

# CLIENT UPDATE

## Swine Flu

April 28, 2009

[www.bcdtravel.com](http://www.bcdtravel.com)

### Swine Flu & Travel Programs

The World Health Organization (WHO), which coordinates the global response to the spread of human disease, has determined that recent cases of swine flu constitute an international public health concern.

BCD Travel is closely monitoring the unfolding of events related to swine flu and is prepared to assist travel managers in evaluating relevant information and key issues upon which organizations need to make travel policy decisions. Please find below information aimed at helping BCD Travel clients manage their travel programs during this situation. In addition, clients should contact their BCD Travel account or operations manager for assistance in determining the proper strategy for their specific travel program.

### What is Swine Flu?

Swine influenza A (H1N1) infection is a highly contagious respiratory disease most commonly spread among pigs. Swine flu viruses sometimes cross the species barrier to cause disease in humans. According to medical experts, those infected may experience symptoms ranging from none or very mild to pneumonia-like. Those infected usually remain contagious for about seven days.

### Latest News

The WHO director-general, on 27 April, raised the level of influenza pandemic alert to phase 4—indicating that the likelihood of a pandemic has increased, but is not inevitable. The WHO is not recommending restricting international travel or closing borders. The organization is recommending that people who are ill delay international travel and people who develop symptoms following international travel seek medical attention. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that travelers avoid all nonessential travel to Mexico. Clients should consult their internal crisis management teams and travel policies to determine appropriate responses sanctioned within their own organizations.

### Swine Flu Effects on Business Travel & Travel Programs

In response to the confirmation of swine flu infections, some local public health and regulatory agencies around the world have issued recommended precautions, including essential-only travel to destinations (including Mexico, the United States and Canada) where there are confirmed cases of the disease. Individual travel programs should seek information from world health organizations and local agencies to determine whether and which travel policy and procedure changes are necessary. Resources are outlined below.

The impact of the public health concern and the recommended precautions on travel policy must be determined by individual organizations after careful consideration of risk and travel need. Travel managers should work closely with established risk management teams, including human resources and security departments, to validate company travel policy and communicate that policy through normal channels to all travelers within their company.

BCD Travel clients should also work with their account or operations managers to make the best use of the solutions and information available through your travel program. DecisionSource: Security Manager and TripSource: Portal are specifically designed to locate travelers and provide on-demand information and critical alerts in situations such as these.

If your company sends travelers to an area that has reported cases of swine flu, the CDC recommends travelers follow local public health guidelines, including any movement restrictions and prevention recommendations. Travelers should be made aware that there may be travel impacts as well. For example, Mexico is checking all exiting airline passengers for signs of swine flu. Exit screening may cause significant delays at airports and should be considered in any upcoming travel plans.

## Staying Informed

The [World Health Organization](#) is coordinating the global response to swine flu and monitoring corresponding threats. WHO has set up a Web page devoted to providing the latest information. The site provides access to technical guidelines and general information.

The U.S.-based [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) is a recognized source of information on global disease and helps the WHO track the number of confirmed infections.

Travel managers should also keep up with breaking news related to swine flu by monitoring reputable news organizations such as [CNN](#) or other local news resources.

## Airline Ticket Change-Fee Waivers

Most U.S. carriers are offering blanket waivers for travelers with tickets to destinations affected by swine flu. Your account or operations manager can advise on the waiver process and which carriers are offering waivers.

## Advice for Travelers

Flu-avoiding habits. See complete list at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov):

- Wash your hands often with soap and water. This removes germs from your skin and helps prevent diseases from spreading.
- Use waterless alcohol-based hand gels (containing at least 60% alcohol) when soap is not available and hands are not visibly dirty.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze and put your used tissue in a wastebasket.
- If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve or elbow, not your hands.
- Wash your hands after coughing or sneezing, using soap and hot water or an alcohol-based hand cleaner (with at least 60% alcohol) when soap and water are not available.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth. Germs spread that way.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people. (Influenza is thought to spread mainly person-to-person through coughing or sneezing of infected people.)
- It is important to follow the advice of local health and government authorities. You may be asked to restrict your movement and stay in your home to contain the spread of swine flu.
- Seek medical care if you feel sick.