

Public Employer Health Emergency Plan for the **Town of Andes**

DATE APPROVED: March 9th, 2021

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



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 Andes. 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 of Andes shall adhere to all CDC, DoH and OSHA/PESH guidelines/requirements and depending on the disease or hazard, the Town will conduct a hazard risk assessment to determine what controls including PPE needs to be in place.

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.

Water and Sewer District	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cedarwood Environmental Services employees 	Must maintain normal work to ensure proper wastewater treatment system function. Must also ensure that the Water District has safe and drinkable water.
Transfer Station	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attendant 	Must allow for all residents to have a safe and proper place to dispose of all household trash.
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It is important to note that Justice Court is a vital component of town government, with Justice Court functions budgeted and supported by the Town Board and Town Supervisor. However, we recognize that the New York State Office of Court Administration holds dominion over Justice Courts and, as such, may issue orders which suspend or alter the hours of operation or means by which Justice Courts operate; which may not fully align with this plan or other measures taken by the Town Board or Town Supervisor. As such, the Town Board, Town Supervisor, and Town Clerk will coordinate as necessary with Justice Court personnel to ensure safe and effective continuity of town Justice Court.

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

If deemed necessary, the Town Supervisor will work with each department head to determine the staff's ability to work from home on a case by case basis.

As possible, 'essential' staff may be assigned to work remotely for part of their work week to reduce exposures. Further, business hours and locations of Town government may be altered to best accommodate public health protective actions for employees and the public. Alterations to building access and the means by which the public interacts with Town employees may also take place to support these protections. Protective actions may include, but are not limited to occupancy restrictions, protective barriers, and increased conduct of business by

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 law.
 - 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. Our cleaning staff, is responsible for cleaning common areas, and the frequency of such will be determined on a case by case basis.
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 Andes 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. This policy may be altered based upon changes in law or regulation, as applicable.

It is our policy that employees of the Town of Andes will not be charged with leave time for testing. Employees will be provided with up to two weeks (80 hours) 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, the Town of Andes will provide up to two weeks (80 hours) 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 Andes 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 Andes, 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.

Contractors, either independent or affiliated with a contracted firm, are not classified as employees of the Town of Andes, and as such are not provided with paid leave time by the Town of Andes, 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 Andes to support contact tracing within the organization and may be shared with local public health officials.

All Department Heads will keep accurate records as applicable to this law.

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 Andes' 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 Andes will coordinate with Delaware County Emergency Services to help identify and arrange for these housing needs. The Town Supervisor will be responsible for coordinating this.