



CHESTERFIELD COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Department: Human Resource Management

Policy Number: 6-21

Subject: Pandemic Influenza Human Resource Policy

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I. PURPOSE:

The county is committed to the health and safety of its employees, contractors and workplace visitors and is committed to minimizing the risk of exposure and transmission of pandemic influenza virus through the workplace. The county will make all reasonable efforts to provide essential services to residents on an uninterrupted basis during a pandemic influenza outbreak. During a pandemic outbreak, employees will be expected to make all reasonable efforts to attend work and perform essential duties. This policy will help to prepare the county to properly handle infection control, to establish communication strategies and to provide needed support services to employees during a pandemic outbreak.

II. PRINCIPLES:

- A. All employees are encouraged to take responsibility for themselves by: preparing their own pre-plans, understanding their own levels of responsibility and fulfilling their work obligations.
- B. Internal communication methods need to be established in advance in order to provide accurate, timely and consistent information to all employees affected by an outbreak. A failure to present information to employees in a planned and comprehensive fashion can lead to lost confidence and may result in employees' failure to comply with their individual work responsibilities.
- C. Coordination with the Chesterfield County Health Department is required in order to provide information, education and services to employees regarding prevention precautions, infection control, quarantine/isolation guidelines and safe work practices.
- D. Sufficient income continuance will encourage employees' cooperation with safe work practices (i.e. self-reporting, self-quarantine and self-isolation) so they can fulfill their work obligations when fit to do so without putting themselves, their co-workers or the public at risk. An extension of some benefits beyond what is currently provided (such as administrative leave) may be available to qualifying employees.
- E. It is prudent to pre-plan for a pandemic; however, it is impossible to anticipate every issue that may arise during a public health emergency. This procedure should be used as pre-planning guidelines.

III. DEFINITIONS:

- A. **Influenza** is commonly known as "the flu" and is a highly contagious and common respiratory illness (an infection of the lungs and airways) caused by a virus. It is transmitted from person to person in one of two ways: (a) from droplets that enter your body through the eyes, nose or mouth when an infected person coughs, sneezes or talks, or (b) from indirect contact when a person's hands become contaminated with the virus by touching contaminated objects and the person subsequently touches his eyes, nose or mouth or eats food without washing his hands first.
- B. **Pandemic Influenza** occurs when there is an abrupt and major change in the structure of the influenza virus and infection reaches global proportions. Since people have no immunity to the completely new strain, the virus can spread very quickly and outbreaks can occur in many countries.

- C. **Public Health Emergency** occurs when there is a pandemic influenza that is spreading very quickly and creating simultaneous outbreaks in many communities. The governor or state health commissioner may declare a public health emergency in coordination with federal health agencies.
- D. **Quarantine** occurs when a person has been in close contact with someone else who is contagious with the pandemic influenza virus or when a person has been in a high-risk contaminated area. Quarantine can be imposed by an order from the state health commissioner or by self-quarantine when that person realizes that he/she has had the close contact that may make them contagious. Self-quarantine should occur for a three to five day period following exposure or as recommended by the Health Department.
- E. **Isolation** should occur when a person starts to exhibit the actual signs and symptoms of pandemic influenza and will, therefore, be capable of spreading the virus to others with whom he/she may be in contact. Self-isolation should occur for five days from the onset of symptoms or as recommended by the Health Department to prevent further spreading pandemic influenza.
- F. **Supervisor** means the supervisor or work group leader who is accountable for a particular facility, department or area of the county and generally includes managers and others in supervisory positions directly responsible for the performance of employees.
- G. **Employees** includes all full-time, part-time, temporary and seasonal employees on the county payroll.
- H. **County Work sites** include any work site to which employees have been assigned for the purpose of conducting county business and includes all land, buildings, facilities, mobile equipment and vehicles either owned, leased or otherwise controlled by the county.
- I. **Essential Services** are those county services critical to the protection of life and property. The loss of any of these essential services would be intolerable in that they could affect the basics of life or safety and the community could not function without such services. Essential services shall be identified in each department and shall be distinguished from services that are determined to be merely desirable or valued services.

