

## Scottish Resilience

Scottish Fire and Rescue Advisory Unit

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Chief Officers



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Dear Chief Officer

### **DEAR CHIEF OFFICER (SCOTLAND) LETTER 5/2009**

#### **Mexican Influenza Outbreak- Advice to Fire and Rescue Services for Business Continuity Planning**

Following the confirmation of cases of Swine Flu in Scotland, the UK and Scottish Governments have deemed it appropriate to issue national guidance to assist in Business Continuity Planning in anticipation of the possibility of a pandemic being realised over the coming months. In addition and on behalf of the Minister, the Scottish Fire and Rescue Advisory Unit (SFRAU) may, from time to time, issue additional specific guidance to Fire and Rescue Authorities.

The World Health Organisation raised the alert level to Phase 5 at 21:15hrs on Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> April. At WHO Phase 5:

- Business Continuity response plans must be ready for instant implementation and activated when required;
- national and local coordination and communication arrangements should be activated;
- arrangements for the development and supply of the specific vaccine should be reviewed; and
- Health directorates will monitor the development and emerging epidemiology of the pandemic and will consider proportionate response measures including the implementation of service restrictions to allow healthcare organisations to finalise preparations, adjust working practices and release capacity in preparation for a pandemic.
- Individuals should listen carefully to public announcements with advice and instructions. They should familiarise themselves with local arrangements for accessing health and community care support and anti-vials'.

- Advertising campaigns and a door to door leaflet drop will be implemented with messages emphasising that people should maintain essential activities as far as possible and explaining how services will operate and how they should be accessed.
- Symptomatic patients should stay at home and contact their GP or call NHS24. They should be prepared to describe symptoms, give basic personal details and carefully note and follow clinical advice and instructions.

In addition to the above I would remind Chief Officers of the contents of the following specific documents:

- Pandemic Flu- A Scottish framework for responding to an influenza pandemic – published by the Scottish Government in October 2007 <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2007/11/21141855/0> ; and
- Pandemic Flu – Guidance for infection control for the Fire and Rescue Services – published by the Scottish Government and Health Protection Scotland in 2008 <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/924/0056659.pdf>.
- Pandemic Flu- Guidance for the Fire and Rescue Service; What you need to know and how to protect yourself and others [http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH\\_082433](http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_082433)

Clearly any significant outbreak of flu locally will be an issue for local Strategic Co-ordinating Groups; however SFRAU will continue to work with our colleagues in the Scottish Government and fire and rescue services to ensure the best guidance is available and that national issues affecting the Service are effectively co-ordinated.

Yours Faithfully



**BRIAN FRASER**  
**Head of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Advisory Unit**