



Pandemic Planning-The VIGILAIR® Solution

Executives at corporations with a multi-national presence face unique challenges as they plan for a potential pandemic. Media hype, junk science and fear have obscured the reality of the threat. In the confusion, preparation and planning can be stymied by panic and paralysis.

What We Know

A recent editorial in the New England Journal of Medicine provides a succinct snapshot of the pandemic situation:

“There is no question that there will be another influenza pandemic someday. (Given) the rate of death of more than 50%, it would be prudent to develop robust plans for dealing with such a pandemic.”¹

What is Unknown

From the same article in the New England Journal of Medicine:

“We simply don’t know when it will occur or whether it will be caused by the H5N1 avian influenza virus.”

Regarding pandemics, the paramount issue companies face is business continuity interruption caused by employee absenteeism. Experts estimate that 20% of working adults will become ill, and another 20% will stay away from work to avoid becoming infected or to care for a sick relative.²

Efforts to cross-train employees, create succession plans and to facilitate ‘telecommuting’ are among the strategies that some companies are considering to ameliorate pandemic absenteeism.³

The use of N-95 respirator masks for employees has been suggested to reduce absenteeism. However, the US Government has warned that such measures may lead to a false sense of security:

“Respirators should only be used as a “last line of defense” when engineering control systems are not feasible. **Engineering control systems, such as adequate ventilation or scrubbing of contaminants should be used to negate the need for respirators.**”⁴

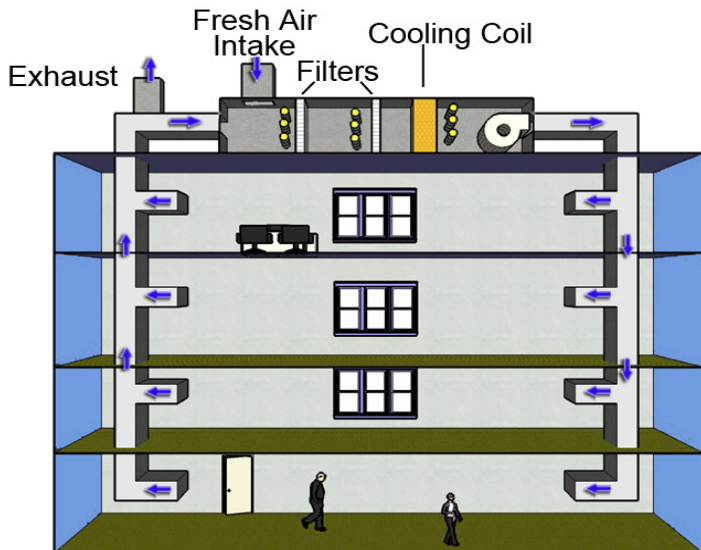
The VIGILAIR® Solution

The US Department of Homeland Security has designated VIGILAIR® as a “Qualified Anti-terror Technology.” Installed inside a building’s heating ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) system, VIGILAIR® purifies air with a combination of high efficiency filtration and Ultraviolet Germicidal Irradiation (UVGI). VIGILAIR® technology significantly reduces the effects of an anthrax or smallpox attack by removing and destroying more than 99% of these pathogens.

VIGILAIR® systems offer the same protection against airborne influenza viruses. In fact, when UVGI emitters were installed in the ventilation systems of three Montreal office buildings, the UVGI reduced

microorganisms on HVAC surfaces by 99%. During the one year study⁵ when UV emitters were operating, 771 office occupants reported:

- 20% fewer symptoms associated with Sick Building Syndrome
- 40% fewer allergy symptoms amongst allergy sufferers



A building's ventilation system acts like lungs, circulating and filtering air. Microbial contamination can be spread by the ventilation system throughout the building.

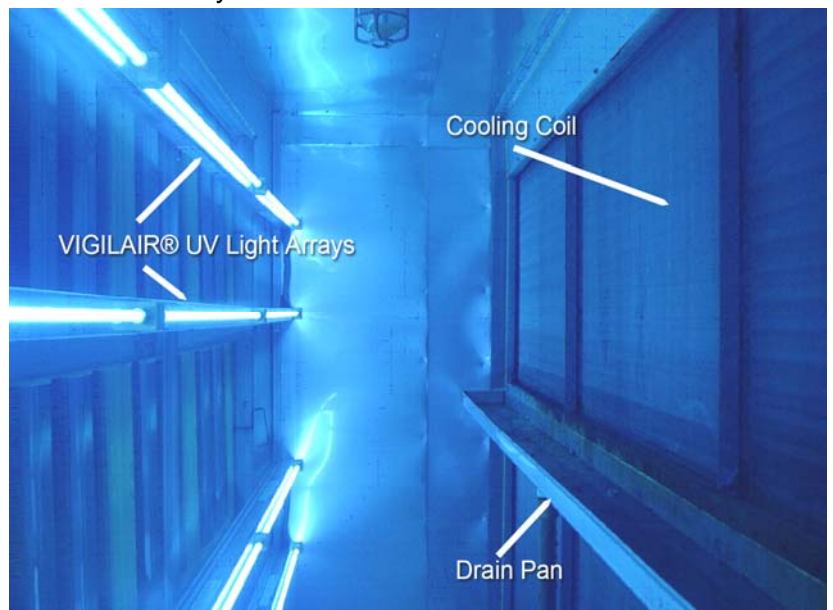
Think of the HVAC system as your building's respiratory system. Just like your lungs, the HVAC system supplies and filters air. When your lungs are infected, pathogens are distributed internally and you become sick. The same applies to your ventilation system—when it is contaminated with microorganisms it can distribute them internally and cause illness. VIGILAIR[®] effectively breaks the chain of transmission for airborne illnesses, such as influenza.⁶

Corporations with international offices are especially vulnerable to spreading influenza because of employee travel. Consider an infected person arriving in New York City from Hong Kong. Although infected and capable of shedding infectious viruses, he may not exhibit symptoms of illness. Countermeasures such as isolation can't work if the infected person is asymptomatic.

While no single technology can guarantee 100% security against pandemic flu, VIGILAIR[®] air purification systems provide broad spectrum protection against environmental airborne spread of viruses, bacteria and fungi. Unlike reactive measures such as stockpiling masks, VIGILAIR[®] systems are proactive and provide continuous protection 24 hours a day.

Summary

Now is the time to make preparations for pandemic influenza. Your planning should consist of a spectrum of countermeasures. Mitigating employee illness and absenteeism is likely the #1 problem you'll face. VIGILAIR[®] provides significant protection against the airborne spread of influenza within a building through the use of UVGI and filtration. By disinfecting the air as it passes through the HVAC system, VIGILAIR[®] significantly decreases viruses, bacteria and fungi that are airborne.



VIGILAIR[®] UV lights installed inside a building's air handler. UV is a potent germicide that destroys microorganisms. UV and filtration can significantly reduce airborne environmental pathogens such as viruses and fungi.



References

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Contact Us:

VIGILAIR® Systems, Inc.
888.401.8770
4097 Beach Ridge Rd.
N. Tonawanda, NY 14120

www.VIGILAIRsystems.com