



Northshore Utility District

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER EFFECTIVE MARCH 23, 2020

PANDEMIC POLICY

BACKGROUND:

A "Pandemic" or localized outbreak threatens Northshore Utility District's (District) ability to provide essential services to the community. As a water and sewer service provider, it's essential to have an established Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) to ensure necessary functions and services are provided in the event of an outbreak. Some organizations may be forced to suspend operations due to the severity of an illness outbreak, however being an essential service provider, it is not feasible to shut-down the District's essential services. An effective pandemic plan provides a framework in which to operate and strengthens the District's ability to transition to normal operations once the threat subsides.

PURPOSE AND SCOPE:

This policy is intended to provide guidance in the event a pandemic illness or public health emergency that is, or expected to, adversely affect operations of the District. The following guidelines and practices consist of appropriate measures to mitigate and minimize impacts of a pandemic. The measures include; increase social distancing, increased hygiene, suspension of non-essential services and practices, identification of needs based on the following considerations – (see appendix A. for sample COOP);

- A. Identification of staffing levels necessary for operational needs,
- B. restricting access and exposure for vulnerable staff,
- C. identification of essential service functions,
- D. telecommuting options for qualifying position.

This policy applies to all employees and the Board of Commissioners of Northshore Utility District.

DEFINITIONS:

- A. Pandemic: a disease that is prevalent over a region, country, or the world.
- B. Outbreak: a widespread occurrence of an infectious disease in an organization, community at a time with a hospitalization and/or mortality rate significantly higher than the common flu.

POLICY:

It is the policy of Northshore Utility District to take appropriate measures needed to address a pandemic. Protecting the community, District staff and providing a continuity of operations are the top priorities for the District during a pandemic outbreak. This policy authorizes certain actions that may be taken to address a pandemic.

PROCEDURES:

The following procedures are created to minimize disease exposure and maintain continuity of District operations if a pandemic becomes a threat to District employees, their families, and the community at large.

Declaration of Pandemic and/or Public Health Emergency: Public health professionals at organizations such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Washington State Public Health Department, Washington State Governor, and/or King County/Seattle Public Health Department may declare that a pandemic, outbreak, or public health emergency exists. Such declarations may contain instructions to both private and public sector entities which will be followed by the District as applicable.

A. Personnel Policies

- i. Procedures to minimize the spread of disease or illness: Employees are required to practice standard Non-Pharmaceutical Interventions ("NPI's"), including covering coughs by coughing into their elbows or into a tissue, regular hand washing, regular use of alcohol hand sanitizer, and avoiding touching eyes, nose, or mouth. Hands and work surfaces should be disinfected frequently. Employees are also to utilize social distancing such as maintaining six feet from others when practical to do so.
- ii. Employees who have a communicable illness or are experiencing flu-like symptoms are prohibited from coming to work and are encouraged to consult their physician.
- iii. Employees reporting to work that exhibit symptoms of a communicable illness will be sent home and encouraged to consult their physician. The employee shall be required to utilize accrued leave, if any, pursuant to the Employee Handbook if they are sent home due to symptoms of an illness.
- iv. If the illness of an employee or member of an employee's household interferes with reporting to work in a timely manner, the employee is responsible for notifying their supervisor or Director. Employees must not return to work until discontinuation of home isolation is authorized by the CDC – see Appendix A. Employees are required to check-in regularly to report their status prior to returning to work, to the employer's HR representative.
- v. Employees are required to utilize their accrued sick or vacation leave, or compensatory time while recovering from an illness or caring for an ill spouse or dependent.
- vi. Employees in their first year of employment with the District shall be allowed to use up to 80 hours of unaccrued "supplemental sick leave", (as defined in the District's employee handbook) once their balance is exhausted for absences related to a pandemic. Future sick leave accruals will be used to draw down any negative balance created by this provision.
- vii. When quarantine of an employee is ordered by State or County Health Officials due to a pandemic illness, any accrued leave may be taken for the period of quarantine and may qualify for additional benefits such as Paid Family Medical Leave.

