

TURNER COUNTY PLANNED RESPONSE TO THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC FOR COUNTY EMPLOYEES

The new coronavirus, COVID-19, is not a flu but a pneumonia-like infection. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) believes at this time that symptoms may appear in as few as two days or as long as 14 days after exposure. The good news is that, except in rare situations, an employee diagnosed with the virus will have no significant long-term health care problems.

1. PLAN OBJECTIVES

- County's Primary Goal: Protect Employees and Citizens
 - Reduce the spread of disease among staff.
 - Protect people at higher risk for complications.
 - Maintain critical operations.
 - Minimize impact on our residents, customers and businesses.
 - Be proactive, rather than reactive, by taking small measures now to minimize risk.
 - **This plan will supersede all other County policies if the pandemic impacts TURNER County. This plan is subject to change as needed, when conditions change and as events play out.**

2. DETERMINING MITIGATION STRATEGY

- The County Manager in conjunction with the BOC and the Turner County Board of Health and the EMA Director, understanding numerous factors including epidemiology, community characteristics, healthcare capacity and public health capacity will consider the following Levels of Impact to County operations.
- Levels of Impact are as follows:
 - Level 1: No to Low Impact (preparedness phase)
 - Level 2: Minimal to Moderate Impact
 - Level 3: Substantial Impact
- Please note the Level of Impact for each topic area highlighted herein. It is important to note that the Level of Impact may change, as needed.

3. PROCESS FOR ACTIVATING THE COUNTY'S PLAN (Level 1, Level 2, Level 3)

- The County Manager with input from the EMA director will determine all Levels of Impact.
- Employees must immediately notify, by phone or email only, their supervisor/employer if they have experienced an exposure or received a presumed or confirmed diagnosis of coronavirus.
- Employees who have been medically diagnosed with the virus or who were quarantined must submit a physician's release to return to work.

If the employee was self-quarantined due to exposure, then the employee must be symptom free for fourteen days before returning to work.

- o Work with local health officials as needed to manage the pandemic.
- o Public safety employee
- o If public safety employee becomes symptomatic, public safety employee will need to remain isolated for 7 days from when the symptoms start OR 3 days after symptoms stop, whichever is longer. ALL CDC and State Health requirements to regulate this guideline.
- o Non-public safety employee
- o If non-public safety employee has come into contact with someone exposed and becomes symptomatic, non-public safety employee will need to remain isolated for 7 days from when the symptoms start OR 3 days after symptoms stop, whichever is longer. If non-public safety employee does not develop symptoms non-public safety employee will be cleared after 14 days.
- o Non-public safety employee
- o If non-public safety employee has come into contact with a confirmed positive case, non-public safety employee needs to self-quarantine for 14 days.
- o If, within those 14 days, non-public safety employee becomes symptomatic, non-public safety employee will need to remain isolated for 7 days from when the symptoms start OR 3 days after symptoms stop, whichever is longer.
- o If non-public safety employee does not develop symptoms non-public safety employee will be cleared after 14 days.

4. WORKFORCE INVOLVEMENT (Level 1)

- o Ensure that every person and department deemed essential has reviewed the County's Planned Response plan and is ready to act immediately.
- o Every department must test the plan to help detect gaps or problems that need attention by utilizing "what if" scenarios prior to shut down or events.
- o Every employee should be familiar with this plan and be prepared to act immediately if an employee illness or event occurs.
- o Every employee should know and understand the role they will play if an event occurs.
- o Employees who may be classified initially as non-essential could become essential in the event of major outbreaks and/or quarantine of essential employees. Be prepared!

5. WORKPLACE EXPOSURE (Level 1)

- Staff with increased risk includes older employees, those with existing serious health conditions and those involved in waste management and public safety, such as EMS and Police. Public Safety employees should immediately consider showering and changing clothing at the end of each shift (before going home) to minimize risk of exposure to family members.
 - o No handshaking.

- o Minimize face-to-face contact.
- o Minimize meetings with large numbers of people.
- o Use email, phones and teleconferencing/webinars during a pandemic, rather than face-to-face contact.
- o Effectively handle materials and customers/patients that could be contaminated.
- o Wash hands often and practice other sanitary means to prevent spread of germs.
- o If an employee is diagnosed/confirmed positive with the virus, the workplace should be shut down and disinfected before allowing other employees to return.

6. KEY BUSINESS FUNCTIONS (Level 2, Level 3)

- If a government shutdown becomes necessary, essential employees are defined as those who will be required to work from home or in their offices/vehicles so that critical government services can still be provided. Nonessential departments and employees are defined as those non-critical during a pandemic. The chart below shows the County’s plan of action if a pandemic occurs.
- Inventory equipment that remote workers will be utilizing.
- All employees are subject to be called back to work during a government shutdown, depending on the need and circumstances.
- Impact on County services.
 - o Department Managers should be prepared to backfill positions if employees are absent.
 - o Communicate and practice various scenarios with staff to ensure understanding.
 - o Ensure lines of communication are available for all critical staff and departments.

