

PANDEMIC VIRUS PREPAREDNESS PLAN



**Contingency Plan for
Mitigating the Spread of
Pandemic Virus**

MARCH, 2020

PLAN OBJECTIVES

In response to the threat of a pandemic virus, the City of Crystal City (the “City”) has prepared this plan to meet the following objectives:

1. Establish departmental service continuity plans in the event of pandemic virus in order to insure delivery of basic City services.
2. Mitigate the spread of pandemic virus among employees.
3. Assist employees and their families in managing personal and/or family illnesses during a pandemic virus outbreak.

The KEY priority will be ensuring that essential City operations continue. Each department must develop a list of service priorities and then develop plans for meeting those priorities.

Managing the pandemic—focusing on continuity of operations with considerable loss of staff, depleted resources, a struggling economy, and a nervous public—will be a considerable challenge. Planning increases the likelihood that the City will be able to continue service operations during a global health crisis.

ASSUMPTIONS

A pandemic virus is unlike any crisis the City has encountered. No one can predict when it might arrive, where it might strike, how long it might last, and how serious its impacts might be. Caution requires that the City plan for a worst-case scenario. Accordingly, the City’s Pandemic Virus Preparedness Plan is based on the following assumptions:

1. As many as 30 to 40 percent of the City’s employees could become ill at the pandemic’s peak; another 5 percent may refuse to report to work, either because they fear becoming ill or because they are caring for afflicted family members.
2. The government will not be able to perform all functions and provide all services at full capacity throughout the pandemic.
3. Any City office may be closed due to staffing shortages or community quarantine.

PREVENTING VIRUS SPREAD AT WORKSITE

Promoting respiratory hygiene/cough etiquette: The City of Crystal City will promote hygiene through a variety of methods to help reduce the spread of the virus at the worksite. Though respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette are simple concepts, during a pandemic they become a vital defense to a potentially dangerous outbreak.

Since indirect transmission (e.g. from hand-to-hand, or hand to contaminated object and then contaminated object to hand) is the main way in which a respiratory virus is passed from person to person, the City reiterates the need for routine and frequent hand washing. Washing with anti-bacterial hand soap for twenty (20) seconds, hand sanitizer lotion, alcohol or other antiseptic-based hand wash products eliminates the virus. It is important to wash hands even if protective gloves have been worn. ***Gloves are not a substitute for hand washing.***

If available, hand sanitizer lotion and tissues will be provided at each work site for employees to enhance proper cough and hygiene etiquette. If available and necessary, masks will be provided to all employees in the event of an outbreak.

If masks are provided, the masks will be placed in each department such that they are readily available to staff. Even with the mask, employees should cover their mouth when coughing or sneezing and wash/sanitize their hands immediately thereafter. Additionally, all employees should avoid/reduce close contact with the public or other employees. The telephone or e-mail should be used to communicate whenever possible.

The City may also:

1. Disseminate information on the virus and how it is spread.
2. Disseminate information to employees on proper hygiene methods and other behavior activities and/or restrictions that will reduce the risk of spreading the virus among the workforce.
3. Post educational materials to remind employees of proper cough etiquette, hand washing, and other behaviors that will reduce the risk of infection.
4. Provide information to employees to assist them in protecting themselves and their families during a pandemic.

EMPLOYEES EXPOSED OR SUSPECTED OF EXPOSURE

Employees should be conscious of their own health; those who experience any pandemic like symptoms should notify their immediate supervisor and stay home. If symptoms begin at work, employees should notify their immediate supervisor of the potential exposure and go home. Sick leave resulting from pandemic episodes will be processed as per the Pandemic Sick Leave (PSL) Policy.

GUIDELINES TO MODIFY FREQUENCY AND TYPE OF FACE-TO-FACE CONTACT

Face-to-Face: In face-to-face meetings, individuals should limit contact. Participants should practice staying about six (6) feet apart.

Hand-Shaking: Employees should stop shaking hands if there is a pandemic virus outbreak to help reduce the spread of the disease.

Meetings: Employees should limit attendance at meetings. Meetings should be suspended when the same information can be obtained with a conference call, e-mail, or through chat groups over the internet. If a face-to-face meeting is necessary, following the rules may help ensure that transmission of the virus is limited:

1. The room should be cleaned and disinfected using good housekeeping techniques such as disinfecting the table, chairs, phones, and other places that one might be expected to touch.
2. Prop the door open (when doing so would not breach security) to keep employees and the public from touching the doorknob.
3. Spread out as much as possible and avoid hand shaking.
4. Minimize the length of meetings.
5. Meet in large rooms.
6. Require all employees to wash their hands after leaving meetings.
7. Clean the room after each use.

