample of organizations on the actions taken and will be able to share the results soon.