County Department	Essential - Front Line	Essential - As Needed	Essential - Work from Home	Non-Essential
County Administration		Manager/County Clerk		
Tax & Tag		Tax Commissioner	Deputy	All other Staff
Voter Registration				All Staff
Tax Assessor		Designated Staff		All other Staff
Fire/EMA	All Staff		Clerk/Typist	
Accounts Payable/Receivable		Staff-Limited/No public contact		All other Staff
Recreation		Director/Staff		
Courts				All Staff
County	All Staff			

Sheriff's Office				
County Jail	Jail Operations Staff		Administrative Personnel	
911	Operations Staff			
Public Works		Director	Administrative Personnel	
Vehicle Maintenance		Staff-Limited/No public Contact		
EMS	All Staff		Administrative Personnel	

7. WORKPLACE POLICIES

- The County Manager will coordinate the following activities:
 - o Presumed or Confirmed Cases of coronavirus in employee or immediate family member - If a medical official determines that an employee is presumed or confirmed to have the virus, then the County will pay the employee as stated in the COVID 19 Policy based on medical professional directives.
 - On the job Exposure - The County will cover the percentage of normal pay that worker's comp doesn't cover, up to the maximum three weeks.
 - Exposure Event - Quarantine of employee by medical staff - The County will pay employee up to 160 hours at their current hourly rate. Based on the Advanced Leave wording in the COVID 19 Policy
 - o County meetings, special events and gatherings will be cancelled/rescheduled upon designation of specific impact level.
 - o If an employee chooses to personally travel to a high-risk country and is quarantined upon return to the US, the County will not pay the employee during this timeframe. The employee would have the ability to utilize any earned leave (sick, vacation, etc.) while quarantined. The County reserves the right to place the employee in voluntary quarantine under these conditions.

8. INFECTION CONTROL MEASURES (Level 1)

- o Place posters that encourage staying home when sick, cough and sneeze etiquette, and hand hygiene at the entrance to your workplace and in high visibility locations.
- o Provide soap, water, and alcohol-based hand rubs in multiple locations and routinely refill.
- o Employees should clean hands often by washing for at least 20 seconds using soap and water, or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water is not available.
- o Supply tissues and no-touch waste bins.

- o Ask employees to stay home when sick.
- o Employees should routinely clean commonly touched surfaces and sanitize all areas of their workspace daily.

9. ENCOURAGE SOCIAL DISTANCING (Level 2, Level 3)

- Social distancing is an intervention to increase the physical distance between people and reduce the spread of disease.
- Implement policies and procedures for critical employees to work remotely.
- The County Manager can allow telecommuting, if necessary.
- The County Manager can permit flexible work hours (e.g. staggered shifts), if possible.
- Ensure that we have the technology and infrastructure needed to support multiple employees working from home.
- Establish limited access to county facilities to minimize risk of exposure to staff and contamination of areas.
- Place appropriate signage at all entrances and an information monitor at the designated entrance for customers, visitors, etc.
- Place a locked drop-box at the designated entrance to the building, where documents and payments can be submitted safely, without the need to interact directly with staff.
- Provide email and telephone number on signage for assistance to customers utilizing the drop box.
- Establish employee business travel and training restrictions to minimize risk.

10. SEPARATE SICK EMPLOYEES (Level 1)

- Employees who report to work having a fever or flu-like symptoms upon arrival, or who become sick during the workday, should be separated from others and immediately sent home. Ensure that:
 - o All managers and employees are aware of County policies and the expectation that sick employees stay home.
 - o Employees should utilize the Telemedicine Line or call the Health Department at 229-567-3947 or the Coronavirus Hotline at 844-442-2681 if they experience fever or flu-like symptoms.
 - o Do NOT go directly to the hospital or urgent care unless directed by, the Health Department, or Licensed Doctor. This will minimize the risk of exposure with all concerned parties. If the employee has other health conditions or is otherwise considered high risk, that information must be disclosed immediately to a physician, the Health Department and/or licensed medical professional during the call.

11. ANTICIPATE ABSENTEEISM (Level 1, Level 2, Level 3)

- Prepare for employee absences resulting from personal illness, caring for ill family members, and **dismissal** of early childhood programs and K-12 schools. Be ready to adapt your business practices to maintain critical operations.
 - o Cross-train employees to carry out critical functions so the workplace can operate when essential staff are out.
 - o Prepare to temporarily suspend non-essential operations, if necessary.

- o Be prepared to differentiate between critical and non-critical services if staff shortages occur due to illnesses or quarantines.
- o Utilize “what-if” scenarios with essential and non-essential staff to prepare.

12. PERSONAL PREPAREDNESS (Level 1)

- Our government is only as healthy as our employees. Employees should immediately take standard steps to prepare for staying at home, if needed:
 - o Store a supply of water and food.
 - o Make sure to have enough prescription drugs at home.
 - o Keep non-prescription drugs and other health supplies on hand. This includes pain relievers, stomach remedies, cough and cold aides, fluids with electrolytes, and vitamins.
 - o Get copies of electronic health records from the doctor, hospital, or pharmacy.
 - o Talk with family members and loved ones about how they would like to be cared for if they got sick, and what's needed to care for them at home.
 - o Try to minimize being in large groups, events and traveling by plane - any direct contact with others you can reasonably avoid will help.

13. COMMUNICATION PROTOCOL (Level 1, Level 2, Level 3)

- o Keep workforce informed about the outbreak.
- o Provide positive, factual information which will help calm and encourage staff.
- o Establish clear lines of communication between essential staff members and departments to ensure critical services can be provided.
- o Provide timely and factual press releases as needed to keep community informed.
- o Media contact will not include personal interviews, in order to maintain social distancing.

