



United States Department of the Interior

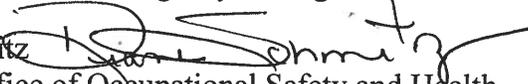
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Washington, D.C. 20240

July 17, 2014

Memorandum

To: Bureau/Office Heads
Solicitor
Inspector General

Attention: Bureau/Office Emergency Coordinators
DOI Safety Council

From: Laurence Broun 
Director, Office of Emergency Management
Diane Schmitz 
Director, Office of Occupational Safety and Health

Subject: *Updated Employee Health and Safety Guidance for Avian Influenza Surveillance and Control Activities in Wild Bird Populations, 2014*

This memorandum announces a revision of the guidance document, *Employee Health and Safety Guidance for Avian Influenza Surveillance and Control Activities in Wild Bird Populations*. The original guidance was developed in 2006 during interagency/intra-departmental pandemic/avian influenza planning efforts. The revised guidance reflects recent research findings and shifts in the ecology of influenza viruses.

The revised guidance provides additional information related to handling birds including the need for influenza vaccinations and anti-viral medication for DOI personnel, and the need for personal protective equipment (PPE).

In addition to providing updated guidance, this memo serves as a reminder to DOI personnel, as well as their supervisors and managers, to be mindful of the tendency to normalize risk where behaviors are accepted because they have not resulted in adverse effects to the individual in the past. Managers, supervisors and employees need to be watchful of this tendency and must implement robust management and supervisory controls to prevent this from occurring in all types of field operations.

Please distribute this guidance to the appropriate personnel in your bureaus. If you have questions regarding this document, please contact your Bureau Safety Manager of CAPT Tim Radtke, Office of Occupational Safety and Health, at (303) 236-7128 ext. 226.

Updated Employee Health and Safety Guidance for Avian Influenza Surveillance and Control Activities in Wild Bird Populations, 2014

This document provides guidance for protecting Department of the Interior (DOI) employees involved in handling wild birds. The risk of exposure to influenza viruses, and consequent safety recommendations, are dependent on the suspected presence of one or more zoonotic avian influenza viruses (strains that are infectious to humans) in wild birds in North America or the Pacific Islands. Zoonotic avian influenza outbreaks in poultry or other domestic birds may or may not present risk to wild birds or people handling wild birds. Discuss any questions or concerns with your regional Wildlife Health Office or Health and Safety Office.

I. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Instruction and up-to-date information must be provided to personnel at risk of coming in contact with zoonotic avian influenza:

- while handling infected animals - trapping and handling of wild birds, euthanasia, carcass collection and disposal
- while working with contaminated objects or surfaces - cleaning and disinfection of equipment/vehicles/non-disposable PPE
- through contact with infected persons

DOI agencies are required to provide the necessary PPE to at-risk personnel. PPE use and training is done in accordance with 29 CFR 1910.132 – 134.

The table below describes conditions and general activities and the protective measures required to minimize exposure to zoonotic avian influenza. It specifies the **minimum personal protective equipment** to be used for each activity. Other PPE and safety precautions may be necessary depending on specific conditions of the worksite or the tasks.

It is important to note that the table does not attempt to cover all tasks that may be assigned to DOI personnel. High exposure tasks not anticipated in the table should be evaluated in consultation with DOI health and safety officers.

Guidance on PPE will continue to be re-evaluated as more information becomes available and as the characteristics of different avian influenza viruses are better defined.

GUIDANCE FOR HANDLING WILD BIRDS DEPENDING ON THE CURRENT CONDITIONS:

CONDITIONS	ACTIVITY	PPE	WORK PRACTICE
1. a. Zoonotic avian influenza is not known or suspected in wild birds within North America or the Pacific Islands.	Handling apparently healthy birds.	Follow all PPE and standard work practices recommended for normal operations at your station. Consult regional health and safety expertise regarding zoonotic disease risks in your area.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Wash your hands often and thoroughly for at least 30 seconds (using soap/water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer) before eating, smoking, using cell phone and touching your face, hair, or exposed skin. 2. If working indoors, work in well-ventilated areas. When working outdoors, work upwind of animals to decrease the risk of inhaling airborne particulate matter such as dust, feathers, or dander. 3. Gloves, aprons, goggles, face shields, rubber boots, and coveralls that can be easily disinfected may also be worn to prevent skin and mucous membrane contact with biological materials, and prevent movement of biological materials to other sites.
1. b. Zoonotic avian influenza is not known or suspected in wild birds within North America or the Pacific Islands.	Handling sick or dead birds.	Follow all PPE and standard work practices recommended for normal operations at your station. Consult regional health and safety expertise regarding zoonotic disease risks in your area.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Remove gloves and wash your hands often and thoroughly for at least 30 seconds (using soap/water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer) before eating, smoking, using cell phone and touching your face, hair, or exposed skin. 2. If working indoors, work in well-ventilated areas. When working outdoors, work upwind of animals to decrease the risk of inhaling airborne particulate matter such as dust, feathers, or dander. 3. Aprons, goggles, face shields, rubber boots, and coveralls that can be easily disinfected may also be worn to prevent skin and mucous membrane contact with biological materials, and prevent movement of biological materials to other sites.
2. a. Zoonotic avian influenza is confirmed¹ or presumed to be present in wild birds within North America or the Pacific Islands.	Handling, investigation, or disposal of any healthy or sick, live or dead wild birds.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impermeable gloves (pvc or nitrile) or heavy duty rubber work gloves • Goggles • NIOSH-approved disposable N-95 particulate respirator². Workers must be fit-tested and medically cleared annually prior to wearing a respirator. • Disposable Tyvek coveralls or raingear that can be disinfected • Waders, hip-boots, rubber boots or boot covers 	<p>In addition to the work practices listed above:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Suppress dust at the work site using water 2. Minimize direct contact with birds and their secretions, feathers, and dander. 3. Minimize contact with carcasses when bagging birds. 4. Contact recipient laboratories prior to collection and shipping; follow their guidelines. <p>Remove PPE in the following order:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Carefully remove coveralls and boot covers and discard as contaminated material if disposable. 2. Disinfect rubber boots. 3. Remove gloves and immediately wash hands thoroughly with soap and water (or an alcohol-based hand gel when soap and clean water are not available). 4. Remove eye protection and place in designated receptacle for subsequent cleaning and disinfection. 5. Remove N-95 disposable respirator and discard. 6. Immediately after all PPE has been removed, wash hands thoroughly a second time and wash face.

