

Public Employer Health Emergency Plan for Town of Ashford

3/10/2021

This plan has been developed in accordance with NYS legislation S8617B/A10832.

Promulgation

This plan has been developed in accordance with the amended New York State Labor Law section 27-c and New York State Education Law paragraphs k and l of subdivision 2 of section 2801-a (as amended by section 1 of part B of chapter 56 of the laws of 2016), as applicable.

This plan has been developed with the input of Teamsters Local#625, as required by the amended New York State Labor Law.

No content of this plan is intended to impede, infringe, diminish, or impair the rights of us or our valued employees under any law, rule, regulation, or collectively negotiated agreement, or the rights and benefits which accrue to employees through collective bargaining agreements, or otherwise diminish the integrity of the existing collective bargaining relationship.

This plan has been approved in accordance with requirements applicable to the agency, jurisdiction, authority, or district, as represented by the signature of the authorized individual below.

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As the authorized official of the Town of Ashford, I hereby attest that this plan has been developed, approved, and placed in full effect in accordance with S8617B/A10832 which amends New York State Labor Law section 27-c and New York State Education Law paragraphs k and l of subdivision 2 of section 2801-a (as amended by section 1 of part B of chapter 56 of the laws of 2016), as applicable, to address public health emergency planning requirements.

Signed on this day: 3/10/2021

By: John A. Pfeffer

Title: Town Supervisor

Signature: _____

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John A. Pfeffer', is written over a horizontal line.

Record of Changes

Date of Change	Description of Change	Implemented by

Table of Contents

Promulgation	1
Record of Changes	2
Purpose, Scope, Situation Overview, and Assumptions	4
Purpose	4
Scope	4
Situation Overview	4
Planning Assumptions	4
Concept of Operations	5
Mission Essential Functions	5
Essential Positions	6
Reducing Risk Through Remote Work and Staggered Shifts	7
Remote Work Protocols	7
Staggered Shifts	8
Personal Protective Equipment	8
Staff Exposures, Cleaning, and Disinfection	9
Staff Exposures	9
Cleaning and Disinfecting	10
Employee and Contractor Leave	11
Documentation of Work Hours and Locations	11
Housing for Essential Employees	11

Purpose, Scope, Situation Overview, and Assumptions

Purpose

This plan has been developed in accordance with the amended New York State Labor Law section 27-c (as amended by section 1 of part B of chapter 56 of the laws of 2016), as applicable. These laws were amended by the passing of legislation S8617B/A10832 signed by the Governor of New York State on September 7, 2020, requires public employers to adopt a plan for operations in the event of a declared public health emergency involving a communicable disease. The plan includes the identification of essential positions, facilitation of remote work for non-essential positions, provision of personal protective equipment, and protocols for supporting contact tracing.

Scope

This plan was developed exclusively for and is applicable to the Town of Ashford. This plan is pertinent to a declared public health emergency in the State of New York which may impact our operations; and it is in the interest of the safety of our employees and contractors, and the continuity of our operations that we have promulgated this plan. The Town retains the discretion to determine which, if any, aspects of this plan will be implemented based on the particular circumstances of any public health emergency.

Situation Overview

On March 11, 2020 the World Health Organization declared a pandemic for the novel coronavirus which causes the COVID-19 severe acute respiratory syndrome. This plan has been developed in accordance with amended laws to support continued resilience for a continuation of the spread of this disease or for other infectious diseases which may emerge and cause a declaration of a public health emergency.

The health and safety of our employees and contractors is crucial to maintaining our mission essential operations. We encourage all employees and contractors to use [CDC Guidance for Keeping Workplaces, Schools, Homes, and Commercial Establishments Safe](#). The fundamentals of reducing the spread of infection include:

- Using hand sanitizer and washing hands with soap and water frequently, including:
 - After using the restroom
 - After returning from a public outing
 - After touching/disposing of garbage
 - After using public computers, touching public tables, and countertops, etc.
- Practice social distancing when possible
- If you are feeling ill or have a fever, notify your supervisor immediately and go home
- If you start to experience coughing or sneezing, step away from people and food, cough or sneeze into the crook of your arm or a tissue, the latter of which should be disposed of immediately
- Clean and disinfect workstations at the beginning, middle, and end of each shift
- Other guidance which may be published by the CDC, the State Department of Health, or County health officials.