IV. RESPONSIBILITIES AND ACCOUNTABILITIES

A. Department directors shall:

1. Have the ultimate responsibility to provide the essential services within their departments to the best of their ability to do so.
2. Require that all supervisors and employees in the departments/sections under their control adhere to the responsibilities and procedures as identified in this policy.
3. Assume the supervisor's responsibilities and accountabilities in regard to all employees that are directly reporting to them.

B. Supervisors shall:

1. Have responsibility to provide the essential services within their sections to the best of their ability to do so.
2. Consult with the appropriate sections of the Human Resource Management Department to provide consistent application of this policy and procedures.
3. Require all employees in their departments/sections to adhere to the responsibilities and procedures as identified in this policy.
4. Require departmental timekeepers (or backup timekeepers) to continue to enter timesheet details for employees to ensure that employees can continue to receive pay checks during any pandemic influenza emergency.

5. Assist in educating employees (and customers accessing their department) on the required protective strategies available to prevent and control the risk of infection (as per appendices of this policy). Supervisors shall also require employees and customers to follow the attached guidelines to prevent risk of infection.
6. Ensure employees are aware of and require them to follow the procedures for self-quarantine and self-isolation and for reporting absences and that employees do not report to work when they have been quarantined or if they become symptomatic themselves.

C. Employees shall:

1. Develop personal plans so they can manage their responsibilities at home, plan on how to care for their families and be able to come to work.
2. Follow infection prevention and transmission control guidelines as applicable to their work situation (appendices 1 and 2).
3. Properly use personal protective equipment and respiratory protection equipment that may be made available to them.
4. Identify to their supervisor immediately any potential risks to infection transmission and assist in corrective actions to minimize these risks.
5. Identify to their supervisor immediately if an employee is exposed to others with pandemic influenza or if they become symptomatic themselves. Employees with pandemic influenza-like symptoms should not be at the work site.
6. Assist in cleaning of work stations and/or shared work areas if requested.
7. Not report to work with pandemic influenza-like symptoms. Paid time off or sick leave call-in procedures must be followed. Employees who develop pandemic influenza-like symptoms while at work should leave the work site after notifying their supervisor.
8. Return to work only when safe to do so. The Health Department will provide return-to-work guidance based on the particular pandemic influenza virus.

D. Department of General Services shall:

1. Ensure that there are sufficient amounts of appropriate cleaning supplies.
2. Ensure General Services employees are wearing the proper personal protective clothing (i.e. disposable gloves) when cleaning.
3. Ensure their employees and the contracted janitorial staffs are knowledgeable and require them to follow appropriate infection control procedures while performing their job duties.

E. Communications & Media Department shall:

1. Develop strategies for effective methods of establishing communication with appropriate groups in order to ensure accurate and timely information is disseminated.
2. Partner with the Health Department to develop informational materials for distribution to employees, supervisors and county residents.

F. Human Resource Management (HRM) shall:

1. Recommend amendments and updates to this policy and procedures as may be required on a periodic basis to respond to current circumstances and evolving needs.
2. Provide information about this policy to supervisors and employees so that they are aware of their responsibilities and the procedures as identified in this policy. Attend departmental staff meetings and distribute information to staff as required.
3. Provide advice and interpretation of this policy to department heads and supervisors.

4. Consult with supervisors to ensure consistent application of this policy.

G. Chesterfield County Health Department shall:

1. Provide information to departments, prior to and during a pandemic influenza outbreak regarding:
 - Pandemic influenza and infection prevention and control strategies
 - Modes of transmission of pandemic influenza
 - Signs and symptoms of pandemic influenza
 - Personal protection methods
 - Travel guidelines
 - Social distancing guidelines
2. Monitor both seasonal and pandemic influenza situations.
3. Provide advice to departments on quarantine and isolation situations.

H. Chesterfield Employee Medical Center shall:

1. Follow up, as needed, with exposed or ill employees to explore the severity of exposure, medical treatment options and post-exposure employee supports.
2. The Medical Center may review any available medical information, as needed, when an employee has been cleared for return to work and/or review the symptoms of the employee and advise departments and employees on safe return to work.

I. Emergency Management shall:

1. Activate the Emergency Operation Center as needed.
2. Activate the county's Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) as needed.

