

Maplewood Township



COVID-19 Pandemic Plan Township Operations March 2020

In conjunction with the Office of
Emergency Management Team
SARS-COV-2 PANDEMIC PLAN

Introduction

The SARS-CoV-2 virus (the contagious virus that causes COVID-19, commonly known as novel coronavirus) continues to spread globally. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has indicated that COVID-19 is a serious health threat.

While we cannot predict when or if the coronavirus will impact the township we serve, we can anticipate that such an impact could result in high rates of employee absenteeism and an increase in demand for public safety services and difficulty providing normal Township services.

Purpose

This plan was developed to assist this agency in responding to and conducting operations during a potential coronavirus pandemic outbreak. This plan is based on the following goals:

- 1.** Protect employees and their families
- 2.** Minimize the effects of a pandemic on employees and Township residents served by Township employees
- 3.** Continue essential operations while meeting the service expectations of our township

Threat Assessment and Planning Assumptions

A pandemic is a public health emergency with significant political, social, and economic dimensions. It will simultaneously affect public and private sectors. Due to the unique characteristics and events associated with a potential coronavirus pandemic, it is entirely foreseeable that resources at all levels could become overwhelmed.

For Maplewood Township, there will be on-going challenges and demands that will impact agency operations.

These primarily consist of:

- Reduced personnel resources due to a high rate of absenteeism
- Increase in emergency operations and requests for public safety related services
- Maintaining normal Township services and day to day operations

The following is a summary of other planning assumptions and possible threats related to a pandemic, along with social conditions and disruptions that may occur.

- Susceptibility to the virus will be universal.
- Worker absentee rates will likely range between 40 and 80 percent due to personal illnesses, family illnesses, community mitigation efforts, quarantines, childcare issues resulting from school and daycare closures, and the overall fear of risking exposure by leaving the sanctity of one's home.
- Food and medical supply shortages and travel restrictions could result in social and political unrest.

Concept of Operations

All Maplewood Township operations will be carried out in accordance with the 2019 Hazard Mitigation Plan for Essex County. The agency will work in conjunction with County and State emergency management partners and our Police & Fire Departments.

Updates to this Special Order may be forthcoming due to new information learned. The need to develop additional procedures and or practices relating to this Order will be communicated through this document.

Township Goals

There will be competing challenges and demands that will affect agency operations

during a novel coronavirus outbreak. These primarily consist of the aforementioned:

1. Reduced personnel resources due to a high rate of absenteeism;
2. An increase in emergency operations and requests for public safety related services;
3. Attempts to maintain normal Township operations (day-to-day service to our Residents).

Given these factors, the following goals are intended to guide the agency through a pandemic:

1. Protect employees and their families by taking precautionary measures and increasing communication;
2. Conduct emergency operations to enhance public safety and minimize the effects of a pandemic;
3. Continue essential operations while meeting the service expectations of our service population and developing innovative ways to provide Township services with limited in-person contact.

Goal 1: Protect Employees and Their Families

In order to have the personnel resources to fulfill organizational and operational needs during an outbreak, employee protection and safety is the key objective. All other goals and objectives are predicated on successfully carrying out this core responsibility.

Objective 1.1— Communicate with and make information resources available to employees

A. Supporting Initiatives:

1. Provide the updated status and information regarding a potential and/or occurring outbreak to employees, along with recommendations for protective measures.
 - Township Email, Intranet, ADP Time and Attendance & PowerDMS will be used to keep employees updated with the latest information and protective measures.

- Utilize Township Nixle to communicate timely information.
 - Supervisors will reinforce this information at the beginning of all shifts.
2. Provide information to employees for their families and homes regarding preparedness and protective measures.

B. *Objective 1.2 — Make the Workplace Safe*

Supporting Initiatives:

1. Emphasize/reinforce basic hygiene practices, such as:
 - a. Hand washing
 - b. Disinfecting and sterilizing work surfaces
 - c. Use of alcohol-based sanitizers
 - d. Ensuring adequate supplies
 - e. Maintaining safe distance from coworkers
 - f. Use gloves while handling forms/money collected
2. Limit gatherings and group activities of employees.
3. Encourage online services and the use of USPS to send information or Township forms.
4. If necessary, initiate staggered shifts to minimize exposure for employees who are only able to perform on the job duties. Provide VPN access to employees able to continue work at home.