Planning Assumptions

This plan was developed based on information, best practices, and guidance available as of the date of publication. The plan was developed to largely reflect the circumstances of the current Coronavirus pandemic but may also be applicable to other infectious disease outbreaks.

The following assumptions have been made in the development of this plan:

- The health and safety of our employees and contractors, and their families, is of utmost importance
- The circumstances of a public health emergency may directly impact our own operations.
- Impacts of a public health emergency will take time for us to respond to, with appropriate safety measures put into place and adjustments made to operations to maximize safety
- The public and our constituency expects us to maintain a level of mission essential operations
- Resource support from other jurisdictions may be limited based upon the level of impact the public health emergency has upon them
- Supply chains, particularly those for personal protective equipment (PPE) and cleaning supplies, may be heavily impacted, resulting in considerable delays in procurement
- The operations of other entities, including the private sector (vendors, contractors, etc.), non-profit organizations, and other governmental agencies and services may also be impacted due to the public health emergency, causing delays or other disruptions in their services
- Emergency measures and operational changes may need to be adjusted based upon the specific circumstances and impacts of the public health emergency, as well as guidance and direction from public health officials and the governor
- Per S8617B/A10832, 'essential employee' is defined as a public employee or contractor that is required to be physically present at a work site to perform their job
- Per S8617B/A10832, 'non-essential employee' is defined as a public employee or contractor that is not required to be physically present at a work site to perform their job

Concept of Operations

The Supervisor of the Town of Ashford, their designee, or their successor holds the authority to execute and direct the implementation of this plan. Implementation, monitoring of operations, and adjustments to plan implementation may be supported by additional personnel, at the discretion of the Ashford Supervisor.

Upon the determination of implementing this plan, all employees and contractors of the Town of Ashford shall be notified by telephone, text and email, with details provided as possible and necessary, with additional information and updates provided on a regular basis. Highway, Water, Code Enforcement, Justice Court, Dog Control, Assessor, Constables, and others as needed, will be notified of pertinent operational changes by way of telephone, text, and email. Other interested parties, such as vendors, will be notified by phone and/or email as necessary. The Town Supervisor, or their designee, or their successor will maintain communications with the public and constituents as needed throughout the implementation of this plan.

The Supervisor of the Town of Ashford, their designee, or their successor will maintain awareness of information, direction, and guidance from public health officials and the Governor's office, directing the implementation of changes as necessary.

Upon resolution of the public health emergency, the Supervisor of the Town of Ashford, their designee, or their successor will direct the resumption of normal operations or operations with modifications as necessary.

Mission Essential Functions

When confronting events that disrupt normal operations, the Town of Ashford is committed to ensuring that essential functions will be continued even under the most challenging circumstances.

Essential functions are those functions that enable an organization to:

1. Maintain the safety of employees, contractors, and our constituency
2. Provide vital services
3. Provide services required by law
4. Sustain quality operations
5. Uphold the core values of the Town of Ashford

The Town of Ashford has identified as critical only those priority functions that are required or are necessary to provide vital services. During activation of this plan, all other activities may be suspended to enable the organization to concentrate on providing the critical functions and building the internal capabilities necessary to increase and eventually restore operations. Appropriate communications with employees, contractors, our constituents, and other stakeholders will be an ongoing priority.

Essential functions are prioritized according to:

- The time criticality of each essential function
- Interdependency of a one function to others
- The recovery sequence of essential functions and their vital processes

Priority 1 identifies the most essential of functions, with priority 4 identifying functions that are essential, but least among them.

