



## **SWINE FLU OUTBREAK**

### Some Key Points For FSC Customers

1. WHO have rated the H1N1 outbreak of Swine Flu currently at level 6 (out of 6) due to the low level but sustained human-to-human transmission in more than one continent. The UK government is currently rating the risk as low due to the Swine Flu currently exhibiting only mild symptoms in the vast majority of cases.
2. The government's current plan has moved from one of containment to one of treatment of the symptoms and to reduce the spread by good hygiene practice – containing sneezes, single use of disposable tissues which are binned afterwards and frequent hand washing. This is the normal practice for seasonal flu and has been reinforced by the recently issued D.C.S.F. guidance. There is no need to cancel your field course and FSC has already put in place its flu pandemic plan to ensure that we have stocks of tissues, sterile wipes for hand cleaning when out in the field and contingencies in case key staff at the centre are absent through illness.
3. If students are already suffering from the symptoms of Swine Flu they should not travel to the centre. If they become ill en-route or whilst at the centre then the centre will have procedures in place to help minimise the spread. Those individuals who are covered by FSC's insurance, or have taken out their own insurance, should be able to recover their course fees if they are unable to attend the course due to their illness.
4. Most people will be susceptible to this new virus, although many will not develop clinical illness. Serious illness is likely to match typical seasonal flu patterns, eg. very young, elderly, those with complicating conditions.
5. Influenza is mainly spread by coughs, sneezes and breathing on people. The virus can pass through almost all face masks but the face masks reduce the large flows of air from exhalation ie they are better at stopping an infected person spreading the disease than stopping an uninfected person catching it. Plenty of fresh air (and fieldwork!) is good for reducing the risk of spread.
6. Influenza can also be spread to hard surfaces (door handles, handrails, push plates, light switches, etc) by mouth/nose to hand contact. FSC's action plan will increase cleaning and disinfection of key contact points.
7. The influenza outbreak is expected to last up to 3 months, with subsequent smaller waves of infection over the next 6-12 months. Like seasonal flu it will have a persistent but low level effect over a prolonged period.

***We look forward to welcoming you on your field course with us***

*Rob Lucas, Chief Executive Designate  
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