

Public Employer Health Emergency Plan for The Town of Schroon

April 12, 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.

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 Schroon, 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:

By: Jeffrey Subra

Signature: _____

Title: Town Supervisor

Record of Changes

Date of Change	Description of Change	Implemented by

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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 for and is applicable to the Town of Schroon Lake, NY. 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, 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 Town Supervisor of the Town of Schroon, 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 Supervisor.

Upon the determination of implementing this plan, all employees and contractors of the Town of Schroon shall be notified by email or regular mail as appropriate, with details provided as possible and necessary, with additional information and updates provided on a regular basis. Such employees, contractors, or any other person reasonably impacted by such operational changes will be notified of pertinent operational changes by way of email, regular mail, or other public notification method such as posting or publication, as appropriate. 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. Such communication duties may be delegated to other appropriate Town of Schroon Officials at the discretion of the Town Supervisor in consultation with the Town Board.

The Town Supervisor and the Town Board, 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, their designee, or their successor will direct the resumption of normal operations or operations with modifications as necessary.

Mission Essential Functions and Positions

When confronting events that disrupt normal operations, the Town of Schroon (Town) 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 Essex County

The Town 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.

Due to the nature of the provision of government services in the Town of Schroon, nearly all operations must retain some level of in person staffing in order to continue to provide the many essential services required to continue the operations of the Town government and resulting services to the constituents of the Town. Most, if not all, departments cannot function without the support and assistance provided by other departments. Interdependence of functions within the Town is high. Additionally, nearly all of the functions of the Town are essential, and often mandated, to some degree.

In a public health emergency, the criticality of these functions is often elevated, and not degraded. These functions include, but are not limited to, maintenance of critical infrastructure and Town property, provision of the full range of social services, provision of mental health services, maintenance and security of information technology systems, provision of services to the elderly via the Office of the Aging, ensuring that vendors and contractors are compensated via the Town, ensuring the proper conduct of elections through the Board of Elections, procurement of necessary services and commodities to support all other essential functions, and legal review to ensure compliance with all laws in support of such activities. This list is not intended to be exhaustive, but rather illustrates that the many essential functions of the Town will require partial staffing of nearly all offices in all but the gravest of circumstances.

It is the policy of the Town of Schroon to address mandated reductions of in person staffing based on the latest and most reliable guidance available from county, state and federal public health agencies to craft an in person workforce that complies with such guidance and maximizes the safety of Town employees and the public, while still delivering necessary services to the residents of the Town.

To that end, the head of each Department shall maintain a list of all titles and positions under his or her charge that such Department Head has identified as essential to the in person workforce, with a specific justification for such designation. Such list shall be reviewed and filed in the Town Clerks office at least once in every 12-month period following the initial filing of such list, which will occur concurrently with the adoption of this policy. All employees shall be notified by their Department Head as to their status as an essential or non-essential in person employee under this pandemic response plan. Any employee who disagrees with the determination is encouraged to first discuss the matter with their Department Head to attempt to reach a resolution. If resolution in such manner is not possible, employees are encouraged to follow the grievance procedure as outlined in the Town of Schroon Policy Manual. All efforts will be made to accommodate the particular circumstances of the employee and to ensure a safe work environment while maintaining the essential operations of the Town.

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 in work spaces and common areas.

Remote Work Protocols

Non-essential employees and contractors able to accomplish their functions remotely will be enabled to do so to 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

Remote work protocols will vary depending on the nature and scope of the pandemic and the particular circumstances present in each Department as it pertains to maintenance of essential services and staffing levels. In order to facilitate the transition to remote work, each Department Head is expected to develop procedures to handle requests for remote work, provision of the necessary equipment for such work, and maintaining accountability of those employees who will work from home. These procedures shall be made available to all employees of the Department when promulgated. In general, it is the policy of the Town of Schroon that remote

work will be assigned to the extent necessary to ensure employee safety, comply with directives implementing reduced in person workforce, and ensure the continued provision of essential government services.

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 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

The decision to implement staggered shifts will rest with the respective Department Head. All efforts will be made to assign staggered shifts in such a manner as to prevent excessive disruption to the employee's life (ie: child care conflicts). To the extent practical, prior to being required to work a staggered or irregular shift, such employee shall have the opportunity to discuss such assignment with his or her department head.

If any employee, after discussion with his or her Department Head, is unable to reach a resolution regarding assignment to remote work or a staggered shift, such employee is encouraged to follow the grievance procedure as outlined in the Town of Schroon Policy Manual. All efforts will be made to accommodate the particular circumstances of the employee and to ensure a safe work environment while maintaining the essential operations of the Town.