The mission essential functions for the Town of Ashford have been identified as:

Essential Function	Description	Priority
Information Technology	Provides all hardware and software for the town. Maintains the town's network and phone system.	1
Constabulary	Provides for interfacing with other LEO's, provides for public safety, provides duties as described in Town of Ashford Constabulary Law, provide court security	1
Highway Department	Maintains roadways and clears roadways of obstructions such as snow, ice, flood damage, tree damage.	1
Supervisors Bookkeeper	Maintains town budget, payroll, vendor payments, vouchers, and all other financial matters.	1
Town Clerk	Maintains town records, receives tax and water district payments, Maintains licensing.	1
Town Justice	Provides arraignments, town court adjudications,	
Water Assessor	Meter reading, repairs to water system, water testing, chlorination	1
Code Enforcement	Building permits, code enforcement for ongoing construction	1

Essential Positions

Each essential function identified above requires certain positions on-site to effectively operate. The table below identifies the positions or titles that are essential to be staffed on-site for the continued operation of each

essential function. Note that while some functions and associated personnel may be essential, some of these can be conducted remotely and do not need to be identified in this section.

Essential Function	Essential Positions/Titles	Justification for Each
Information Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contracted IT workers 	Maintains essential IT connectivity.
Constabulary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 Constables 	Onsite as needed for court matters, arraignments, court security
Highway Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highway Superintendent 4 MEO's Sidewalk Plow operator 	Staffed in separate building, not accessible by public. Required to access highway department building for operation, repair, maintenance of highway equipment. Sidewalk plow to be stored offsite as needed.
Water Operators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 water operators 	
Supervisors Bookkeeper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 bookkeeper 	Staffed in the town hall, needs access to files and network. Some functions can be done at home.
Town Clerk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Town Clerk 	Can meet on-site via appointment, can social distance for transactions.
Code Enforcement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Code Enforcement Officer 	Can meet on-site via appointment, can social distance for transactions, can perform inspections with appropriate PPE and social distancing.
Assessor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessor 	Can meet on-site via appointment, can social distance for transactions.

Reducing Risk Through Remote Work and Staggered Shifts

Through assigning certain staff to work remotely and by staggering work shifts, we can decrease crowding and density at work sites and on public transportation

Remote Work Protocols

Non-essential employees and contractors able to accomplish their functions remotely will be enabled to do so at the greatest extent possible. Working remotely requires:

1. Identification of staff who will work remotely
2. Approval and assignment of remote work
3. Equipping staff for remote work, which may include:
 - a. Internet capable laptop
 - b. Necessary peripherals
 - c. Access to VPN and/or secure network drives
 - d. Access to software and databases necessary to perform their duties
 - e. A solution for telephone communications
 - i. Note that phone lines may need to be forwarded to off-site staff

The Town of Ashford has no staff that need to work remotely.

Staggered Shifts

Implementing staggered shifts may be possible for personnel performing duties which are necessary to be performed on-site but perhaps less sensitive to being accomplished only within core business hours. As possible, management will identify opportunities for staff to work outside core business hours as a strategy of limiting exposure. Regardless of changes in start and end times of shifts, the Town of Ashford will ensure that employees are provided with their typical or contracted minimum work hours per week. Staggering shifts requires:

1. Identification of positions for which work hours will be staggered
2. Approval and assignment of changed work hours

Majority of shifts are already staggered, those that need to be will be identified based on the extent and nature of the ongoing pandemic. Work performed in the town hall is generally individual in nature.

Highway MEO's will stagger shifts and not share equipment. During identified emergencies, there are to be no group gathering for lunches or breaks. Given that we have appropriate space in the highway barns, meetings and other group events can take place using known social distancing and PPE protocols.

