

WEEKLY SAFETY TIP – 11/28/11 – 6 FEET OF SEPARATION

You are working with Joe today. You notice that in the morning, he seems a little sluggish, but don't think much about it. As the day progresses, he starts to complain that his headaches, he mentions the burrito he ate for lunch disagreed with him, he is shivering, and he seems to be getting achy and tired. He also starts coughing and sneezing. You think he might have the flu. You think you should stay away from him so you don't get sick. But how far away is the recommended distance?

You might have guessed from the title to this safety tip – 6 feet of separation are recommended by the Centers for Disease Control.

Flu Season has not quite started yet, but already some people are reporting in sick with the flu. So how do you prevent yourself from getting sick? You can't stay 6 feet away from everyone – sometimes you have to work closely with people. And have you ever tried to stay 6 feet away from someone in a store or shopping mall during the holidays – it isn't always possible, is it?

So here's some things you can do to stay a little healthier:

1. Get vaccinated. The Centers for Disease Control recommend seasonal flu vaccinations for anyone over 6 months old. The flu is a contagious virus, and vaccinations can help your body build antibodies to help fight it off. For more information about Seasonal Flu Vaccinations, we have uploaded a brief 2 page informational pdf to the SCM website. Download it for free from our Industry News page at http://www.scm-safety.com/industry_news.html.
2. Wash your hands. Wash them thoroughly with soap and water frequently and often. Wash for at least 15 seconds (if you don't know how long that is, it's one chorus of "Happy Birthday"). When soap and water are not available, use an alcohol based hand cleaner, then wash with soap and water as soon as you can.

Think about what you touch when you are in public. Doorknobs, elevator buttons, shopping carts, items on a store shelf. If you can touch it, so can someone who might be carrying the flu virus. No one is immune – so keep washing your hands!
3. Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. What do those facial features have in common? They have thin membranes that can easily spread those flu germs through your body.
4. This one might not be so easy – but try to avoid the exposure. Avoid sick people. Remember the 6 feet of separation.
5. Learn the signs and symptoms of the flu. Fever, coughing, sore throat, muscle or body aches, headaches, fatigue, and possible nausea. Someone with these symptoms is someone to stay away from. And if you have those symptoms, help your co-workers out by staying home. How long to stay home? The CDC recommends you stay home at least 24 hours after your fever is gone.

To learn more about preventing the flu, visit the CDC's page on the seasonal flu at <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/index.htm>, linked here. And if you enjoy receiving alerts and texts, sign up for the latest updates on the seasonal flu from the CDC at: <http://cdc.gov/mobile/> or at m.cdc.gov on your cell phone.