

Development Authority of the North Country

Subject: NYS Public Employer Health Emergency Plan

Adopted: February 23, 2023

Resolution: 2023-02-04



NYS PUBLIC EMPLOYER HEALTH EMERGENCY PLAN

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Section 1.0 Generation Requirements

1.1 Promulgation

The Development Authority of the North Country's (Authority) New York State Health Emergency Plan was developed, approved, and placed in full effect in accordance with S8617B/10832 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. No content of this plan is intended to impede, infringe, diminish, or impair the rights of the Authority or our valued employees under any law, rule, regulation, or collectively negotiated agreement.

1.2 Purpose

This plan 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.

1.3 Scope

This plan was developed exclusively for and is applicable to the Authority. This plan is pertinent to a declared public health emergency in the State of New York, which may impact Authority operations; and it is in the interest of the safety of our Authority employees and contractors, and the continuity of our operations that we have promulgated this plan.

1.4 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 access and use the most recent CDC guidance for best practices in reducing the spread of communicable disease. 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
- Implement personal protective equipment (PPE) appropriate to the work task and as recommended by the CDC, the State Department of Health, or County Public Health officials. PPE could include but is not limited to the following:
 - Masks
 - Face shields, goggles, or safety glasses
 - Gloves
 - Disposable gowns, aprons, or coveralls
- Other guidance which may be published by the CDC, the State Department of Health, or County health officials.

1.5 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 Authority 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 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

Section 2.0 Operations

The Executive Director (ED) of the Authority, 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 ED and under guidance from the Authority's existing Emergency Response Plan.

Upon the determination of implementing this plan, all employees and contractors of the Authority shall be notified by each respective Supervisor giving a brief overview of the plan and where it shall be located.

Other interested and affected parties, such as vendors, will be notified by phone and/or email as necessary. Roles and responsibilities are defined in the Emergency Response Plan (ERP) Section 3. The ED with the assistance of the Director of Public Affairs & Communications, or their designees will maintain communications with the public and constituents as needed throughout the implementation of this plan.

The ED, 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, or the Emergency Declaration as defined in the ERP, the ED, their designee, or their successor will direct the resumption of normal operations or operations with modifications as necessary.

Section 3.0 Essential Functions

When confronting events that disrupt normal operations the Authority 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 Authority

The Authority 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 one function to others
- The recovery sequence of essential functions and their vital processes

The essential functions for Authority have been identified in Table 1:

Table 1

Essential Function	Description
Administration	Provides back-office support to including finance, human resources, procurement, and information technology services.
Engineering	Provides internal technical support to the Authority's operating divisions and to municipal customers.
Material Management Operation	Provides all functions to safely operate the Materials Management Facility
Regional Development	Administration of business funding and housing programs.
Telecom	Provides oversight and maintains the Authority's telecommunications network.
Water Quality Operation	Provides operation and maintenance of the Authority-owned and contract operated municipal water and wastewater system.

3.1 Essential Positions

Each essential function identified above may require certain positions on-site to effectively operate. Table 2 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.

Table 2

Division	Essential Positions Titles	Justification for Each
Administration	Administrative Associate- ADMIN Accounting Associate Accountant I	Performs record keeping and other daily tasks that are essential to the ongoing operation of the Authority. To include processing payroll, accounts payables and accounts receivables.
Materials Management	Landfill Superintendent Assistant Landfill Superintendent Equipment Operators Maintenance Technicians Environmental Specialist Customer Service Coordinator Administrative Associate	Performs the functions related to the proper and legal operation of the Material Management Facility, including operations oversight, operation of heavy equipment, facility and equipment maintenance, and environmental compliance.
Water Quality	Water Quality Supervisor Water Quality Supervisor II Water Quality Senior Operator Water Quality Operator Water Quality Technician	Performs functions related to the safe and legal management, operation and maintenance of water treatment facilities, water distribution systems, waste water treatment facilities and waste water collection systems for Authority-owned and contracted locations. Duties includes operation oversight, sampling, monitoring of controls and maintenance of equipment.

Section 4.0 Reducing Risk Through Remote Work and Staggered Shifts

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

4.1 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

All staff have been classified as either Level 1, 2 or 3 based on the nature of their position, facilities available at home for the employee to productively work remotely, and employee performance. The ED and Division Directors will approve the assignment of remote work and ensure staff have the necessary equipment.

