

Public Employer Health Emergency Plan for the Town of Aurora

March 2021

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Promulgation

This plan has been developed in accordance with the amended New York State Labor Law Section 27-c.

This plan has been reviewed by the President of the following labor union: CSEA Local 1000 AFSCME, AFL-CIO as required by the amended New York State Labor Law.

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.

This plan has been approved in accordance with requirements applicable to this local government unit, a subdivision of the State of New York, as represented by the signature of the authorized individual below.

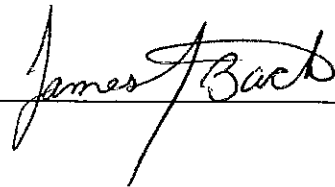
As the authorized official of the Town of Aurora, I hereby attest that this plan has been developed, approved and placed in full effect in accordance with S8617B/A10832, which amends New York State Labor Law Section 27-c to address public health emergency planning requirements.

Signed on this day: March 8, 2021

By: James J. Bach

Title: Supervisor

Signature: _____

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "James J. Bach". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above a horizontal line that serves as a signature line.

Record of Changes

Date of Change	Description of Change	Implemented by

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. 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 Aurora. 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 for a minimum of 20 seconds, 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 that 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 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 expect 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.
- Pursuant to S8617B/A10832 an “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.
- Pursuant to S8617B/A10832 a “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 Supervisor of the Town of Aurora, his/her designee or his/her 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 Aurora shall be notified by utilizing one or more of the following methods:

- In-person;
- Email;
- Phone;
- Text message;
- Messages on official websites;
- Social media;
- Fax;
- USPS mail.

Initial contact shall include details provided as possible and necessary, with additional information and updates provided on a regular basis. Members of the general public will be notified of pertinent operational changes by utilization of the above-listed means and methods. Other interested parties, such as vendors, will be notified as necessary. The Supervisor and/or his/her designee will maintain communications with the public and constituents as needed throughout the implementation of this plan.

The Supervisor of the Town of Aurora and/or his/her designee or his/her 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 Supervisor will direct the resumption of normal operations or operations with modifications as necessary.

Mission Essential Functions

When confronting events that disrupt normal operations, the Town of Aurora is committed to ensuring that essential functions will be continued even under the most challenging circumstances.

Essential functions are those functions that enable an organization to:

1. Maintain the safety of employees, contractors and our constituency.
2. Provide vital services.
3. Provide services required by law.
4. Sustain quality operations.
5. Uphold the core values of the Town of Aurora.

The Town of Aurora 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.

Priority 1 identifies the most essential of functions, with priority 4 identifying functions that are essential, but least among them.

The mission essential functions for the Town of Aurora have been identified and are detailed in Appendix A.

Essential Positions

Each essential function identified above requires certain positions on-site to effectively operate. The table below identifies the positions or titles that are essential to be staffed on-site for the continued operation of each essential function. Note that while some functions and associated personnel may be essential, some of these can be conducted remotely and do not need to be identified in this section.

The essential positions for the Town of Aurora have been identified and are detailed in Appendix B.

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.

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;
 - i. Note that phone lines may need to be forwarded to off-site staff.
4. Department Heads shall make decisions based on chain of command and approving authorities. This includes determining who is responsible for implementation of activities, availability of technology, troubleshooting and equipment accountability. Consideration shall be given to workflow of all personnel working remotely to ensure they will be able to accomplish their duties.

Staggered Shifts

Implementing staggered shifts may be possible for personnel performing duties that 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.

Department Heads shall be responsible to implement the steps above and establish appropriate protocols. Consideration shall be given to chain of command and approving authorities, building access and status of utilities outside of core hours and security outside of core hours.

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.

Department Heads shall consider the variety of PPE required and how needs will be identified within their respective departments. The Town Clerk shall be the chief procurement officer and all requests for PPE shall be submitted by the Department Heads to the Town Clerk for processing through the County DLAN system and/or other appropriate suppliers. The Town Clerk shall provide requested PPE to the Department Heads. The Department Heads are then responsible for inventory tracking, distribution within each department and proper storage of inventory on hand for future use. A stockpile of eight weeks of PPE is recommended.

