

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NOVATO FIRE DISTRICT

Prevention is Key This Flu Season

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As this year's flu season approaches, the Novato Fire District reminds you that preventative measures are your best defense against influenza. When it comes to influenza or Novel Influenza A (H1N1), or influenza-like illness, taking simple precautions to keep you and your family healthy are key. The Novato Fire District is standing with our partners at the County of Marin Public Health, Kaiser and Sutter hospitals and is ready to combat this flu season. We are monitoring the every changing situation and are here to serve our communities. While we cannot do anything about these viruses being in our area, we can be proactive and have a direct impact on transmission and spread by using these preventative measures:

- Wash your hands **FREQUENTLY AND THOROUGHLY**
 - Use soap and water, and wash for a minimum of 30 seconds
 - Make sure to wash all areas – palms, fingers, web between fingers, thumbs, back of hands, and wrists
- Use an alcohol based hand sanitizer in between hand washings
 - No water is required
 - You may use as often as you would like between washings
 - These do not cause dry skin, but may aggravate dry skin conditions. If you have such conditions, seek guidance from a physician or pharmacist on using hand sanitizers
- Avoid touching your eyes, mouth, or nose
 - These are the number one routes the spread germs
 - Old habits are hard to break, and you may need to retrain your brain to keep from touching these areas
 - Have hand sanitizer readily available for accidental occurrences
- Use good coughing and sneezing etiquette

- Always cover your nose and mouth and turn away from others when sneezing or coughing
- Don't use your hands for cover as this makes it easy to spread germs. Cough or sneeze into your upper arm or the inside bend of your elbow
- If you use cover, use disposable items like Kleenex tissue – avoid handkerchiefs and bandanas that harbor germs
- For more information regarding coughing and sneezing etiquette, go to www.coughsafe.com
- If you get sick STAY HOME!
 - Don't needlessly infect others
 - If you get the flu, plan on at least seven (7) days for it to run its course
 - Never return to work within 24 hours of a having a fever
 - Seek medical care at anytime you develop difficulty breathing or swallowing
- Stay a safe distance from those around you who are coughing or sneezing
 - Keep a distance of at least three (3) feet if they are using over and good etiquette
 - Keep a distance of at least six (6) feet if they are not
- Limit the handling of food items from “community” containers such as cookie and candy jar (how clean was the last hand in that jar?)
 - Keep serving utensils used for pot luck or buffets clean and changed out as necessary
 - Consider the cleanliness of other items such items such as ice chests, food platters, etc.
- Take care of yourself when you're well – limit immune system suppressing activities
 - Eat well, get plenty of sleep and listen to your body
 - Limit or eliminate body system stressing activities such as smoking and drinking
- The use of simple masks, such as dust or surgical, have not been proven to be beneficial
 - If a mask is going to be worn, it should be worn by the sick person

For continuing, up-to-date information, please visit www.marinflu.org.

Novato Fire District is an independent Special District providing all risk fire, rescue, emergency medical paramedic service and risk reduction to the City of Novato and the county communities of Bel Marin Keys, Loma Verde, Black Point, Green Point, Wildhorse and Indian Valleys. The Fire District serves a community of nearly 63,000 residents and responds to over 5,000 incidents annually. An independently elected Board of Directors provides policy and budget direction to Fire Chief Marc Revere and 86 full-time employees.

www.novatofire.org

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