C. *Objective 1.3 — Establish and Enact Policies to Limit the Potential Spread of Illness*

A. Supporting Initiatives:

1. Encourage employees who are ill to stay home from work until they are no longer contagious. You should restrict contact with pets and other animals while you are sick, just like you would around other people. Although there has not been any reports of pets or other animals becoming sick with the COVID-19, it is still recommended that people sick with the COVID-19 virus limit contact with animals until more information is known about the virus. This includes feeding, petting, being licked and sharing food with the animal. If you must interact with your pet or other animal while you are sick, it is recommended to wash your hands before and after you interact with pets and wear a facemask

2. Employees who have symptoms of acute respiratory illness are recommended to stay home and not come to work until they are free of fever (100.4° F [37.8° C] or greater using an oral thermometer), signs of a fever, and any other symptoms for at least 24 hours, without the use of fever-reducing or other symptom-altering medicines (e.g. cough suppressants). Employees should notify their supervisor and stay home if they are sick.
3. Employees who have been exposed to someone with novel coronavirus, particularly ill members of their household or the general public, should follow the recommended course of action as prescribed by the CDC and/or State Department of Health.
4. Employees who develop influenza-like symptoms while at work should leave as soon as possible.
5. Employees who appear to have acute respiratory illness symptoms (i.e. cough, shortness of breath) upon arrival to work or become sick during the day should be separated from other employees and be sent home immediately. Sick employees should cover their noses and mouths with a tissue when coughing or sneezing (or an elbow or shoulder if no tissue is available).
6. Adopt aggressive respiratory hygiene etiquette.
 - a. Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing;
 - b. Use in the nearest waste receptacle to dispose of the tissue after use;
 - c. Perform hand hygiene (e.g., hand washing with non-antimicrobial soap and water, alcohol-based hand rub, or antiseptic hand wash) after having contact with respiratory secretions and contaminated objects/materials.
7. Employees are encouraged to limit travel and are HIGHLY encouraged to defer long plane trips and cruises.

Goal 2: Minimize the effects of a pandemic on employees and Township residents served by Township employees

It is essential that we make every effort to provide the public with the services they need and that we've been able to offer. The next objective will outline steps that should be taken to maintain services and mitigate further risk.

Objective 2.1 – Review Township services and identify ways to provide these services without residents having to come to Town Hall.

A. Supporting Initiatives

- a. Communicate to the public the services that we provide on a day to day basis that can be accomplished through other means. (i.e.: paying taxes online instead of waiting in line at Town Hall and receiving forms/information through USPS.)
- b. Review need for future meetings and large gatherings of Township residents and potentially reschedule.
- c. Encourage all surfaces, door handles and office equipment be wiped often by employees and Buildings and Grounds personnel. A collective and collaborative approach to this effort will only decrease risk of transmission.
- d. Use gloves when handling mail, forms and/or money.
- e. There is a potential need to telecommute. Additional guidance and procedures will be provided if this need arises.

Goal 3: Continue Essential Operations and Provide Primary Services to the Public

The initiatives for this goal are intended to address inadequate staffing due to absenteeism during a novel coronavirus outbreak. Execution of these objectives, in whole or in part, will only be at the direction of the Business Administrator.

Objective 3.1— Prepare and execute personnel resource plan
Supporting Initiatives:

1. The Personnel Director will review available personnel resources and coordinate with Department Heads to establish staffing level needs and possible consolidation.
2. Personnel will be briefed on providing services to residents that does not require in person contact (when possible, i.e.: online services, USPS)
3. Implement telecommuting for personnel whose functions can be substantially accomplished remotely.

Pandemic Preparation and Response (ready.gov)

Pandemic

Before a Pandemic

- Store a two week supply of water and food.
- Periodically check your regular prescription drugs to ensure a continuous supply in your home.
- Have any nonprescription drugs and other health supplies on hand, including pain relievers, stomach remedies, cough and cold medicines, fluids with electrolytes, and vitamins.
- Get copies and maintain electronic versions of health records from doctors, hospitals, pharmacies and other sources and store them, for personal reference. Get help accessing [electronic health records](#).
- Talk with family members and loved ones about how they would be cared for if they got sick, or what will be needed to care for them in your home.

During a Pandemic

Limit the Spread of Germs and Prevent Infection

- **Avoid close contact** with people who are sick.
- When you are sick, **keep your distance** from others to protect them from getting sick too. This includes your pets.
- **Cover your mouth and nose** with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. It may prevent those around you from getting sick.
- **Washing your hands** often with antibacterial soap will help protect you from germs.
- **Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.**
- **Practice other good health habits.** Get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids, and eat nutritious food.

How Coronavirus Spreads (cdc.gov)

How COVID-19 Spreads

Current understanding about how the virus that causes coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) spreads is largely based on what is known about similar coronaviruses. COVID-19 is a new disease and there is more to learn about how it spreads, the severity of illness it causes, and to what extent it may spread in the United States.

Person-to-person spread

The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person.

