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‘Pandemic Preparedness Manual’ Offers Guide to Dealing with Possible Swine Flu Pandemic

HOUSTON — (April 27, 2009) — With more than 100 deaths and hundreds of other infections reported around the world, the recent swine influenza outbreak has triggered global concern as governments everywhere scramble to contain it. In an effort to assist businesses in preparing for a potential pandemic, the IFMA Foundation is offering the “[Pandemic Preparedness Manual](#),” a complimentary resource that can assist in planning for, controlling and responding to the threat of influenza.

Workplaces have a vested interest in mitigating the effects of a pandemic. The Spanish flu of 1918, for example, affected hundreds of millions of people and resulted in more than 50 million fatalities. Today, a flu outbreak could lead to the absenteeism of 25 to 50 percent of employees for up to four months, potentially causing supply chain disruptions and the closure of retail facilities, further impacting the global economic downturn.

To prepare for and deal with these issues, the “Pandemic Preparedness Manual” suggests facility professionals perform pre-planning and develop business continuity plans. Pre-planning involves establishing internal and external communications protocols and reviewing corporate policies on pay, time off, visitor and travel restrictions, and medical clearance. Triggers for building closure, mandatory absences and other preventative measures should also be put into place.

The manual advises employers on steps they can take to help control the outbreak of flu, beginning with employee training on awareness and prevention. Employers are encouraged to make supplies such as tissues, hand soap and sanitary wipes available, and to be vigilant in sanitizing commonly touched surfaces.

“The IFMA Foundation has this manual ready to go 24/7 on its Web site as a resource for anyone concerned about maintaining the health and safety of their workplace,” said IFMA Foundation Executive Director William Rub. “When used in conjunction with information provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the latest media reports, we feel this manual gives facility professionals the tools they need to do their part in mitigating the harmful effects of this outbreak.”

The “Pandemic Preparedness Manual” was prepared in conjunction with [Environmental and Occupational Risk Management](#), a company that specializes in the development and

implementation of cost-effective environmental, health and safety solutions. To obtain a free copy of the report, visit www.ifmafoundation.org.

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