J. Information Systems Technology shall:

1. Be prepared to execute appropriate emergency plans and actions; implement expanded Internet capabilities with key suppliers, business partners and customers that may be unwilling or unable to provide services in person during a pandemic event.
2. Determine and communicate the preferred IT-enabled secure telecommuting and Remote Access Infrastructure.
3. Provide technical support that enables crisis communications as necessary. This may be via the Internet, Intranet and/or Voice services.
4. Provide guidance on preferred methods of obtaining and securing alternative communication technologies if primary lines of communication are disrupted.
5. Provide specialized teleconferencing and/or video link technologies as required to support disparate, remote operations.
6. Provide preferred method for secure access to county information resources.
7. Provide infrastructure support for preferred resources or tools to support a centralized or decentralized crisis management.

V. PROCEDURES:

- A. Infection Control** - The most common route of pandemic influenza is droplet transmission and indirect contact from person-to-person. Scrupulous attention to hand hygiene and containment of respiratory secretions produced by coughing and sneezing will be essential in reducing the transmission of pandemic influenza. Key actions in a pandemic situation include:

- Education of employees and customers about transmission and prevention of pandemic influenza with information that is understandable and applicable to their particular situation
- Prompt identification of employees or customers with pandemic influenza symptoms
- Restriction of ill employees or customers from the workplace

B. Health and Safety - The requirements for personal protective equipment will be based on Health Department assessments. Appropriate masks to prevent the transmission of droplet contact shall be provided as required. As practical, barriers or other personal distancing measures will be taken to reduce close physical contact between employees and the public.

C. Alcohol Dispensers or Hand Sanitizers – Hand washing is the most effective method to control the spread of pandemic influenza. When necessary hand sanitizers should be made available in employee work areas as well as in areas that the public or customers utilize. People will be encouraged to use these pump foam dispensers whenever they are entering any public or shared workspace in order to control the transmission of any virus.

D. Vaccinations - It is anticipated that vaccine may not be readily available in the early stages of a pandemic; and when it does become available, it may initially be in a very limited supply. Therefore, pandemic influenza vaccine will need to be administered on a restricted and pre-established priority basis. The priority will initially be to those employees who are directly involved in the delivery of essential services. After these employees have been immunized, and when additional vaccine is available, then other employees will receive vaccine based upon a pre-established priority setting process.

E. Communications and Education of Employees - Infection control measures need to be implemented long before the population is at risk and then need to be reinforced as the situation manifests itself. Communications & Media, in consultation with the Health Department, will coordinate and distribute pandemic-related information in order to provide consistent and timely messages to employees. Information will be distributed through such means as pamphlets and posters in strategic locations, intranet, Internet, e-mails and other means.

Information also will be posted on the county's intranet and Internet sites to allow employees to access HR related information, forms and tips on how they can protect themselves and their family during a pandemic.

External strategies and networks shall be required between HRM, Communications & Media and the Health Department to ensure that information and advice that is provided to county employees is consistent with information being provided to the general public.

Communication strategies and networks with other external groups (such as the public, customers, suppliers, media, local employers and other municipalities) shall be the responsibility of Communications & Media.

F. County Departments/Human Resource Management Priorities - County departments are responsible for ensuring that they have the optimum number of personnel available and trained to perform essential services. To do so, they will employ the following strategies in order of priority:

1. Suspend normal employee training programs.
2. Suspend vacations, leaves and any other planned absences of employees involved in essential services.
3. Re-deploy employees from desirable and valued function to essential and necessary valued functions.

4. Authorize overtime for employees in situations where re-deployment of other skilled employees is not an option due to the complexity of the essential task.
5. Use surplus employees from other county departments.
6. Rehire recently retired employees.
7. Where possible, use volunteers.
8. Recruit new employees.

The HRM Department will coordinate the application of strategies 5 to 8 above.