- Between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet).
- Through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes.

These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs.

Spread from contact with infected surfaces or objects

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.

Can someone spread the virus without being sick?

- People are thought to be most contagious when they are most symptomatic (the sickest).
- Some spread might be possible before people show symptoms; there have been reports of this occurring with this new coronavirus, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads.

How easily does the virus spread?

How easily a virus spreads from person-to-person can vary. Some viruses are highly contagious (spread easily), like measles, while other viruses do not spread as easily. Another factor is whether the spread is sustained.

The virus that causes COVID-19 seems to be spreading easily and sustainably in the community (“community spread”) in some affected geographic areas. Community spread means people have been infected with the virus in an area, including some who are not sure how or where they became infected.

Pandemic Planning Checklist for Individuals and Families

You can prepare for an influenza pandemic now. You should know both the magnitude of what

can happen during a pandemic outbreak and what actions you can take to help lessen the impact of an influenza pandemic on you and your family. This checklist will help you gather the information and resources you may need in case of a flu pandemic.

1. To plan for a pandemic:

- Store a two week supply of water and food. During a pandemic, if you cannot get to a store, or if stores are out of supplies, it will be important for you to have extra supplies on hand. This can be useful in other types of emergencies, such as power outages and disasters.
- Periodically check your regular prescription drugs to ensure a continuous supply in your home.
- Have nonprescription drugs and other health supplies on hand, including pain relievers, stomach remedies, cough and cold medicines, fluids with electrolytes, and vitamins.
- Talk with family members and loved ones about how they would be cared for if they got sick, or what will be needed to care for them in your home.
- Volunteer with local groups to prepare and assist with emergency response.
- Get involved in your community as it works to prepare for an influenza pandemic.

2. To limit the spread of germs and prevent infection:

- Teach your children to wash hands frequently with soap and water, and model the current behavior.
- Teach your children to cover coughs and sneezes with tissues, and be sure to model that behavior.
- Teach your children to stay away from others as much as possible if they are sick. Stay home from work and school if sick.

3. Items to have on hand for an extended stay at home:

Examples of food and non-perishables

- Ready-to-eat canned meats, fish, fruits, vegetables, beans, and soups

- Protein or fruit bars
- Dry cereal or granola
- Peanut butter or nuts
- Dried Fruit
- Crackers
- Canned juices
- Bottled water
- Canned or jarred baby food and formula
- Pet food
- Other nonperishable foods

Examples of medical, health, and emergency supplies

- Prescribed medical supplies such as glucose and blood-pressure monitoring equipment
- Soap and water, or alcohol-based (60-95%) hand wash
- Medicines for fever, such as acetaminophen or ibuprofen
- Thermometer
- Anti-diarrheal medication
- Vitamins
- Fluids with electrolytes
- Cleansing agent/soap
- Flashlight
- Batteries
- Portable radio
- Manual can opener
- Garbage bags
- Tissues, toilet paper, disposable diapers

Handwashing

Wash Your Hands Often to Stay Healthy

You can help yourself and your loved ones stay healthy by washing your hands often, especially during these key times when you are likely to get and spread germs:

- **Before, during, and after** preparing food
- **Before** eating food

- **Before** and **after** caring for someone at home who is sick with vomiting or diarrhea
- **Before** and **after** treating a cut or wound
- **After** using the toilet
- **After** [changing diapers or cleaning up a child who has used the toilet](#)
- **After** blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing
- **After** touching an animal, animal feed, or animal waste
- **After** handling pet food or pet treats
- **After** touching garbage



Follow Five Steps to Wash Your Hands the Right Way:

Washing your hands is easy, and it is one of the most effective ways to prevent the spread of germs. Clean hands can stop germs from spreading from one person to another and throughout an entire community—from your home and workplace to childcare facilities and hospitals.

Follow these five steps every time.

1. **Wet** your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold), turn off the tap, and apply soap.
2. **Lather** your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.

3. **Scrub** your hands for at least 20 seconds. Need a timer? Hum the “Happy Birthday” song from beginning to end twice.
4. **Rinse** your hands well under clean, running water.
5. **Dry** your hands using a clean towel or air-dry them.

Use Hand Sanitizer When You Can't Use Soap and Water



You can use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.

Washing hands with soap and water is the best way to get rid of germs in most situations. If soap and water are not readily available, you can use an alcohol-based [hand sanitizer](#) that contains at least 60% alcohol. You can tell if the sanitizer contains at least 60% alcohol by looking at the product label.

Sanitizers can quickly reduce the number of germs on hands in many situations. However,

- Sanitizers do **not** get rid of all types of germs.
- Hand sanitizers may not be as effective when hands are visibly dirty or greasy.
- Hand sanitizers might not remove harmful chemicals from hands like pesticides and heavy metals.