Summary	Description
Level 1	Nature of position readily allows for remote work, employee typically performs office functions, facilities available to work from home
Level 2	Preferable to business needs to work onsite; if risks increase Level 2 employees may be requested to work from home
Level 3	Nature of position requires work to be performed onsite, remote work only as last resort

Level 1 employees that will be working onsite will obtain approval from their supervisor and facility manager in advance. Approval requests should be submitted by email and include the purpose of the site visit, the location that the employee plans to be working (i.e., specific office, conference room, shop, etc.), and the time the employee plans to be onsite.

Any employee that does not routinely work at a given Authority facility on a daily basis, or is designated to temporarily work remotely, will sign the facility log when entering and exiting the facility daily. Employees traveling to any alternate non-Authority work

location will maintain their Outlook calendar to show the location of the alternate work location for contact tracing should an exposure occur; and they will complete the Alternate Work Location Form and submit to their supervisor in advance of travel.

Forms will be routed by the supervisor through the management chain of command, and filed with HR. This form is not required for field work that does not involve meeting with customers, vendors, or other personnel. A copy of the Alternate Work Location form is found in Attachment A.

Employees will keep a written or electronic log tracking their hours worked and specific work locations. Only essential access of the Authority owned buildings and facilities by essential employees or contractors will be allowed. Any employee or contractor that does not routinely work at a given Authority facility on a daily basis, or is designated to temporarily work remotely, will sign the facility log when entering and exiting the facility daily. A sign in sheet containing the date, time of entry, and time of exit will be maintained at each facility or building. Other health screening questions may also be included on the sign-in sheet depending on the specific public health emergency and in accordance with applicable federal and state guidelines. The Facility Manager will be responsible for maintaining these records in their area of management to assist with contract tracing if required.

4.2 Site Specific Procedures

1. MATERIALS MANAGEMENT FACILITY (MMF)

All MMF employees classified as Level 2 or 3 employees will be grouped into two teams (Team North and South). The North Team staff will utilize the north end of the MMF facility. This section of the facility will include the Main Conference Room for lunch and breaks, and the north end restrooms. South Team staff will utilize the south end of the MMF facility restrooms and the existing lunchroom. Teams have been denoted on the Employee Roster.

The Customer Service Coordinator and Administrative Associates, that are Licensed Weighmasters at the MMF, will work onsite on a rotational basis to ensure the scale is staffed.

2. WATER QUALITY (WQ)

All WQ employees classified as Level 3 employees will avoid working out of the Warneck Pump Station (WPS) to minimize contact with other employees. If Level 3 employees are required to come to the WPS to perform certain tasks or pick up equipment, they will contact their supervisor to obtain approval in advance.

WQ Level 3 employees will be grouped into teams. The teams will work together if there are certain tasks that require two employees to perform. Teams have been denoted on the Employee Roster. Separating employees into teams will minimize the number of staff that may be in contact with one another should a potential exposure occur that requires quarantining, thereby ensuring maintenance of essential services.

Level 2 employees in WQ include the Division Director, Assistant Director and the Administrative Specialist – WQ. Each employee has a separate office to work in. The Assistant Director works out of the City of Ogdensburg facility.

3. ENGINEERING

All Engineering staff are classified as Level 1.

4. TELECOM

All Telecom staff are classified as Level 1 with the exception of the Administrative Specialist, which is classified as Level 2.

5. ADMINISTRATION/REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

All Administration employees classified as Level 3 on the Employee Roster are working at the Dulles State Office Building (DSOB). Due to the nature of their positions, they will not be able to work remotely. Each employee has a separate cubicle area and will have plexiglass separation.

Level 2 employees in Administration and Regional Development working from either the DSOB or WPS have a separate office to work within or a cubicle with plexiglass to mitigate potential exposure.

4.2 Staggered Shifts

Implementing staggered shifts is not possible given the nature of the Authority's operations.

Section 5.0 Personal Protective Equipment, Cleaning and Disinfection

5.1 Personal Protective Equipment

The use of 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 include:

- Masks

- Face shields, goggles, or safety glasses
- Gloves
- Disposable gowns, aprons, or coveralls

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 of 2020 demonstrated that supply chains were not able to keep up with increased demand for these products early in the pandemic. As such, the Authority is 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

A facility specific summary of positions that will be responsible for maintaining necessary PPE and disinfectant cleaning supplies is shown in Table 3 below. These employees have also been designated to clean any common high-touch surfaces are disinfected at least twice a day as sited in Section 5.2 Cleaning and Disinfection.

