



United States Department of the Interior
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Washington DC 20240

*Updated Employee Health and Safety Guidance for Wild Bird Management Activities and
Avian Influenza Surveillance, 2022*

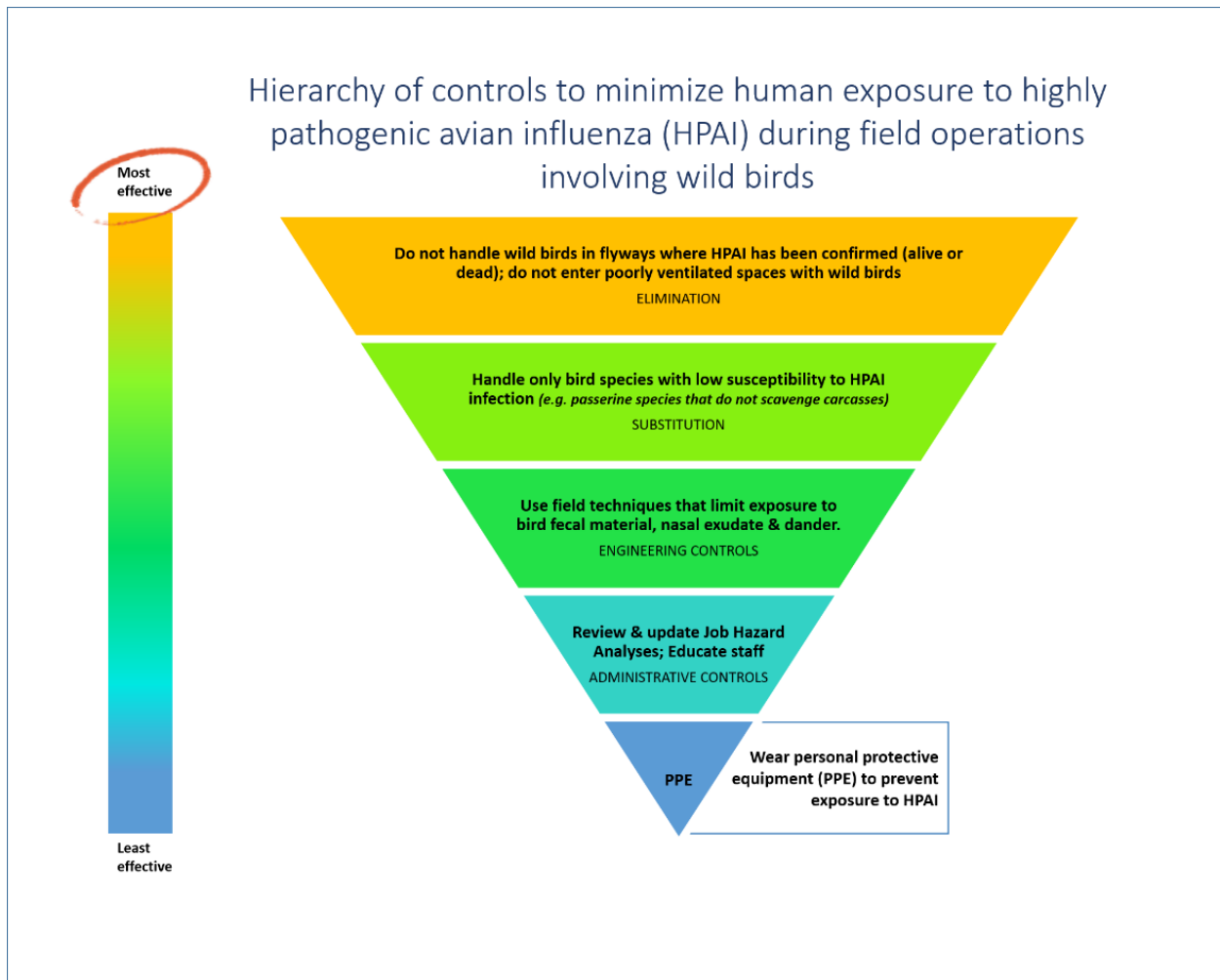
This document provides guidance for protecting Department of Interior (DOI) employees involved in handling live or dead wild birds. The risk of exposure to avian influenza viruses, and consequent safety recommendations, are dependent on the presence of one or more HPAI avian influenza viruses (strains that are potentially infectious to humans) in wild birds in one of the North American Administrative Flyways (Appendix 1). Some people may have job-related or other exposures that put them at risk for infection with avian influenza viruses. Discuss any questions or concerns with your health and safety office, office of public health, or wildlife health office.