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, the following protocols have been established.

- 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. Department Heads shall identify who, by title/position, in the organization must be notified and who is responsible for ensuring these protocols are followed.
 - 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, contractors, and the 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 at least every hour, as practical. See the section on Cleaning and Disinfection for additional information on that subject.
 - d. If at any time a person exhibits symptoms, refer to item B below.
 - e. Department Heads shall ensure adherence within their respective departments to the above protocols.
- B. The following protocols shall be followed in the event an employee or contractor exhibits symptoms of the communicable disease that is the subject of the public health emergency.
 1. Employees and contractors who exhibit symptoms in the workplace should be immediately separated from other employees, customers and visitors. They should immediately be sent home with a recommendation to contact their physician.
 2. Employees and contractors who exhibit symptoms outside of work should notify their supervisor and stay home, with a recommendation to contact their physician.
 3. Employees should not return to work until they have met the criteria to discontinue home isolation per CDC/public health guidance and have consulted with a healthcare provider.
 4. The Town shall require sick employees to provide a healthcare provider's note to validate their illness in order to qualify for sick leave. The Town shall adhere to advisories from the CDC/public health officials for proper protocols to be followed for an employee to return to work.
 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. Department Heads shall coordinate with the Town Supervisor and Town Clerk to ensure that the above protocols are clearly communicated to all employees. Department Heads shall ensure adherence within their respective department to the above protocols.
- C. The following protocols shall apply 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 Department Head or his/her designee should inform all contacts, to the extent possible, of their possible exposure. Confidentiality shall be maintained as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).
 - b. Apply the steps identified in item A, above, as applicable, for all potentially exposed personnel.
4. The Department Head must be notified in these circumstances and shall also be responsible to ensure 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, 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 the items listed below.

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 will be disinfected at least hourly.
 - b. An independent contractor is responsible for cleaning common areas.
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 Leave

Public health emergencies are extenuating and unanticipated circumstances for which the Town is committed to reducing the burden on our employees. The Federal, State and County governments passed laws, enacted executive orders and mandated policies related to the COVID-19 pandemic. These included mandates the Town was obligated to follow concerning employees being paid for COVID-related time off.

In the event of a new public health emergency, the Town anticipates that higher levels of government with jurisdiction over the Town shall enact similar mandates that the Town shall be obligated to follow. The Town Board may also enact local policies in addition to the abovementioned mandates, as it deems appropriate to be applicable to Town employees.

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 and off-site visits. This information may be used by the Town to support contact tracing within the organization and may be shared with local public health officials.

Department Heads shall determine for their respective department's appropriate means and methods of tracking hours and locations, which may be paper-based or electronic logging, tracking via a smartphone app or other.

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's essential operations.

If such a need arises, hotel rooms may 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 will coordinate with the Erie County Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Services to help identify and arrange for these housing needs. The Supervisor and/or Town Clerk shall coordinate with the Department Heads concerning appropriate housing under the above circumstances.