Table 3

Facility	Position
Dulles State Office Building	Administrative Associate - ADMIN or Executive Assistant
Canton Office	Director of Public Affairs and Communications, if office is staffed
Material Management Facility	Maintenance Technician
Water Quality	WQ Supervisor

A minimum of an eight-week supply will be kept on hand by the Authority, whenever possible. The Authority will coordinate with the Jefferson County Fire and Emergency Offices if required PPE becomes unavailable.

5.2 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. The positions listed in Table 3 have been designated to clean any common high-touch surfaces and disinfect at least twice a day.
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.

Section 6.0 Staff Exposures

Staff exposures are managed in accordance with current CDC guidelines. Guidelines change periodically, and it is important to reference current protocols

1. If an employee tests positive or experiences symptoms of COVID-19 or other communicable disease that is the subject of the public health emergency, they shall immediately notify their Supervisor, Division Director and Human Resources.
2. The CDC recommends other precautions to minimize the spread such as isolation, masking, and avoiding contact with people who are at high risk of getting very sick. Isolation is used to separate people with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 or other communicable disease that is the subject of the public health emergency from those without the disease.
3. If you have COVID-19 or another communicable disease that is the subject of the public health emergency, see additional information on treatments that may be available to you.
4. 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 take a COVID 19 test, or other communicable disease test as recommended by the CDC. Employees and contractors who exhibit symptoms outside of work should stay home and notify Human Resources and their Supervisor immediately. It is also recommended that the individual contact their

physician.

Employees who test positive for a communicable disease should not return to work until they have met the criteria to discontinue home isolation per public health guidance. The Authority 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.

Human Resources must be informed in these circumstances and are responsible for ensuring these protocols are followed.

5. If an employee or contractor has tested positive for the communicable disease that is the subject of the public health emergency:

Apply the steps identified in item 1, above, as applicable. Any common areas entered, surfaces touched, or equipment used shall be cleaned and disinfected immediately in accordance with Section 5.2.

Identification of potential employee and contractor exposures will be conducted. If an employee or contractor is confirmed to have the disease in question, Human Resources should inform all contacts of their possible exposure. Confidentiality shall be maintained as required by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA). Apply the steps identified in Section 6.1 above, as applicable, for all potentially exposed personnel.

The Supervisor, Division Director, and Human Resources must be notified in these circumstances and are responsible for ensuring these protocols are followed. The Authority recognizes there may be nuances or complexities associated with potential exposures, close contacts, symptomatic persons, and those testing positive. The Authority will follow CDC/public health recommendations and requirements and coordinate with our local public health office for additional guidance and support as needed.

Section 7.0 Employee and Contractor Leave

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

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

Section 8.0 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 Authority to support contact tracing within the organization and may be shared with local public health officials. Refer to Section 4.1 for specific procedures.

Section 9.0 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 Authority'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 Authority will coordinate with the Jefferson County Fire and Emergency, Lewis County Fire and Emergency Management or the St. Lawrence County Office of Emergency Services to help identify and arrange for these housing needs. The ED or their designee are responsible for coordinating this.

Section 10.0 Plan Updates

Change Number	Description of Changes	Date Authorized
0	Original Document Created	3/25/2021
1	Revised document to reflect changes in job titles, CDC protocol, consolidated duplicative sections, and made plan more general to address non-COVID19 public health emergencies	2/23/2023
2	Updated job titles and made minor non-substantive edits	2/21/2024
3	Updates to job titles, minor non-substantive edits	10/24/2024

Attachment A

Request for Approval at Alternate Non-Authority Owned Work Location

Due to Public Health Emergency

Employee(s) Name:

Employee's normal assigned work location:

Location of alternate work location or meeting attendance:

Date(s) of request for work at alternate location:

How will employees be traveling to alternate work location (i.e., personal vehicle or company car)?

If taking company car disinfection prior to and after use is required.

What is the purpose of the travel to alternate work location?

Will employee be meeting with any other non-Authority personnel (i.e., municipal/county staff)? If so, please specify.

Is attending remotely an option?

What public health emergency protocols are in place at the location of alternate work location (i.e., Town protocols for distancing, masks, disinfecting high-touch surfaces, etc.)?