

WORKERS PROTECTION FROM AVIAN FLU



Basic Information

What is avian flu?

It is a zoonotic infection caused by influenza viruses. These viruses infect poultry (chicken, turkeys, ducks and geese) and are transmitted from waterfowl migratory birds, which are considered as the natural reservoir of all viruses.

Employers' Obligations

The employers' obligations to protect their employees from avian flu derive from the Health and Safety at Work Laws of 1996 to 2003 and the Health and Safety at Work (Biological Agents) Regulations of 2001. On the basis of this legislation every employer must take all the necessary measures to protect the health and safeguard the safety of his employees, as well as of other persons that can be affected from his working activities.

How can it be spread to humans?

Although human infection is very rare, the disease can be spread from direct contact with excretions (saliva, nasal excretions and feces) of infected birds, contaminated surfaces and by inhalation of contaminated dust.

When do we suspect the disease?

The disease causes on birds a wide spectrum of symptoms. It is characterized by high mortality of birds, falling egg production, respiratory symptoms etc.

What are the necessary measures to be taken at the workplace for the protection of the workers from avian flu?

- The employer should isolate the birds in a contained environment, restrict the movement of persons, birds or their products, from or to the infected area and immediately call the Veterinary Services.
- Before entering a workplace, where a suspected or a confirmed case of avian flu has been identified, the employees should seek medical advice for vaccination or other treatment, wear all the necessary personal protective equipment, as shown in the picture and follow all the necessary personal hygiene measures after any work activity.
- Contaminated places and equipment should be disinfected according to the instructions of the Veterinary Services.

Avian Flu Personal Protecting Equipment

Directly vented, close fitting goggles

FFP3 respirator with exhalation valve

Tyveck type overalls "air impermeable" with long cuffed sleeves, head cover.

Nitrile or Vinyl gloves or heavy duty rubber gloves (not latex)

Rubber or plastic boots



For more information on Health and Safety Issues at the workplace you can visit the website of the Department of Labour Inspection at the address: <http://www.mlsi.gov.cy/dli> or contact the District Offices of the Department of Labour Inspection:

Nicosia: 22879191 Limasol: 25827200 Larnaca: 24305128
Pafos: 26822715