

## Bird Flu Fast Facts for Employers

Bird flu is a disease that infects birds, cows, and other animals. It can also spread to people who work with animals, such as at poultry farms or dairy farms.

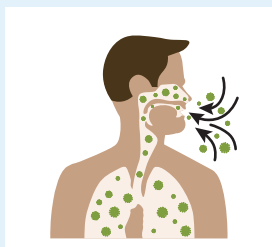
Some symptoms in humans include:

- Pink eye (conjunctivitis).
- Fever.
- Fatigue.
- Muscle aches.
- Stuffy or runny nose.

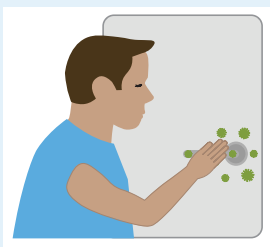


### How does bird flu spread?

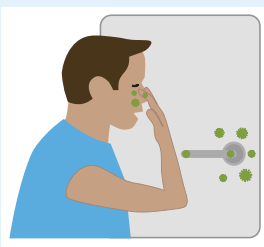
Workers can become infected when they:



Breathe in tiny particles containing the virus.



Touch a surface contaminated with the virus, then touch their eyes, nose, or mouth.



Are splashed in the face with even small amounts of liquid containing the virus.

### How can workers be protected?

Employers must:

- Keep work areas clean and provide handwashing facilities.
- Use safe work practices to minimize dust.
- Provide medical check-ups for workers who work in restricted or quarantined areas, or with infected animals or their waste.
- Train workers on bird flu, its hazards, and safety procedures.
- Provide and ensure use of PPE and respirators.
- Investigate worker symptoms of bird flu to figure out how they got infected, and adjust safety procedures if needed.
- Provide more protections if the worksite is under quarantine or other order or if there are any infected animals, including establishing restricted areas and providing showers and change rooms for workers.



respiratory protection



coveralls



apron



head covering



eye protection



gloves



shoe covers

(continued on next page)

## Workers' Compensation

Employers must provide workers' compensation benefits for workers that get bird flu on the job.

- Workers are unlikely to get bird flu from another person.
- Employees exposed to animals on the job can likely prove that their illness is from work, unless they were exposed to bird flu away from work.

Workers Compensation benefits:

- **Medical Care** – employer pays all reasonable and necessary treatment.
- **Temporary Disability Benefits** – employer pays portion of lost wages if employees misses three or more days of work because of the illness.
- **Permanent Disability Benefits** – if illness causes permanent impairment.

## Paid Sick Leave

Employers are required to provide employees paid sick leave.

Employers must allow employees to use up to 40 hours or 5 days, whichever is more, of earned paid sick leave in a 12-month period.

To qualify, employees must have:

- Worked at least 30 days for the same employer in a year.

An employee is entitled to use what they have earned on the 90th day of employment, although an employer can lend paid sick leave in advance of accrual.

## Resources

- [Protection from Avian Influenza page](#)
- [Exposure to Zoonotic Aerosol Transmissible Disease Hazards Guide](#)
- [California Department of Public Health: Current Bird Flu Situation](#)

## Retaliation is Illegal

All workers in California are protected by labor laws, including retaliation protections, regardless of immigration status. It is illegal for employers to fire, reduce the pay or work hours, or otherwise punish workers for following California laws or threaten to report a worker to immigration authorities for following California laws.

Some of the many activities that are protected from retaliation under California law include speaking up about unsafe conditions or unpaid wages, refusing to work in unsafe conditions, or reporting an unsafe workplace or labor violation.

Employers who commit retaliation may be required to reinstate the employee, pay back wages and pay penalties.

Workers who believe they have experienced retaliation can get more information at [www.wagetheftisacrime.com](http://www.wagetheftisacrime.com), file a retaliation complaint online at [www.dir.ca.gov/dlse/dlseRetaliation.html](http://www.dir.ca.gov/dlse/dlseRetaliation.html), or call the Labor Commissioner's Office at 1-833-526-4636.

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This document is available with active links at [www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/dosh\\_publications](http://www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/dosh_publications)

For assistance regarding this subject matter, employers may contact

**Cal/OSHA Consultation Services** at 1-800-963-9424 or [InfoCons@dir.ca.gov](mailto:InfoCons@dir.ca.gov)

[www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/consultation.html](http://www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/consultation.html)

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