Appendix A - Mission Essential Functions

Essential Function	Description	Priority
Information Technology	Provides all hardware and software for the Town. Maintains the Town's network and phone system.	1
Highway Dept: Snow removal	Clearing of streets, municipal parking lots and sidewalks	1
Highway Dept: Trees downed in R.O.W.	Clearing of trees and debris within the R.O.W. for public safety	1
Highway Dept: Vehicle maintenance	Care and repairs of Highway vehicles and equipment	2
Highway Dept: Water	Water line repair	1
Highway Dept: Water meter reading	Reading water meters as needed	3
Highway Dept: Basic services	Mowing, leaf collection, ditching, etc.	4
Building Department	Inspection of buildings damaged by fire/natural disaster/etc., for emergency enclosure purposes	1
Dog Control	Response to emergency where dog is involved	2
Town Clerk: Death Certificates	Register Death Certificates/issue certified death certificates	1
Town Clerk: Collect Tax	Collect tax monies as required by law	2
Supervisor/Town Clerk: DLAN	Place order in DLAN system for all departments, as needed	1 or 2
HR/Supervisor: Payroll	Collect/prepare payroll for payroll processing vendor	2
Assistant to the Supervisor	Pay bills, move money, journal and all accounting functions	2
Town Clerk	Process/pay vendor bills	2
Town Clerk: Priority work	Accept legal documents, FOIL, Town Board meetings, minutes	2 or 3
Town Clerk	Open, sort and distribute mail as required for departments	4
Town Clerk: Customer service	Assist residents with questions and concerns and payments (ex: dog licensing, marriage licenses, etc.)	4
Senior Center	Distribute PPE to residents; coordinate food programs for Senior Citizens;	1 or 2
The following are contractual services used by the Town but performed by other entities:		
EBC Inc./Payroll processing vendor :	Processes payroll for all Town employees	2
Police Services (contracted thru VEA)	Public Safety – protect life, property	1
Dispatch Services (contracted thru VEA)	Public Safety – dispatch calls for police, fire, EMS, ambulance	1
Fire Services (contracted thru VEA)	Calls for service for fire and other emergencies	1

It is expected that the Town Board shall continue to meet, as scheduled. Note otherwise, however, that various board and committees of the Town that would normally meet may not be considered essential during a public health emergency and as a result, many of those meetings may be suspended.

Appendix B

Level 1 - Essential; needs to be able to work at their office and with others, which may include the public		
Level 2 - Essential; could work rotating schedule without public contact if level 1 is available		
Level 3 - Essential to operation - majority of work can be done from home (remotely)		
Level 4 - Essential to operation - can work completely from home (remotely)		
Level 5 - Not generally essential during State of Emergency; can be assigned to another level		
	DEPARTMENT - TITLE	Essential level
TOWN BOARD		
COUNCILPERSONS		4
SUPERVISOR		1 - 3
ADMINISTRATION		
SUPERVISOR: ASSISTANT TO SUPERVISOR		
ASSISTANT TO SUPERVISOR		2
SECRETARY TO SUPERVISOR		2 - 3
TOWN CLERK:		
TOWN CLERK		1
DEPUTY CLERK		1 - 2
OTHER CLERKS		3
DEPARTMENTS:		
BUILDING/CODE ENFORCEMENT		
CODE ENFORCEMENT OFFICER		1 - 2
ASSISTANT CODE ENFORCEMENT		1 - 2
CLERICAL STAFF		3
TOWN ATTORNEY		
OTHER ATTORNEYS		3
HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT:		
SUPERINTENDENT OF HIGHWAYS		1
DEPUTY HIGHWAY SUPERINTENDANT		1 - 3
MECHANIC		2
	Back-up if person becomes incapacitated	
	N/A	
	Deputy Supervisor	
	Secretary to Supervisor	
	Deputy Town Clerk	
	Deputy or Other Clerks	
	Assistant Code Enforcement Officer	
	Deputy Superintendent of Highways	
	Other MEO/Truck Driver/Laborer with CDL	
	Other Mechanic	

Appendix B - continued

DEPARTMENT - TITLE	Essential level	Back-up if person becomes incapacitated
MEO	1 during weather event or water breaks; 2 otherwise	Laborers W/ CDL and Mechanics
LABORER	1 during weather event or water breaks; 2 otherwise	Other Laborers
SENIOR CENTER:		
DIRECTOR	1 - 2	Clerical staff
CLERICAL STAFF	2	Kitchen Manager
RECREATION:		
DIRECTOR	5	Recreation Supervisor
RECREATION SUPERVISOR	5	
OTHER BOARDS:		
ZONING Board of Appeals	5	N/A
PLANNING & Conservation Board	5	N/A
ALL OTHER BOARDS	5	N/A
Fire Department - Volunteer/non-contractual		
Chief	1	1st Assistant Chief....
Assistant Chief	1	Captains
Firefighters	1	Other Firefighters
Fire Police	1	Other Fire Police