AVIAN (BIRD FLU) VIRUS: THE FACTS
Medical evidence suggests that the transmission of infection of human influenza takes place principally within the respiratory tract. Avian (Bird Flu) viruses do not usually infect humans and it is believed that most cases of infection in humans have resulted from contact with infected poultry.

Because all influenza viruses have the ability to mutate, scientists are concerned that the strain of the H5N1 virus could one day be able to spread easily from person to person. Recent deaths in SE Asia from bird flu amongst people in close contact with infected poultry have highlighted these concerns that this virus (H5N1), may mutate so it can spread from human to human. This is the scenario that could lead to an influenza pandemic which might affect New Zealand.

The World Health Organisation and the Ministry of Health say that such a mutation is almost certain to happen and it is a question of when, not if. Businesses in New Zealand need to start planning now because the possible consequences could be extremely serious.

In terms of disaster event management this is classified as a low probability – high consequence event.

Business Managers should follow Risk Management procedures as set out in the HSE Act. The accepted hierarchy of control is to eliminate, isolate and minimise the risks.

For further assistance go to www.dol.govt.nz

Typical Symptoms of Influenza:

- Fever
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Muscle aches
- Eye infections
- Pneumonia
- Severe respiratory diseases (such as acute respiratory distress).

Source: Department of Health & Human Services, Centres for Disease Control and Prevention.
Recommendations for the control of influenza in the workplace:

- **Social Distancing** – Early detection of illness and the separation on infected personnel from workmates is essential – staff should be encouraged to monitor their own health and advise management and supervisors of elevated temperatures before the work day begins. Any staff with flu like symptoms should seek medical attention and stay away from work or be sent home immediately.

- **Cleaning and disinfecting** of all environmental surfaces is essential. Particular attention should be paid to communal areas such as lunch rooms, toilets, reception areas and shared equipment like telephones, photo copiers and computer keyboards. If a staff member has reported in sick or gone home sick, make sure a thorough cleaning programme relating to all surfaces and areas normally occupied by the sick employee is actioned.

- Encourage staff to **cover the nose/mouth** when coughing or sneezing. Use tissues to contain respiratory secretions. Dispose of tissues in the nearest waste receptacle after use and clean hands either by washing or using sanitisers.

- **Hand washing** includes both the use of plain or antimicrobial soap and water or the use of alcohol-based products (gels and foams). Hands should be dried thoroughly using disposable paper towels.

- **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**
  - Wear disposable rubber, vinyl or nitrile gloves when handling suspected contaminated areas.
  - An ASNZS Approved P2 respirator (or N95 approval) is recommended for exposures to airborne micro-organisms such as Influenza viruses.
  - Eye protection is recommended for caregivers along with gowns/disposable coveralls.
  - Training in the correct fitting and use of PPE is essential.

- **Avoid public places** (shops, buses, trains, meetings, etc.) as much as feasibly possible.
RECOMMENDED PERSONAL PROTECTIVE PRODUCTS

**ANSAFE LUXURY FOAMING SOAP**
This product is ideal for washroom situations in office, leisure and hotel environments. It rinses off quickly and easily, so is ideal where excess water use may be of concern. 1 litre.
CODE 402362

**CUTAN ALCOHOL GEL**
A mild ethyl alcohol gel formula that moistens and soothes while rapidly disinfecting physically clean skin. 1 litre. Also available in 400ml pump bottles and 50ml personal packs.
CODE 400984

**YELLOW RUBBER GLOVE**
Flock free “Silver” inner silver lining for easy-on easy-off. Anti-slip honey comb pattern for good grip in wet and dry conditions. Chlorinated for improved chemical resistance. Glove is compliant with FDA regulations for use in repeated contact with food. Sizes 6.5-10.5
CODE 401605

**2200 MOLDEX RESPIRATOR MASK**
A P2 class particulate filter designed to protect against mechanical and thermally generated particulates including bacteria and viruses.
CODE 2200

**TYVEK COVERALLS**
Coveralls designed to protect workers from hazardous materials or sensitive products and processes from contamination by people.
CODE 151467

START PLANNING NOW!

Contact your local NZ Safety branch or phone Safeline on 0800 10 0014 or visit www.nzsafety.co.nz