I. Job Hazard Assessments

- a. Job hazard assessment or analysis (JHA) is a systematic process for identifying hazards and eliminating or minimizing their risks. First you break down a job or activity into basic steps and examine each step for potential hazards. For larger or more complex operations, you may need to divide the operation into several activities or sub-steps. For each hazard you identify, you must develop a means of eliminating or controlling the hazard.
- b. Each DOI bureau has JHA templates available, please click [here](#) to find an example JHA template from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

II. Hierarchy of Controls

- a. Controlling exposures to occupational hazards is the fundamental method of protecting workers. A [hierarchy of controls](#) is used to determine how to implement feasible and effective control solutions. The control methods at the top of graphic are potentially more effective and protective than those at the bottom. Following this hierarchy normally leads to the implementation of inherently safer systems, where the risk of illness or injury has been substantially reduced. Below is a hierarchy of controls specific to controlling exposure to HPAI.



III. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Instruction and up-to-date information must be provided to personnel at risk of coming in contact with HPAI avian influenza viruses:

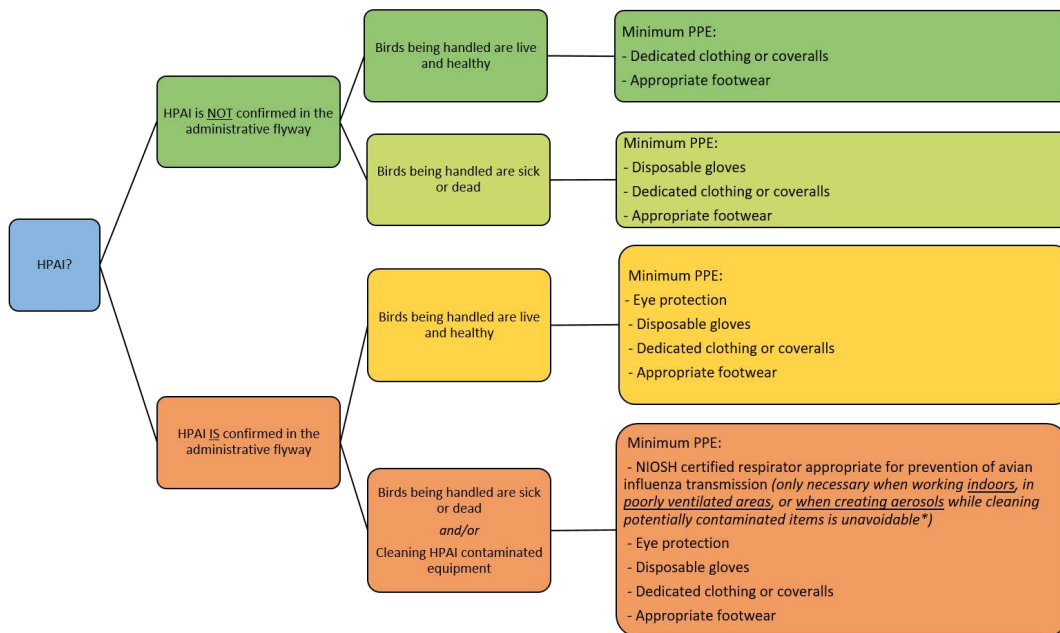
- while handling infected animals - trapping and handling of wild birds, euthanasia, collection of cloacal and/or oropharyngeal swabs and carcass collection and disposal
- while conducting routine field work activities for monitoring avian health (e.g., bird banding)
- while working with contaminated objects or surfaces (e.g. saliva, blood, mucus, feathers, dander, or droppings from birds) - cleaning and disinfection of equipment/vehicles/non-disposable PPE
- through contact with persons infected with avian influenza viruses

DOI agencies are required to provide the necessary PPE to at-risk personnel. PPE use and training is done in accordance with the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Personal Protective Equipment standards (29 CFR 1910.132 – 134), DOI’s Job Hazard Analysis policy ([485 DM 14](#)), and applicable bureau/office requirements.