Personal Protective Equipment

The use of personal protective equipment (PPE) to reduce the spread of infectious disease is important to supporting the health and safety of our employees and contractors. PPE which may be needed can include:

- Masks
- Face shields
- Gloves
- Disposable gowns and aprons

Note that while cleaning supplies are not PPE, there is a related need for cleaning supplies used to sanitize surfaces, as well as hand soap and hand sanitizer. The Coronavirus pandemic demonstrated that supply chains were not able to keep up with increased demand for these products early in the pandemic. As such, we are including these supplies in this section as they are pertinent to protecting the health and safety of our employees and contractors.

Protocols for providing PPE include the following:

1. Identification of need for PPE based upon job duties and work location
2. Procurement of PPE
 - a. As specified in the amended law, public employers must be able to provide at least two pieces of each required type of PPE to each essential employee and contractor during any given work shift for at least six months
 - b. Public employers must be able to mitigate supply chain disruptions to meet this requirement
3. Storage of, access to, and monitoring of PPE stock
 - a. PPE must be stored in a manner which will prevent degradation
 - b. Employees and contractors must have immediate access to PPE in the event of an emergency
 - c. The supply of PPE must be monitored to ensure integrity and to track usage rates

The Town Supervisor will obtain and store PPE in the Town Hall and in the Highway Barn. The Town Supervisor will be responsible for monitoring and maintaining the stock of PPE. An 8 week stock of PPE will be maintained,

allowing for each employee to have access to reusable, washable PPE, appropriate for the declared emergency or pandemic.

Staff Exposures, Cleaning, and Disinfection

Staff Exposures

Staff exposures are organized under several categories based upon the type of exposure and presence of symptoms. Following CDC guidelines, we have established the following protocols:

- A. If employees or contractors are exposed to a known case of communicable disease that is the subject of the public health emergency (defined as a 'close contact' with someone who is confirmed infected, which is a prolonged presence within six feet with that person):
 1. Potentially exposed employees or contractors who do not have symptoms should remain at home or in a comparable setting and practice social distancing for the lesser of 14 days or other current CDC/public health guidance for the communicable disease in question.
 - a. As possible, these employees will be permitted to work remotely during this period of time if they are not ill.
 - b. The Town Supervisor is to be notified of all potentially exposed employees.
 - c. See the section titled Documentation of Work Hours and Locations for additional information on contact tracing
 2. CDC guidelines for COVID-19 provide that critical essential employees may be permitted to continue work following potential exposure, provided they remain symptom-free and additional precautions are taken to protect them, other employees and contractors, and our constituency/public.
 - a. Additional precautions will include the requirement of the subject employee or contractor, as well as others working in their proximity, to wear appropriate PPE at all times to limit the potential of transmission.
 - b. In-person interactions with the subject employee or contractor will be limited as much as possible.
 - c. Work areas in which the subject employee or contractor are present will be disinfected according to current CDC/public health protocol at least every hour, as practical. See the section on Cleaning and Disinfection for additional information on that subject.
 - d. If at any time they exhibit symptoms, refer to item B below.
 - e. The Town Supervisor, is the decision-maker in these circumstances and who is responsible for ensuring these protocols are followed
- B. If an employee or contractor exhibits symptoms of the communicable disease that is the subject of the public health emergency:
 1. Employees and contractors who exhibit symptoms in the workplace should be immediately separated from other employees, customers, and visitors. They should immediately be sent home with a recommendation to contact their physician.
 2. Employees and contractors who exhibit symptoms outside of work should notify their supervisor and stay home, with a recommendation to contact their physician.
 3. Employees should not return to work until they have met the criteria to discontinue home isolation per CDC/public health guidance and have consulted with a healthcare provider.

