

# Public Employer Health Emergency Plan for the

## **TOWN OF ANCRAM**

April 1, 2021

This plan has been developed in accordance with New York State and CDC

Record of Changes

**Date of Change: April 1, 2021**

# Plan Implementation Implemented by the Town of Ancram

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## 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 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. 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 Ancram. 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.

### 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,
  - After using the restroom
  - After returning from a public outing
  - After touching/dispersing 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. 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 Town Supervisor of the Town of Ancram, 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 Town Supervisor.

Upon the determination of implementing this plan, all employees and contractors of Town of Ancram shall be notified by town-wide email, with details provided as possible and necessary, with additional information and updates provided on a regular basis. Employees and contractors will be notified of pertinent operational changes by way of e-mail. Other interested parties, such as vendors, will be notified by phone and/or email as necessary. The Town Supervisor will maintain communications with the public and constituents as needed throughout the implementation of this plan.

The Town Supervisor of the Town of Ancram, 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 Town Supervisor of the Town of Ancram, 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, Town of Ancram 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 Ancram.

The Town of Ancram 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 Town of Ancram have been identified as:

Essential Function	Description	Priority
Town Garage	To maintain the operations pertaining to the roads and equipment needed for those duties.	1
Town Hall	While Town Hall may be closed to the public, Town officials will maintain operational town government and all of its services by phone, email, virtual meetings and appointments	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.

Elected Officials	• Town Board	To provide a quorum so that decisions can be made to keep the Government functioning, virtual meetings may be scheduled.
Chief Fiscal/Operating Officer	• Town Supervisor	Keep operating a functioning government and communicate all details of the plan as they evolve
Clerk	• Town Clerk & Tax Collector	Oversee all functions of the clerk's duties

Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assessor</li> </ul>	Maintain duties of the assessor's office
Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Zoning Enforcement Officer/building Inspector &amp; Clerk</li> </ul>	Fulfill the operations of the building inspector and zoning officer.
Appointed Boards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Planning Board, ZBA &amp; Clerk</li> </ul>	Fulfill the operations of these Boards; virtual meetings if necessary.
Town Court	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Town Justices &amp; Court Clerk</li> </ul>	Maintain the legal department and the court operations

## 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
- \* NOTE: phone lines may need to be forwarded to off-site staff

The Town Supervisor will designate which staff can work from a remote location and oversee the distribution of computers etc. as needed. Hours of operation open to the public may be altered for the safety of all parties. Protective actions may include but are not limited to, occupancy restrictions, protective barriers and increased conduct of business by phone or internet. Protective actions will be taken in accordance with NY State, CDC and Columbia County guidelines.

### 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, Town of Ancram 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 should be in accordance with the Town Supervisor.

## **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
- Hand sanitizer
- Hand soap

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 the duration of the crisis.
  - 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.
  - d. Supplies will be handled by the Town Clerk.

## **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 if they are not ill.
    - b. The town Supervisor will be notified and will be responsible for monitoring the person.
  - 2. CDC guidelines for COVID-19 provide that critical essential employees may be permitted to continue to 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 always wear appropriate PPE 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 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 responsible for making these decisions.

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. Town of Ancram will 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 who is responsible that these protocols be followed.

B. 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 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.

Any common areas entered, surfaces touched, or equipment used shall be cleaned and disinfected immediately.

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, their designee should inform all contacts of their possible exposure. Confidentiality shall be maintained as required by law.
  - b. Apply the steps identified in item A, above, as applicable, for all potentially exposed personnel. 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.
  - c. The Town Supervisor is responsible for enforcing these protocols.

## **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. The cleaning staff will disinfect twice a week and a professional cleaning company will be hired to sanitize if someone tests positive or becomes ill.
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 Ancram is committed to reducing the burden on our employees and contractors. The *Families First Coronavirus Response Act* provided requirements related to the COVID-19 pandemic, which form the policies outlined below. While this Act expired on December 31, 2020, the Town has determined extend the provisions of the Act through March 31, 2021. This policy may be altered thereafter or based upon changes in law or regulation interim, as applicable.

It is our policy that employees of the Town of Ancram will not be charged with leave time for testing. Employees will be provided with up to two weeks (70 hours or 80 hours dependent on their regular scheduled two week pay period) of paid sick leave at the employee's regular rate of pay for a period which the employee is unable to work due to quarantine (in accordance with federal, state, or local orders or advice of a healthcare provider), and/or experiencing symptoms and seeking medical diagnosis. Further, in accordance with the NYS Department of Labor, if an employee, who has already utilized COVID-19 Sick Leave pay and subsequently tests positive, they shall be entitled to two additional periods of paid COVID-19 Sick Leave if each of the subsequent leaves are a result of positive test.

Further, through March 31, 2021, the Town of Ancram will provide up to two weeks (70 hours or 80 hours dependent on their regular scheduled two week pay period) of paid sick leave at two-thirds the employee's regular rate of pay if the employee is unable to work because of a bona fide need to care for an individual subject to quarantine (pursuant to federal, state, or local orders or advice of a healthcare provider), or to care for a child (under 18 years of age) whose school or child care provider is closed or unavailable for reasons related to the public health emergency, and/or the employee is experiencing a substantially similar condition as specified by the CDC/public health officials. This provision may be modified if an employee is able to effectively work remotely and the need exists for them to do so.

Additionally, the Town of Ancram will provide up to an additional 10 weeks of paid expanded family and medical leave at two-thirds of the employee's regular rate of pay where an employee, who has been employed for at least 30 calendar days by the Town of Ancram, is unable to work due to a bona fide need for leave to care for a child whose school or child care provider is closed or unavailable for reasons related to the public health emergency. This provision may be modified if an employee is able to effectively work remotely and the need exists for them to do so.

Additional provisions may be enacted based upon need and the guidance and requirements in place by federal and state employment laws, FMLA, executive orders, and other potential sources.

Non-Employees/Contractors, either independent or affiliated with a contracted firm, are not classified as employees of the Town of Ancram, and as such are not provided with paid leave time by the Town of Ancram, unless required by law.

## **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 Ancram to support contact tracing within the organization and may be shared with local public health officials.

Work hours are documented and given to the Town Clerk for payment.