How to use hand sanitizer:

- Apply the gel product to the palm of one hand (read the label to learn the correct amount).
- Rub your hands together.
- Rub the gel over all the surfaces of your hands and fingers until your hands are dry. This should take around 20 seconds.

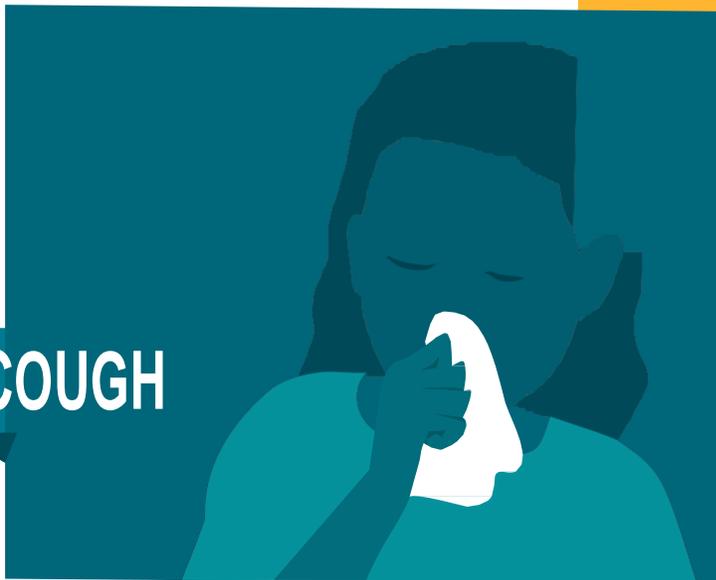
Patients with COVID-19 have experienced mild to severe respiratory illness.

Symptoms* can include

FEVER



COUGH



*Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure.

SHORTNESS



Seek medical advice if you develop symptoms, and have been in close contact with a person known to have COVID-19 or if you live in or have recently been in an area with ongoing spread of COVID-19.

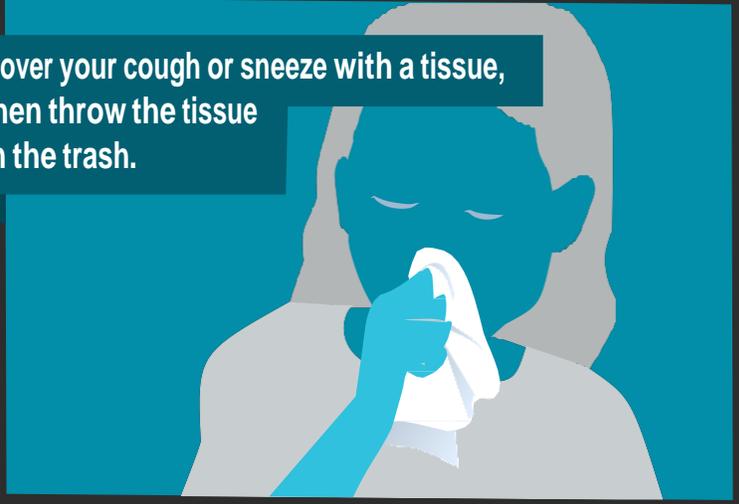
STOP THE SPREAD OF GERMS

Help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases like COVID-19.

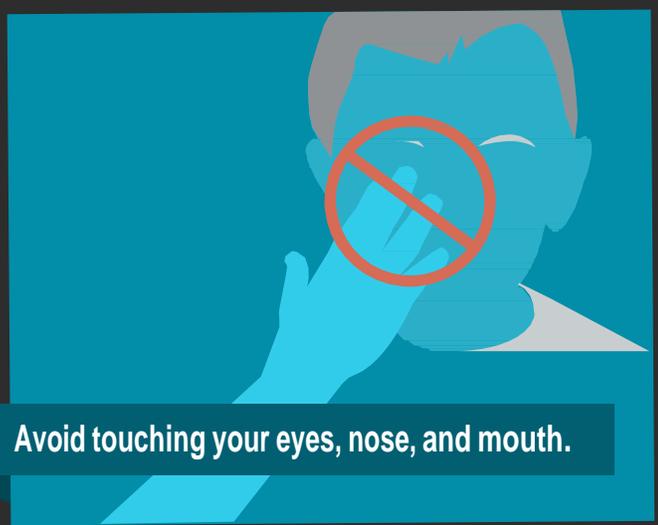
Avoid close contact with people who are sick.



Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.



Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.



Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.



Stay home when you are sick, except to get medical care.



Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.



For more information: www.cdc.gov/COVID19