

Richland County, Wisconsin COVID-19 & Viral Contagion Plan

15 Sep 2020 [17 Mar 2020 original release]



1. **Purpose.** The purpose of this plan is to provide guidance to Richland County department heads and employees on responding to the rapidly evolving coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) public health emergency.

2. **Intentions**

It is Richland County's intentions to continue the delivery of all essential services to the community to maintain order, health and guidance during this period of medical emergency. Likewise, it is our intentions to keep our governmental offices open with employees working onsite and adhering to all hygiene, sanitation, social distancing and symptoms monitoring measures. If onsite work is determined to be a public health threat, or staff shortages occur, remote work and office closures will be made by departments in collaboration with the county administrator and Public Health Manager/Local Health Officer.

3. **About COVID-19 and Its Spread¹**

- 3.01 On February 11, 2020 the World Health Organization announced an official name for the disease that is causing the 2019 novel coronavirus outbreak, first identified in Wuhan, China. The new name of this disease is coronavirus disease 2019, abbreviated as COVID-19. In COVID-19, 'CO' stands for 'corona,' 'VI' for 'virus,' and 'D' for disease. Formerly, this disease was referred to as "2019 novel coronavirus" or "2019-nCoV".
- 3.02 There are many types of human coronaviruses including some that commonly cause mild upper-respiratory tract illnesses. COVID-19 is a new disease, caused by a novel (or new) coronavirus that has not previously been seen in humans.
- 3.03 COVID-19 is a new disease and the CDC is still learning how it spreads, the severity of illness it causes, and to what extent it may spread in the United States. Currently, the virus is thought to spread mainly from person to person as follows:
 - A. Between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet);
 - B. Through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes;
 - C. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs;
 - D. People are thought to be most contagious when they are most symptomatic (the sickest);
 - E. Spread is possible before people show symptoms; and
 - F. It may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads.

¹ Source: Wis. Dept. of Administration, FAQ for Wis. State Employees, March 11, 2020.

- 4. COVID-19 Symptoms.** COVID-19 presents with flu-like symptoms (fever, loss of smell and taste, cough, runny nose or sore throat, headache or body aches, and in some cases diarrhea and vomiting) or acute respiratory illness symptoms (i.e. cough, shortness of breath), etc.
- 5. Risk and Complications.** Elderly people with chronic conditions are currently the most at risk from complications from COVID-19. Given the vulnerable populations within the County's care, careful adherence to this plan and guidance provided by the Richland County Public Health Manager/Local Health Officer is essential.
- 6. Limiting Risk/Non-Pharmaceutical Interventions.** The first line of defense to help slow the spread of COVID-19 before a vaccine is available and to ease the burden on healthcare providers include the following:
 - 6.01 Staying home when sick;
 - 6.02 Covering coughs and sneezes using a tissue or sleeve, and disposing of the tissue properly immediately afterwards;
 - 6.03 Washing hands often using hot water and soap for 20 seconds or longer, and immediately washing your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds after coughing or sneezing;
 - 6.04 Routinely cleaning frequently touched surfaces using a disinfectant bearing an EPA-approved emerging viral pathogens claims label, such as: Peroxide, Hypochlorite (bleach), Alcohol based germicidal, as through CDC guidance.
 - 6.05 Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands;
 - 6.06 Not shaking hands with others;
 - 6.07 Avoiding close contact with people who are sick, and keeping a six-foot distance between yourself and other people if COVID-19 is spreading in the community;
 - 6.08 Cleaning and disinfecting tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, sinks and any other areas frequently touched by others;
 - 6.09 Avoiding travel to areas with verified COVID-19 infections (see Travel Restrictions below);
 - 6.10 Avoiding non-essential large gatherings in accordance with guidance from federal, state and local officials;
 - 6.11 Avoiding non-essential visits to long term care facilities; and
 - 6.12 Wearing a face (nose and mouth) covering.
- 7. Response Coordination.** The Public Health Manager/Local Health Officer for Richland County shall be the lead officer; the Richland County Emergency Management Director shall be responsible for coordinating Richland County's response to COVID-19 – under the direction of the Public Health Manager/Local Health Officer and the County Administrator. The scope of that coordination shall include, but is not limited to:
 - 7.01 Consulting with federal, state, and local emergency management and public health officials concerning the County's overall response to COVID-19;

- 7.02 Distributing official communications concerning the virus, its spread, and the County's response to it;
- 7.03 Providing recommendations to personnel on enhanced cleaning and sanitation not otherwise addressed in this plan;
- 7.04 Providing recommendations on office closures, and travel limitations and restrictions; and
- 7.05 Consulting with, and providing recommendations to, department heads on service delivery as it relates to COVID-19.
- 7.06 WebEOC will be utilized to establish a virtual Emergency Operations Center. EOC staff will be provided login credentials: <https://wi.webeocasp.com/wi/> Richland County's incident page is "**2020-03-12 Richland County; COVID-19 Planning & Response**"