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 varying nature of workspace locations and conditions across the various Town departments lends itself to a decentralized planning and execution of PPE protocols to ensure that employees remain safe while still being able to accomplish the essential functions of their jobs. To that end, each Department Head shall be responsible for promulgating a policy that ensures the proper usage of PPE in the respective work spaces. In crafting such a policy, each Department Head shall consider the exposure risks inherent to the performance of Department work and the necessary functions and daily tasks that must be performed incident to accomplishing the Department's mission. Needs for specific items of PPE (masks, gloves, face shields, etc.) shall be identified, as well as the anticipated quantity required for such items. Such anticipated PPE requirements shall be communicated to the Town Supervisor's Office to ensure that proper amounts of PPE will be procured and maintained on hand.

It is the policy of the Town of Schroon to maintain enough PPE on hand in order to allow for continued Town operations in the event of an unexpected supply chain disruption of commonly needed and foreseeable PPE items. To that end, each Department Head shall be responsible for maintaining a two week supply of all required PPE identified above on hand, at all times. The Town shall further be responsible for maintaining an additional supply of PPE on hand in a safe a secure location, suitable to meet the needs of the entire Town workforce for an additional period of six weeks.

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. Upon learning of such an exposure, the employee shall inform their Department Head, who will then inform the Town Supervisor, who will inform the Director of Public Health.
 - 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, 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 decision as to whether a critical essential employee may be permitted to continue work following potential exposure shall rest within the sole discretion of the Town Supervisor, in consultation with the Director of Public Health.
- A. 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 of the communicable disease that is the subject of the public health emergency outside of work shall 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. As a general matter, the Town of Schroon 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. However, the Town reserves the sole discretion to require such a negative test or return to work note should the particular circumstances warrant, and in compliance with the sick leave procedure outlined in the Town of Schroon Policy Manual.

5. Upon notification from an employee that the circumstances addressed in this section are present, the Department Head shall immediately inform the Town Supervisor who will inform and consult with the Director of Public Health in seeing that the provisions herein are followed. The sole discretion to determine whether an employee has met criteria for return to work under this section shall rest with the Town Supervisor, who shall consult with the Director of Public Health prior to making such determination.

A. 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 Director of Public Health or their designee should inform all contacts of their possible exposure. Confidentiality shall be maintained as required by State and Federal Law.

b. Apply the steps identified in item A, above, as applicable, for all potentially exposed personnel.

c. Upon notification from an employee that the circumstances addressed in this section are present, the Department Head shall immediately inform the Town Supervisor who will inform and consult with the Director of Public Health in seeing that the provisions herein 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 at the end of their shifts, at a minimum.

2. High traffic/high touch areas and areas which are accessible to the public/constituents will be disinfected in accord with current CDC guidance, at a minimum.
3. Staff tasked with cleaning and disinfecting areas will be issued and required to wear PPE appropriate to the task.
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 Schroon is committed to reducing the burden on our employees and contractors. In addition to accommodating requests for leave in accordance with standing personnel policies, the Town will comply with all federal, state, and local laws which address the rights of employees to leave in the event of quarantine of themselves, their children, or others in their care. The Town of Schroon is also committed to enacting additional temporary personnel leave policies as appropriate based on the scope and nature of a future public health emergency. This policy may be altered based upon changes in law or regulation, as applicable. 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 Schroon, and as such are not provided with paid leave time by the Town of Schroon, 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 Schroon to support contact tracing within the organization and may be shared with local public health officials.

In the event that contact tracing is identified by the CDC or State Public Health Authorities as a necessary component of response to a particular pandemic or other public health emergency related to communicable disease, the Town of Schroon is committed to complying with such guidance in order to enhance and secure the safety of its workforce and constituents.

In the event that records to assist in contact tracing are deemed warranted, all employees who enter onto Town premises shall be required to maintain time records in accordance with personnel policies at the beginning and end of the work day. Throughout the work day, a log shall be kept which documents when and where each employee went when leaving their individual work space, and when they returned. This log shall be kept in a form approved by each respective Department Head. This requirement shall also apply to any off site place of work. It shall be the responsibility of the Department Head to ensure that all employees under his or her charge are complying with this requirement. Each Department Head shall require that the aforementioned logs be turned in to him or her at the conclusion of each workday, and shall periodically audit said logs to verify accuracy.

The Department Head shall maintain custody of such logs in a safe and organized manner until directed to dispose of such records by the Town Supervisor.

The decision to implement these provisions lies in the sole discretion of the Town Supervisor who shall consult with the Director of Public Health in making such decision.

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 Schroon 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 Schroon will coordinate with the local, state, and federal emergency management authorities, as deemed appropriate, to help identify and arrange for these housing needs. The Town Supervisor shall be responsible for coordinating this effort.