- G. Canceling Vacations and Leaves** - If a public health emergency is declared, vacation leaves and planned absences (e.g. training or conferences) for many county employees will be canceled until further notice. The priority for the county will be to ensure continued delivery of essential services, and reduced manpower may hamper those efforts.
- H. Payroll and Benefits Services** - It is recognized that the accurate and timely provision of employees' paychecks and the continuance of their health insurance coverage is an essential service that must continue during a pandemic influenza emergency. Health care, dental and life insurance claims will continue to be submitted as they are normally. The most significant issue will be the need for accurate record keeping and timesheet entry by the operating departments. This will require departments to maintain a qualified timekeeper and backup timekeepers to continue to enter the pay details for employees on a weekly basis.
- I. Recruitment Processes** - The normal process of hiring new employees may be put on hold unless there is a critical need to immediately fill the position. However, during a public health emergency, it may be necessary to recruit additional employees to perform some essential services, if the required staffing cannot be provided with existing employees. HRM recruiting staff shall work directly with departments in order to determine priorities based upon their essential needs. It may be necessary (during a public health emergency only) to modify some recruitment procedures, to delay some pre-employment requirements, to hire some employees without all the necessary qualifications or to recruit from alternate sources or retired county employees.
- J. Employees' Refusal to Work** - In accordance with the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, Section 35: A worker shall not carry out any work if, on reasonable and probable grounds, the worker believes that there exists an imminent danger to the health or safety of that worker or another worker present at the work site. If a worker refuses to carry out any work, he shall, as soon as practical, notify the supervisor of the reasons. Upon investigation, the supervisor shall take any actions to eliminate the imminent danger. The worker may be assigned to other work which they are reasonably capable of performing until the investigation is completed. Examples of the county controlling or eliminating the dangers include providing protective equipment, protective clothing, distancing measures and/or associated training (as long as it is reasonably practical for the county to do so). If a worker continues to refuse the work after the county concludes that imminent danger does not exist, the supervisor should then consult with department management or HRM, and appropriate disciplinary actions may be applied on a case-by-case basis in accordance with county policy.
- K. Worker's Compensation Benefits** - If an employee believes that he has contracted an infectious disease while performing duties on county business during a public health emergency, the employee may follow the normal procedures to complete a Worker's Compensation claim form. If their claim is approved, he/she shall be paid in the same manner as others who are off work on approved claims.
- L. Reporting Paid Time Off or Sick Leave Absences** - Employees shall contact their supervisor in accordance with current notification procedures when they are unable to report to work due to quarantine, isolation or sick leave situations. It will be necessary for employees to report

their absences, the reason for the absence and anticipated return to work date to their supervisor who will be responsible for ensuring that attendance records and timesheets are completed and entered properly.

- M. Absence Verification** - The criteria for verification of paid time off, sick leave or FMLA leave may need to be relaxed during the actual public health emergency period. Undoubtedly, the level of adjudication for claims will be different because of the significant increase in absences, the difficulty for the employees to gain access to medical staff and the difficulty in acquiring medical certificates for absences. If a supervisor has reason to question the absence or the length of such absence of any employee, he/she shall consult with department management or HRM to determine if further information or action is required.
- N. Employees with Symptoms Excluded from Workplace** - Employees should not report to work with pandemic influenza-like symptoms nor if they have been quarantined. Some employees will develop symptoms of pandemic influenza while at work. These individuals must notify their supervisor and then immediately leave the workplace and should not return to work until five days after the onset of symptoms or as recommended by the Health Department. If the employee is too ill to drive themselves home, the supervisor shall arrange for alternate transportation to their home or to medical services, if required. Members of the general public or customers should be discouraged from entering the workplace if they are pandemic influenza symptomatic.
- O. Disinfecting Shared Work Areas** - If an employee has been identified as having been at work with pandemic influenza-like symptoms, the work station, work vehicle and any shared work areas will require cleaning. The supervisor is responsible for:
- Having cleaning supplies and appropriate protection available for employees to clean the area safely and without the risk of becoming infected themselves
 - Assigning staff, using the proper protective equipment and procedures, to be responsible for disinfecting shared work areas
- P. Employee Assistance Program (EAP) Counseling Services** - Eligible employees who might need counseling services for any reason should access the county's EAP. In the event of critical illnesses or deaths of fellow employees or family members, the county shall endeavor to arrange for Critical Incident Stress Debriefing conducted by a qualified provider for any affected county employee. Post-Traumatic-Stress Debriefing may also be necessary as the pandemic develops.
- Q. Enhanced Benefit Areas** - During a public health emergency, the following benefit shall be enhanced in order to better support employees:
- Administrative Leave with Pay - The county administrator or designee may approve administrative leave with pay as necessary.
- R. Alternative Work Schedule** - Departments shall review their normal business hours and work schedules to determine if they can be modified in a manner that best promotes social distancing, business continuity or other pandemic response goals during an emergency. If feasible, supervisors should first ask for employees to volunteer to work hours other than their usual schedule. Regular work schedules may be changed by a supervisor subject to a 24-hour cancellation notice, when possible, upon the proclamation of a pandemic influenza emergency. If less than a 24-hour notice is necessary, management may make such changes. Departments are encouraged to work with staff to minimize the impacts of decisions affecting schedule changes. Approved schedules shall also be formally documented. Review HRM's guidelines on alternative work schedules for more details.
- S. Telework** - Telework means that an employee is working one or more days each work week from home instead of commuting to his or her centrally located worksite. Telework