8. Communication Protocol

- 8.01 All e-mails, public health bulletins, and press releases concerning the County's overall response to COVID-19 shall be issued by the Public Health Manager/Local Health Officer's designated PIO.
- 8.02 With the exception of the Public Health Manager/Local Health Officer and Emergency Management Director, all employees shall refrain from publically distributing group e-mails, notices, pamphlets, brochures or other forms of correspondence concerning COVID-19 so as not to confuse, contradict or in any other way interfere with official communications issued by the Public Health Manager/Local Health Officer. Employees that are concerned with receiving the most recent and credible information concerning COVID-19 are encouraged to go to the Centers for Disease Control, State of Wisconsin and Richland County's COVID-19 websites: <http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-NCOV/cases-in-us.html> (<https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/index.htm>), <https://covid.co.richland.wi.us/>
- 8.03 The County Administrator and County Clerk shall serve as the liaisons between department heads, elected officials and the Public Health Manager/Local Health Officer.
- 8.04 The County's Emergency Management Director may periodically issue e-mails and NIXLE alerts concerning COVID-19 in order to provide site-specific information or to counter (factualize) mixed-messaging at the local level.
- 8.05 All the information to be disseminated to the public must first be vetted and approved by the Public Health Manager/Local Health Officer, Emergency Management Director and County Administrator, and will be sent out by the designated PIO.
- 8.06 At the department level, department heads may continue to provide information to their employees concerning the manner in which services will be provided to the public in light of COVID-19.
- 8.07 MIS will periodically post information on Facebook and the County's Health and Human Services webpage (<https://co.richland.wi.us/departments/hhs/publichealth>) concerning COVID-19. County departments that have Facebook

sites are encouraged to post links to either the Public Health Manager/Local Health Officer's Facebook page or County site.

- 8.08 Department heads and employees are urged to remain vigilant for scams related to COVID-19.
- A. Avoid clicking on links in unsolicited emails and be wary of email attachments;
 - B. Use trusted sources—such as legitimate, government websites—for up-to-date, fact-based information about COVID-19;
 - C. Do not reveal personal or financial information in email, and do not respond to email solicitations for this information.
 - D. Notify MIS of suspected electronic spam activity.

9. Cleaning and Disinfecting

- 9.01 Each of Richland County's building environmental services staff will be responsible for cleaning and disinfecting all county run facilities utilizing standards proven effective against COVID-19.
- 9.02 To the extent that employees are capable of doing so safely, they shall assist environmental services staff with disinfecting porous and non-porous, touch surfaces.
- 9.03 Department heads shall place posters that encourage cough & sneeze etiquette, staying home when sick and hand hygiene at the entrance to their workplace and in other workplace areas where they are likely to be seen. Where practical, tissues, sanitizers and disinfectants will be provided for staff and/or public use.

10. Quarantines, Exposure, Sick Leave and Emergency Leave

- 10.01 Government Ordered. This Plan does not prescribe the manner in which government-ordered quarantine decisions are to be made. An order to quarantine would likely be issued or recommended by the Wisconsin Department of Health Services and/or Richland County Public Health for Richland County residents.
- 10.02 Exposure and returning to work:
- A. Non-critical county employees who have come into direct contact with individuals who are infected with COVID-19 or are experiencing symptoms shall report such to their supervisors and self-quarantine at home. Employees who are quarantined are expected to periodically contact their healthcare provider and provide updates to their supervisors.
 - B. Critical government employees, Law enforcement employees, emergency response employees, healthcare employees and employees providing essential services who come in direct contact with individuals who are infected with COVID-19 or are experiencing symptoms will report such to their supervisors. With assessment guidance provided by the Public Health Manager/Local Health Officer, employees will follow PPE (personal protective equipment) and self-monitoring protocols until such time as the employee can be tested in compliance with CDC guidance and our Public Health Manager/Local Health Officer consent

C. Returning to work:

- 1) Test-based strategy. Employees will be excluded from returning to work until:
 - a) Resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications and
 - b) Improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath), and
 - c) Negative results of an FDA Emergency Use Authorized molecular assay for COVID-19 from at least two consecutive nasopharyngeal swab specimens collected ≥ 24 hours apart (total of two negative specimens) [1]. See Interim Guidelines for Collecting, Handling, and Testing Clinical Specimens for 2019 Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV).
- 2) Non-test-based strategy. Employees will be excluded from work until:
 - a) At least 3 days (72 hours) have passed since recovery defined as resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications and improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath); and,
 - b) At least 7 days have passed since symptoms first appeared.
- 3) Employees living in the same household as a symptomatic person, or caring for a symptomatic family member, will be excluded from work until the employee has completed a 14-day self-quarantine following the symptomatic person meeting criteria A or B of this section; or
- 4) Cleared by local health official.