Increase Social Distancing: Social distancing means minimizing human-to human contact in peak phases of pandemic virus. Contacts are those persons who have had close (three feet or less) physical or confined airspace contact with an infected person within four days of that person developing symptoms. These are likely to include family members and/or other living companions, workmates (if in confined airspace environments) and possibly recreational companions.

The City may cancel or postpone all City sponsored meetings/events and/or close public buildings during a virus pandemic.

The City will encourage the use of technology to facilitate social distancing by using communications networks, remote access and web access to maintain distance among employees and between employees and citizens whenever possible.

INFECTION CONTROL SUPPLIES

Hand-hygiene products, tissues, disposal receptacles: The City will identify the products or supplies needed, the sources from which to obtain them, and maintain an inventory of those items, such as hand sanitizer, tissue paper, masks, and other personal protective equipment items for use by employees in their work area, if such supplies are available.. Any indication of an increased threat level may result in an automatic audit and review of inventory levels.

Availability of medical consultation and advice: The City will use a combination of sources for medical consultation and advice, including the Center for Disease Control (CDC), web based and information formats, and the Jefferson County Health Department. An increase in the threat alert level will trigger a review to determine if medical consultation is necessary.

ADMINISTRATION AND HUMAN RESOURCES

Trigger Events: The following events will be considered “trigger events” for implementation of all or portions of this plan:

1. The United States Federal Government through their official agencies issues a pandemic or emergency declaration for the United States, and/or
2. The State of Missouri issues a pandemic or emergency declaration for the State, and/or
3. The Jefferson County Health Department(s) issues a directive to implement a Response plan, and/or
4. Excessive employee absenteeism occurs that results in the City being in jeopardy of experiencing a pandemic related operations emergency, and/or
5. There is confirmation of large-scale employee exposure to pandemic virus pathogens.

Once a pandemic virus crisis is imminent or has occurred, the Mayor/City Administrator (or their designee) will activate the City of Crystal City Pandemic Virus Plan.

Pandemic Virus Crisis Assessment: Upon notification of a pandemic virus crisis, the Pandemic Leadership Team (Mayor, City Administrator and Department Heads) will meet to:

1. Make an initial risk determination to define the extent of the crisis and determine what portions of the program need to be implemented based on that analysis.
2. Continually assess the severity of the crisis, the efficacy of the City's response, and determine if changes are necessitated. If members are unable to physically meet due to governmental limitations on travel or quarantine, meetings will be held by conference call.
3. Make a determination regarding the cancellation of public meetings.

Pandemic Sick Leave (PSL): During a declared pandemic, the following sick leave policy will be used for all pandemic related absences, unless otherwise modified by State or Federal

1. To be eligible for Pandemic Sick Leave (PSL), an employee must have completed at least **thirty (30) days** of continuous employment prior to the request for Pandemic Sick Leave.
2. The first **ten (10) days** in which an employee takes PSL, the employee must use any accrued paid leave (vacation leave, personal, sick, etc.). Should the employee not have any accrued paid leave the PSL may be unpaid.
3. All eligible regular, full-time employees will be provided up to **fourteen (14) PSL days** **AFTER** the first ten (10) days of requested leave. PSL shall be paid at the same rate as the employee's regular rate.
4. An employee becomes eligible for PSL when one of the following occurs:
 - The employee is subject to a Federal, State, or local quarantine or isolation order related to the pandemic;
 - The employee has been advised by a health care provider to self-quarantine due to concerns related to the pandemic;
 - The employee is experiencing symptoms of the pandemic virus and is seeking a medical diagnosis;
 - The employee is caring for an individual who is subject to a quarantine or isolation order or advised to self-quarantine by a health care provider;
 - The employee is caring for a child whose school or care provider is closed or unavailable due to the pandemic; and
 - The employee is experiencing any other condition substantially similar to the pandemic virus, as specified by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC).
5. PSL days will be treated the same as a non-PSL sick day for purposes of pay and leave accrual.

Return to work after illness: Before returning to work, an employee must provide a release from the treating physician stating that the employee is not contagious and is otherwise medically able to safely return to work. If the employee fails to provide such a statement upon return, the employee's immediate supervisor must (1) notify the employee that he/she will not be allowed to work without the return-to-work authorization and (2) inform the employee that he/she must leave the worksite immediately. If the employee is absent due to school or childcare closure or precautions, a release form is not required.