4. the Town of Ashford will not require sick employees to provide a negative test result for the disease in question or healthcare provider's note to validate their illness, qualify for sick leave, or return to work; unless there is a recommendation from the CDC/public health officials to do so.
 5. CDC criteria for COVID-19 provides that persons exhibiting symptoms may return to work if at least 24 hours have passed since the last instance of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications. If the disease in question is other than COVID-19, CDC and other public guidance shall be referenced.
 6. The Town Supervisor must be informed in these circumstances and is responsible for ensuring these protocols are followed
- C. If an employee or contractor has tested positive for the communicable disease that is the subject of the public health emergency:
1. Apply the steps identified in item B, above, as applicable.
 2. Areas occupied for prolonged periods of time by the subject employee or contractor will be closed off.
 - a. CDC guidance for COVID-19 indicates that a period of 24 hours is ideally given before cleaning, disinfecting, and reoccupation of those spaces will take place. If this time period is not possible, a period of as long as possible will be given. CDC/public health guidance for the disease in question will be followed.
 - b. Any common areas entered, surfaces touched, or equipment used shall be cleaned and disinfected immediately.
 - c. See the section on Cleaning and Disinfection for additional information on that subject.
 3. Identification of potential employee and contractor exposures will be conducted
 - a. If an employee or contractor is confirmed to have the disease in question, the Town Supervisor or their designee should inform all contacts of their possible exposure. Confidentiality shall be maintained as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
 - b. Apply the steps identified in item A, above, as applicable, for all potentially exposed personnel.
 4. The Town Supervisor must be notified in these circumstances and is responsible for ensuring these protocols are followed

We recognize there may be nuances or complexities associated with potential exposures, close contacts, symptomatic persons, and those testing positive. We will follow CDC/public health recommendations and requirements and coordinate with our local public health office for additional guidance and support as needed.

Cleaning and Disinfecting

CDC/public health guidelines will be followed for cleaning and disinfection of surfaces/areas. Present guidance for routine cleaning during a public health emergency includes:

1. As possible, employees and contractors will clean their own workspaces in the beginning, middle, and end of their shifts, at a minimum.
 - a. High traffic/high touch areas and areas which are accessible to the public/constituents will be disinfected at least hourly.
 - b. The Ashford Community Center Building Custodian is responsible for cleaning common areas, and the frequency of such

2. Staff tasked with cleaning and disinfecting areas will be issued and required to wear PPE appropriate to the task.
3. Soiled surfaces will be cleaned with soap and water before being disinfected.
4. Surfaces will be disinfected with products that meet EPA criteria for use against the virus in question and which are appropriate for that surface.
5. Staff will follow instructions of cleaning products to ensure safe and effective use of the products.

Employee and Contractor Leave

Public health emergencies are extenuating and unanticipated circumstances in which the Town of Ashford is committed to reducing the burden on our employees and contractors.

Employees may utilize any available Town provided leave to receive testing, treatment, isolate, or quarantine as a result of a communicable disease that is the subject of the public health emergency. The Town will also comply with any federal, state, and/or local laws relating to leaves of absences relating to the communicable disease and associated public health emergency. If an employee has no leave available, an employee will be granted an unpaid leave of absence for an amount of time deemed necessary by federal, state, and/or local public health officials to prevent the spread or contraction of such communicable disease in the workplace.

Documentation of Work Hours and Locations

In a public health emergency, it may be necessary to document work hours and locations of each employee and contractor to support contact tracing efforts. Identification of locations shall include on-site work, off-site visits. This information may be used by the Town of Ashford to support contact tracing within the organization and may be shared with local public health officials.

Work hours and locations are to be managed and determined by the appropriate head of each department.

Housing for Essential Employees

There are circumstances within a public health emergency when it may be prudent to have essential employees lodged in such a manner which will help prevent the spread of the subject communicable disease to protect these employees from potential exposures, thus helping to ensure their health and safety and the continuity of the Town of Ashford's essential operations.

If such a need arises, hotel rooms are expected to be the most viable option. If hotel rooms are for some reason deemed not practical or ideal, or if there are no hotel rooms available, the Town of Ashford will coordinate with the Cattaraugus County Office of Emergency Services to help identify and arrange for these housing needs.