10.03 Emergency Leave/Sick Leave. Employees not utilizing PSLA or EFMLEA will be required to use their available leave balances for the duration of their illness or to provide care for a family member's illness (including available compensatory, sick, vacation and floating holiday). Employees exceeding all paid benefit time available will be allowed to enter a negative balance on their sick leave accrual bank until they can safely return to work. Once they have returned, all future paid time off (including compensatory, sick, vacation, and floating holiday) will be recouped at time earned to offset any remaining negative balance. Employees who begin experiencing symptoms are urged to call a healthcare provider first before proceeding to a healthcare facility so that healthcare providers can prepare for their arrival. Requirements for filing FMLA paperwork is in effect for leaves not covered by the PLSA and EFMLEA. Richland County policy regarding voluntary sick leave donation remains in effect if illness/condition meets catastrophic level as defined by policy.

- 10.04 Employees with a suppressed or compromised immune system, or employees living with a person with a suppressed or compromised immune system are encouraged to communicate the need for an accommodation.
- 10.05 To the extent possible, remaining staff shall cover the duties and responsibilities of staff on emergency leave or sick leave.
- 10.06 Department heads and supervisors are required to protect their employees' right to privacy under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Health Insurance Portability and Protection Act (HIPPA).

11. Office Closures. Suspension of services, office closures, and building closures may be necessary. Departments will communicate with Elected Officials and the County Administrator who will take action upon the recommendation of the Public Health Manager/Local Health Officer. Pine Valley Community Village administration reserves the right to make their own building closure determinations based on State and Federal statutes and regulations.

12. Public Meetings

- 12.01 County committees, boards and commissions are strongly encouraged to postpone non-essential, in person, meetings if it all possible.
- 12.02 If meetings must be conducted in person, face coverings and social distancing shall be required of members, employees and the public in attendance.
- 12.03 Committee, Board and Commission meetings may be conducted via teleconferencing, as allowable under Rule 3 of the County Board rules, during the state of emergency with considerations given to open meetings law.
- 12.04 The following Committee, Boards and Commissions will make teleconferencing attendance available to members, employees and the public during the state of emergency:
 - Richland County Board (with posted recording)
 - Finance and Personnel Committee (with posted recording)
 - Rules and Resolutions Committee (with posted recording)
 - Committee on Committees
 - Law Enforcement and Judiciary Committee (with posted recording)
 - Health and Human Services
 - Veterans Services Commission
 - Land Information Council

- Symons Natatorium Board
- Land Conservation Committee
- County Parks Commission
- Fair and Recycling Committee
- Property, Buildings and Grounds Committee
- Emergency Management Committee
- Joint Ambulance Committee and Sub Committee

13. Telecommuting

13.01 Office workers may be allowed to work from home in accordance with the Remote Work Policy.

14. Backup Site. This plan does not recommend a backup site for continuity of operations given limitations of space and technology infrastructure.

15. Travel Restrictions

15.01 All non-essential travel to trainings, seminars, and conferences is restricted.

15.02 Trainings required to obtain or maintain licensing or credentialing may be allowed but only if the training cannot be postponed.

15.03 Travel required for a court proceeding or a bona fide law enforcement, medical examiner, or first responder matter is exempt from these restrictions.

15.04 All employees are strongly encouraged to reduce all personal and leisure travel.

15.05 The Public Health Manager/Local Health Officer may relax these restrictions on a case-by-case basis.

16. Personal Protective Equipment:

16.01 Personal protective equipment may help prevent the spread of infection in the public. Employees may be required to wear protective equipment in community areas and when engaging with members of the public.

16.02 Pine Valley Community Village, Richland County EMS, Health & Human Services and the Sheriff's Department will be responsible for meeting their own protective equipment requirements. These four departments should coordinate with each other to make sure inventories-on-hand are adequate to cover their immediate needs and share resources as requested, when possible. None of the four departments are a PPE Stock Supply Source.

17. Department Specific Plans. Each department should enact or develop supplemental COOP/COG continuity of operations / continuation of government plans specific to their

service area, provided that they do not conflict with the guidance and direction contained in this Plan.

- 18. AAR Exercise.** We are activating a Virtual EOC in response to this public health emergency. When the emergency is concluded, an after-action report will be compiled and distributed.
- 19. Funding.** Requests for contingency funding shall be made by the County Administrator to the Personnel and Finance Committee. Supplemental appropriations are subject to recommendation by the Personnel and Finance Committee and the County Board of Supervisors.
- 20. Compliance Monitoring.** The Public Health Manager/Local Health Officer and/or Emergency Management Director shall be responsible for ensuring department heads and employees are complying with this plan. Violations shall be forwarded to the County Administrator and Personnel and Finance Committee for administrative review.
- 21. Emergency Declaration.** The Public Health Manager/Local Health Officer and/or Emergency Management Director may recommend to the County Administrator and County Board of Supervisors to declare a state of emergency. In the event of an Emergency Declaration, all department heads shall begin carefully tracking all expenses relating to COVID-19 planning and preparedness.
- 22. Approval.** This Plan was adopted by the Personnel and Finance Committee on March 17, 2020, revised on May 12th 2020, revised on August 4th, 2020 and initially adopted by the county on May 19th 2020. Revisions to the plan may be made by the County Administrator in collaboration with the Public Health Manager/Local Health Officer. The plan may be brought back before the County Board upon request of the Board or chair, or at the discretion of the administrator.