<p>2.b. Zoonotic avian influenza is confirmed¹ or presumed to be present in wild birds within North America or the Pacific Islands</p>	<p>Cleaning and disinfecting equipment known or suspected to be contaminated with zoonotic avian influenza</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impermeable gloves (pvc or nitrile) or heavy duty rubber work gloves • Goggles • NIOSH-approved disposable N-95 particulate respirator². Workers must be fit-tested and medically cleared annually prior to wearing a respirator. • Disposable Tyvek coveralls or raingear that can be disinfected • Waders, hip-boots, rubber boots or boot covers 	<p>In addition to the work practices listed above:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Clean surfaces of equipment and reusable PPE with detergent and water, then disinfect with a virucide (such as Virkon®) that kills avian influenza viruses. Follow the label instructions. 2. www.epa.gov/pesticides/factsheets/avian.htm lists registered products. If a registered product is not available, use 3/4 cup of household bleach (5.25-6.00% sodium hypochlorite) per gallon of water for hard, non-porous surfaces. 3. Avoid generating mists with water sprayers during equipment decontamination procedures. 4. Do not touch any part of exposed person (especially the face) with gloved hands. Replace torn or damaged gloves immediately. 5. Additional protection (such as aprons and face shields) may be desired during equipment decontamination to prevent contact with contaminated material. 6. If there is known exposure to body fluids of the carcass (examples: knife cut, needle stick) contact your health care professional and provide a complete history of your activities. <p>Carefully remove PPE in the order as described above in section 2a.</p>
<p>Key for colored conditions sections:</p>	<p>Green - Low risk conditions</p>	<p>Orange - Medium risk conditions</p>	<p>Red - High risk conditions</p>

¹ Refers to situations where the National Veterinary Services Laboratory confirmed the presence of an avian influenza virus that is pathogenic for humans in a wild bird or a presumptive diagnosis of an avian influenza virus from a wild bird found dead or moribund.

² Use of respirators including N-95 filtering facepiece respirators requires implementing a Respiratory Protection Program as required by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration. This includes training, fit-testing, and fit-checking to ensure appropriate respirator selection and use. To be effective, respirators must provide a proper sealing surface on the wearer's face. Detailed information on respiratory protection programs is provided at: www.osha.gov/SLTC/etools/respiratory/index.html and www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/respirators/. Under certain high risk conditions such as handling large numbers of birds in a confined area confirmed to have the HPAI virus, it may be necessary to upgrade respiratory protection to powered air purifying respirators (PAPR) or other protection options.

Opening carcasses in the field is not recommended as this may increase the risk of disease transmission and decrease the diagnostic value of the carcass. Consult DOI health and safety officers for more guidance if this activity is necessary.

Designated protective measures should be applied for at least 30 days after the date of the last detection of zoonotic avian influenza in wild birds within North America or the Pacific Islands.

II. Vaccination, anti-viral medications, and medical monitoring

Personnel should obtain the seasonal influenza vaccine. Follow the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) annual recommendations for the prevention and control of influenza with vaccines, which include information on the available vaccine products, timing of vaccination, and vaccination of individuals who could have complications from receiving the vaccine. The annual ACIP recommendations can be found on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website (<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/index.htm>).

Vaccination for seasonal influenza viruses will reduce the possibility of an individual being infected with both avian and human influenza viruses at the same time. There is a small possibility that dual infection could occur and result in viral re-assortment, which would result in new, previously unrecognized virus subtypes.

During a threat or occurrence of an actual pandemic, CDC will develop guidance on anti-viral medication and emergency vaccine use based on population risk during an influenza pandemic.

DOI personnel who develop influenza symptoms within 10 days after working with wild birds or being in contact with people suspected to be ill with avian influenza should have prompt telephone access to a health care provider and access to medical care within 48 hours after symptom onset.

- Instruct workers to be vigilant for the development of fever, respiratory symptoms, and/or conjunctivitis (i.e., eye infections) for 10 days after last exposure to avian influenza-infected or exposed birds or to potentially avian influenza-contaminated environmental surfaces.
- Individuals who become ill with symptoms mentioned above should promptly seek medical care and prior to arrival notify their health care provider that they have been working under conditions where zoonotic avian influenza virus was potentially present. In addition, employees should notify their Bureau health and safety representative. They should limit contact with others if at all possible.
- With the exception of visiting a health care provider or seeking emergency care if necessary, individuals who become ill should be advised to stay home until 24 hours after resolution of fever, and follow the guidance of their health care providers. While at home, ill persons should practice good cough and hand hygiene to lower the risk of transmission of virus to others. For further information, visit the CDC website: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/covercough.htm>