Travel restrictions: During a declared pandemic virus outbreak, the following travel policy will be instituted:

1. Upon the announcement by the Governor or other authorized public health official that the State of Missouri is subject to a pandemic virus outbreak or emergency, all work related travel will immediately be suspended.
2. The City Administrator has the authority to suspend/cancel or ban all leave requests, including: vacation, personal time off, compensation time and sick leave.
3. If travel is imminent and refunds cannot or will not be made, the City Administrator may decide to allow the employee to take the prearranged trip if the employee presents a doctor's statement indicating that he/she does not have the pandemic virus.
4. If an employee lives in a community that has been declared a pandemic zone by its local government, health department or other responsible entity, or is otherwise quarantined due to such an outbreak, the employee shall notify his/her department head and City Administrator of the announcement as soon as practical. The affected employee should refrain from travel to and from the workplace until the quarantine is lifted and the employee presents a physician's statement authorizing the return to work.

TELECOMMUTING AND FLEXIBLE WORK SCHEDULES

1. Participation in telecommuting during a pandemic may be mutually agreed upon by the employee and the City Administrator. The employee's position must be identified as telecommuting capable. The City may, however, require an employee to telecommute, where practical, to reduce the risk of spreading the virus at the worksite. This will be determined on a case by case basis as work site conditions and the health status of an employee warrant.
2. Telecommuters may cease their participation in the program at any time, unless they are required to work in the program due to illness or other worksite separation needs. These will be determined by the City Administrator. The City Administrator may cancel the agreement at any time when it is determined that continuation would not be productive, efficient or in the best interest of the City.
3. Telecommuters will be compensated as if duties were being performed at the in-City work location. Overtime may not be worked unless authorized in advance by the City Administrator.
4. Telecommuters are subject to the same rules and procedures as other employees and are covered by worker's compensation when performing official work duties at the alternate work site.
5. Telecommuters must verify in writing that their home provides workspace that is free of safety and fire hazards and agree that the City will be held harmless against any and all claims, excluding worker's compensation claims that result from working at a home office.
6. No employee engaged in telecommuting may conduct face-to-face business from home.
7. The City of Crystal City is not required to provide equipment for telecommuting; however, the City may provide all or part of the equipment necessary for completing work assignments, including the installation and maintenance of City-owned equipment at the employee's home. The City will not cover the cost of repair or maintenance of the

telecommuter's personal equipment. Equipment needs will be determined by the department's need during the pandemic event on a case-by-case basis.

8. The City will establish security controls and conditions for use of City equipment. The telecommuting employee must use approved safeguards to protect City equipment and supplies. All official City records, files and documents must be protected from unauthorized disclosure or damage and returned safely to the office at the conclusion of the telecommuting assignment.
9. Employees on probation or on a performance improvement plan are not eligible for telecommuting. Exceptions may be made if warranted due to the pandemic virus crisis.

Procedures: Employees interested in participating in the telecommuting program during a pandemic crisis should contact their City Administrator to discuss the feasibility of telecommuting. They must hold a position that the City approves for telecommuting.

If the employee and the position are deemed suitable for telecommuting, a Telecommuting Agreement must be signed by the telecommuter, the department director and the City Administrator prior to beginning the program. Exceptions may be made to facilitate emergency situations under the pandemic event as determined by the City Administrator.

FLEXIBLE WORK SCHEDULE

Work schedules will be determined by the City Administrator. Once schedules are defined and communicated to employees, an employee who requests a deviation to that schedule must do so in writing to the City Administrator for approval. The City Administrator will determine an appropriate schedule for an employee to best fit the needs of the department during a pandemic virus event. The City Administrator may require employees to change work schedules in order to reduce the risk of the pandemic virus spreading at the work site. The City Administrator may develop alternative work schedules for one or more employees with approval of the City Administrator.

EMERGENCY COMMUNICATION PLAN – PANDEMIC VIRUS

To ensure effective emergency communications, the City will ensure the following activities:

1. Set-up a system to track pandemic virus-related absences.
2. Provide a notification for supervisors listing absent employees.

DEVELOPMENT AND DISSEMINATION OF MATERIALS

Pandemic fundamentals: The City may do any of the following to keep employees up to date on the pandemic:

1. Relay information to employees through the e-mail, text, and mailings to employees at their homes, if requested.
2. Develop and distribute flyers containing accurate and up-to-date information about the situation.
3. Provide a central bulletin board in City facilities to post information.