Cold, Flu and Transmissible Illness – Landscaping Meentig Kit



WHAT’S AT STAKE

Working outdoors in landscaping exposes workers to weather conditions, which increase the risk of contracting colds, the flu, and other transmissible illnesses. These illnesses can spread rapidly among team members, leading to reduced productivity and increased absenteeism. Understanding how these illnesses spread and taking preventive measures is essential to maintain a healthy workforce.

WHAT’S THE DANGER

Colds, flu, and other transmissible illnesses are common, especially during colder months or in environments where workers are in close contact. The outdoor nature of landscaping work, can weaken the immune system, making workers more susceptible to these illnesses.

Specific Risks

1. **Exposure to Cold Weather**
    - Working in cold, damp, or windy conditions can lower the body’s defenses, making it easier to catch a cold or flu.
    - Prolonged exposure to cold without proper clothing can lead to hypothermia or frostbite.
1. **Close Contact with Others**
    - Landscaping crews often work in teams, sharing tools, equipment, and sometimes enclosed spaces like vehicles. This close contact facilitates the spread of viruses and bacteria.
    - Shared tools and surfaces can harbor germs, leading to indirect transmission of illnesses.
1. **Weakened Immune System**
    - Physical exertion in tough weather conditions can weaken the immune system, making workers more vulnerable to infections.

- Stress, fatigue, and poor nutrition can also lower immunity.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

1. **Personal Protective Measures**
2. **Proper Clothing and Gear**

- Dress in layers to stay warm and dry. Use moisture-wicking base layers, insulating mid-layers, and waterproof outer layers.
- Wear a hat, gloves, and scarf to protect extremities from the cold.
- Keep extra dry clothing on hand to change into if you get wet.

1. **Personal Hygiene**

- Wash hands frequently with soap and water, especially before eating, after using the restroom, and after coughing or sneezing.
- Use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol when soap and water are not available.
- Avoid touching your face, particularly your eyes, nose, and mouth.

1. **Healthy Habits**

- Stay hydrated and eat a balanced diet rich in vitamins and minerals.
- Get adequate sleep each night to allow your body to recover and strengthen itself.
- Exercise regularly to boost your immune system.

1. **Workplace Practices**
2. **Encourage Sick Workers to Stay Home**

- Workers who are sick should be encouraged to stay home and recover fully before returning.
- Implement a clear sick leave policy that supports workers in taking the time they need to recover without fear of losing income or job security.

1. **Sanitization of Shared Tools and Spaces**

- Regularly disinfect shared tools, and equipment to reduce risk of transmitting germs.
- Provide hand sanitizer stations in common areas and ensure that vehicles and equipment are cleaned regularly.

1. **Promote Vaccination**

- Encourage workers to get the annual flu vaccine.
- Consider hosting a flu vaccination clinic on-site where workers can get vaccinated.

1. **Training and Awareness**
   - Conduct regular safety talks on the importance of hygiene, and vaccination.
   - Provide workers with information on recognizing the symptoms of colds, flu, and other transmissible illnesses.
3. **Emergency Preparedness**
4. **Monitor for Symptoms**

- Encourage workers to self-monitor symptoms of colds, flu, and other

illnesses, such as fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, and fatigue.
    - Establish protocols for reporting symptoms and seeking medical attention if necessary.

1. **Plan for Reduced Workforce**
    - Be prepared for potential workforce reductions during peak cold and flu season.

FINAL WORD

By taking proactive measures—such as proper clothing, hygiene practices, vaccination, and staying home when sick—workers can protect themselves and their colleagues from these common illnesses.