is not appropriate for all employees and no employee is entitled or guaranteed the opportunity to telework. The purpose of this policy is to provide support for social distancing or other pandemic response goals as necessary to respond to a pandemic influenza emergency.

Departments should identify possible teleworkers as soon as possible and make the necessary technical arrangements with IST in accordance with county telework guidelines. Departments shall consider a broader use of telework than they would for normal operations or other types of emergencies to accomplish social distancing for a pandemic influenza emergency.

Departments shall identify essential functions that may be accomplished remotely and whether the person performing the function needs access to all systems and applications or only e-mail and/or voice communications. Review HRM's telework guidelines for more details.

Hand Hygiene Guidelines

Pandemic Influenza is an infection of the lungs and airways caused by a virus. The virus passes from person to person by droplets when an infected person coughs, sneezes or talks and can be further spread by touching infected surfaces and then touching your eyes, nose, mouth or food before washing your hands. Viruses generally can live on hard surfaces for 1 to 2 days, on cloth/tissue and paper for 8 to 12 hours, and on hands for 5 minutes.

Next to immunization, the single most effective method of preventing pandemic influenza is frequent and proper hand washing.

Wash your hands:

Before:

- Touching your mouth, nose or eyes
- Handling or eating foods or feeding others
- Brushing or flossing teeth
- Inserting or removing contact lenses

After:

- Touching objects in a shared work space or a public area
- Treating wounds or cuts
- Having contact with a person who has influenza or their immediate environment
- Going to the bathroom or changing a diaper
- Blowing your nose or wiping a child's nose
- Coughing or sneezing
- Handling garbage
- Children should wash their hands after playing with toys or books shared with other children.

How to wash your hands:

- You can use regular soap and water. Antibacterial soap is not necessary.
- Rub hands vigorously together covering all hand surfaces for at least 20 seconds.
- Rinse under hot running water.
- Dry with a clean or disposable towel.
- If in a public restroom, use a disposable towel to turn off the faucet and open the door to avoid further unnecessary contact.
- Alcohol hand rubs are also effective. Rub hands vigorously together, covering all hand surfaces, for at least 20 seconds with alcohol hand rubs or hand sanitization.

Respiratory Protection Guidelines

Cover your Cough:

Pandemic influenza is an infection of the lungs and airways caused by a virus. Droplets pass the pandemic influenza virus from person to person when an infected person coughs, sneezes or talks. Covering your mouth and nose when you cough is, therefore, very important.

Airborne droplets can enter the body through the eyes, nose or mouth. The virus, contained in droplets, can travel up to 2 meters (6 feet) in the air and can live on hard surfaces for 1 to 2 days, on cloth, tissues and paper for 8 to 12 hours, and on hands for 5 minutes. It is essential to wash your hands after you cover your cough, even when a tissue is used.

People generally develop symptoms of influenza 1 or 2 days after becoming infected. They are contagious from the day before they have the first symptoms until normally 5 days after the symptoms start.

Respiratory Protection Procedures:

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue or your sleeve when sneezing or coughing.
- Wash your hands after coughing, sneezing or using tissues.
- Throw away tissues after wiping your nose or coughing/sneezing into the tissue.
- Keep your fingers away from your eyes, nose and mouth until you have washed your hands.
- Maintain your personal distance away from the next person to at least 2 meters (6 feet) or as directed by the Health Department.