The flowchart below describes conditions, general activities, and the protective measures required to minimize exposure to HPAI. It specifies the **minimum PPE** to be used for each activity. Other PPE and safety precautions may be necessary depending on specific risk factors and conditions of the worksite or the tasks. For detailed PPE donning and doffing information, please review the [Safe Work Practices for Working with Wildlife](#) document.

It is important to note that the flowchart below does not attempt to cover all tasks that may be assigned to DOI personnel. High exposure tasks not anticipated in the chart should be evaluated in consultation with servicing health and safety offices. Guidance on PPE will continue to be re-evaluated as more information becomes available and as the characteristics of different avian influenza viruses are better defined.

Department of the Interior flowchart guidance for personal protective equipment (PPE) and safe work practices when working with wild birds depending on presence of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) in the administrative flyway.



* Use of respirators requires implementing a [respiratory protection program](#) as required by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration. Consider wearing a respirator depending on frequency and duration of work activities with wild birds, even if the birds do not appear sick. Contact your servicing Safety and Health or Wildlife Health team for guidance.

Safe Work Practices

When preparing for field work

- Consult regional health and safety public health or wildlife health personnel regarding HPAI and other zoonotic disease risks in your area.
- Please see contacts section in this document for more information.

When in the field

- While working with wildlife, do not eat, drink, smoke, use your cell phone, touch your face, hair, or exposed skin.
- Thoroughly inspect all PPE prior to use for signs of damage and carefully remove worn PPE to prevent self-contamination. Ensure that contaminated PPE is segregated and treated as potentially infectious prior to disposal and/or decontamination.
- Clean surfaces of equipment and reusable PPE with detergent and water, then disinfect with a virucide that kills avian influenza viruses (such as Virkon). Follow the label instructions. The [EPA](#) lists products registered for use against avian influenza. Decontaminate tools and other equipment prior to reuse.
- After contact with wildlife, remove gloves and wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Minimize dust by thoroughly wetting or misting contaminated surfaces and avoid generating mists during equipment decontamination.
- Do not touch exposed skin or parts of your body (especially the face), with gloved hands. Replace torn or damaged gloves immediately.
- If there is known exposure to body fluids from a bird (e.g., fecal material splashed in eyes or mouth) follow proper occupational reporting protocols, contact your health care provider, and give a complete history of your activities and potential for occupational exposure.

*Use of respirators

- Use of respirators requires implementing a respiratory protection program as required by OSHA. At a minimum, this includes development of a written program, employee training, medical clearance, and fit-testing to ensure appropriate respirator selection and use. [National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health \(NIOSH\)](#) approved respirators and additional guidance are available on CDC's website.
- Under certain high-risk conditions such as handling large numbers of birds in a confined area confirmed to have HPAI virus, it may be necessary to upgrade respiratory protection to powered air purifying respirators (PAPR) or other protection options.

If workers need respirators to prevent potential exposure to avian influenza viruses, OSHA advises, at a minimum, a NIOSH-certified N95 filtering face piece respirator or higher (such as a Powered Air Purifying Respirator [PAPR]) as part of a comprehensive respiratory protection program that includes medical exams and fit testing, and that meets the requirements of OSHA's Respiratory Protection standard 29 CFR 1910.134.

Opening carcasses in the field is **not** recommended as this may increase the risk of disease transmission and decrease the diagnostic value of the carcass. Consult DOI health and safety officers and your respective wildlife health office for more guidance if this activity is necessary.

Designated protective measures should be applied for at least 30 days after the date of the last detection of HPAI avian influenza in wild birds within the North American flyways where field work and/or response activities are being conducted.

IV. Vaccination, anti-viral medications, and medical monitoring

It is recommended that DOI personnel should obtain the seasonal influenza vaccine. Follow the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) annual recommendations for the prevention and control of influenza with vaccines, which include information on the available vaccine products, timing of vaccination, and vaccination of individuals who could have complications from receiving the vaccine. The annual ACIP recommendations can be found on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) [website](#).

Vaccination for seasonal influenza viruses will reduce the possibility of an individual being infected with both avian and human influenza viruses at the same time. There is a small possibility that without vaccine protection dual infection could occur and result in viral re-assortment; re-assortment can result in new, previously unrecognized virus subtypes. During a threat or occurrence of an actual pandemic, CDC may develop guidance on anti-viral medication and emergency vaccine use based on population risk during an influenza pandemic.

V. Monitoring

CDC recommends that all persons with direct or close exposure to HPAI infected birds, HPAI infected flocks, or surfaces potentially contaminated with HPAI virus should be monitored for illness for 10 days after their last exposure. Monitoring should occur regardless of the health status of the bird (well-appearing, sick, or dead) and regardless of whether they were wearing appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) or not. The following instructions apply to all people with direct or close exposure to infected birds.

1. In some situations, active monitoring, in which the state/local health department reaches out to check on you, may be recommended.
2. For all situations, you should monitor yourselves daily for any of these signs and symptoms for 10 days:
 - Fever (Temperature of 100°F [37.8°C] or greater) or feeling feverish/chills (fever may not always be present).
 - Cough

- Sore throat
 - Difficulty breathing/Shortness of breath
 - Headaches
 - Runny or stuffy nose
 - Muscle or body aches
 - Diarrhea (less common)
3. If symptoms occur, contact your state/local health department as well as the respective bureau/office safety manager or Office of Public Health immediately. If you do not know how to contact your state/local health department, the Office of Safety and Health or Office of Public Health can assist.
 4. Your health department will give you further assistance and may recommend testing. Testing consists of a sample from a nose or throat swab.
 5. Stay home and limit contact with others as much as possible and do not handle live birds until the results of testing are known. While at home, ill persons should practice good cough and hand hygiene to lower the risk of transmission of virus to others.
 6. If you are sick, a doctor might prescribe an antiviral medication, which you should start immediately.
 7. In any emergency situation, seek medical attention immediately.
 8. For further information on influenza, visit the [CDC](#) website.

DOI Health and Safety, Wildlife Health Office, and Public Health Office Contacts

DOI Office of Safety and Health:

- Phone: 303-570-7110
- Email: michael_quinn@ios.doi.gov
- SharePoint site: [DOI Occupational Safety and Health Home](#)

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

- *JAO Safety Operations:*
 - Email: fws_safety&health@fws.gov
 - SharePoint site: [JAO Safety Operations](#)
- *Wildlife Health Office:*
 - Phone: 970-278-7543
 - Email: darby_murphy@fws.gov or samantha_gibbs@fws.gov
 - SharePoint site: [NWRS Wildlife Health office - Home](#)

National Park Service

- *Office of Occupational Safety and Health:*
 - Email: risk_management@nps.gov
 - SharePoint site: [NPS Occupational Safety and Health](#)
- *Office of Public Health:*
 - Phone: 202-538-5681
 - Email: publichealthprogram@nps.gov
 - SharePoint site: [Avian Influenza](#)
- *Wildlife Health Office:*
 - Email: npsdiagnostics@nps.gov
 - SharePoint site: [Health/Disease](#)

U.S. Geological Service

- *Health and Safety Office:*
 - Email: gs-oa_safety_ih@usgs.gov
 - SharePoint site: [Safety and Health Homepage](#)

Appendix 1. North American Administrative Flyways Map