B. Operational Practices

At the discretion of the General Manager or designee, the District may alter its business practices, employee working hours, hours of business, and services provided. As each pandemic outbreak differs from one to another, the General Manager shall relay on information and guidance from local and national health organizations when making decisions regarding any alteration of operations. Examples of potential measures that could be taken include but are not limited to:

- i. The District may implement temporary emergency procedures to minimize person to person contact between employees. Such measures may include greater use of e-mail, phone, and teleconferences as opposed to in-person meetings and contact.
- ii. Reduced or eliminated, reception and front counter service: The District may alter how it conducts business by limiting or halting services at the counter areas of the District. Alternative methods of receiving payments and permit related submittals shall be implemented.
- iii. The use of the Public Meeting Rooms shall be limited: The use of the public meeting rooms shall be limited to District use only. All previously scheduled use of the rooms by outside agencies or groups shall be canceled unless specifically authorized by the General Manager.
- iv. Maintain Social Distances: The congregation of multiple employees or groups within offices and common areas shall be maintained to an appropriate number as recommended by local, state or national health care organizations. The General Manager may order a more restrictive number as deemed appropriate for the safety of the work environment.
- v. Elimination of Potential Sources of Contamination: Communal unwrapped food items shall be removed from the workplace and highly discouraged.
- vi. Nonessential visits to District Facilities Curtailed: All nonessential entry into District facilities shall be restricted. This includes vendors, associates, customers, employee family members, etc. This limited entry shall also apply to those employees or commissioners that do not have an essential purpose for entering the District's facility. Including those who have been assigned to work from home, affected by the implementation of a reduced staffing order.
- vii. Work from Home Assignments: Some positions may be eligible to work from home provided they enter into a telecommuting agreement with the District as authorized by the General Manager. The decision to assign or authorize work from home will depend on several factors, but most prominently will be related to those job duties that can be effectively performed remotely.
- viii. Utility Crew Separation: The utility crews may be temporarily separated during a pandemic outbreak to reduce social interactions. Separation may occur through implementation of shift work with modified hours and/or a requirement to report to work at an alternate location (i.e. Inglewood SEOC and District HQ).

Field interactions between the segregated crews will be separated as much as possible to minimize exposure. Limiting vehicle assignment shall also be considered.

- ix. **Reduced Staffing:** The District may reduce In-Office Staffing, (see appendix B.), to maintain continuity of operations and delivery of services. The number of staff designated to report in-office shall be dynamic and be updated as conditions develop.
 1. In the event the District moves to a staffing reduction order, staff members will continue to receive their normal pay and benefits and may be provided a temporary remote work, or standby, option. Employees affected by reduced staffing shall maintain availability and work remotely as assigned.
 2. Preauthorized time-off, training request may be revoked to meet the needs of the organization. If an employee is called-back to work while already on vacation or on comp-time leave will be credited 2 hours of comp-time leave for every 1 hour they are called back to work. The General Manager may provide reimbursement considerations for non-refundable cost incurred by the employee as a result of a cancellation or call-back situation – these costs may consist of non-refundable airfare, hotel, special events etc....
 3. An employee in a Non-“Essential Service Position”, (as classified in a current COOP - see appendix B.), who self-elects to stay home, shall use their time-off accrual bank and not be eligible for sick leave assistance pool.
 4. An employee in an “Essential Service Position”, (as classified in a current COOP - see appendix A. example), must be replaced by a qualified person before an accommodation for a work from home request, shelter in place, or reassignment option is provided. The District shall make reasonable efforts to ensure these employees are provided with proper PPE, training and work environment to reduce risk of exposure at work.
 5. If employee(s) is(are) sent home as a result of a shelter-in-place order or Directive from the General Manager, then the employee shall be compensated their regular rate of pay provided the employee;
 - a.) enters into a “**telecommuting agreement**” and meet the terms and conditions per the Districts Telecommuting policy; or,
 - b.) be on “**standby status**” in which they are to remain at home during their compensated time and abide by conditions of being available to work and remain fit for duty. The employee must respond within 30 minutes to a call. If the employee does not respond within 30 minutes of a call, then they may be subject to disciplinary action, and receive a reduction in their personal leave bank accruals.

Employees must check-in with their supervisor by phone, email, or other method mutually agreed upon, daily to receive instruction and report on their

work status.

Employees must also receive prior authorization from their supervisor if they intend to use personal time while working remotely or while on standby status.

Employees are also to obtain prior authorization for additional requested accommodations such as a modified work schedule, in which a detail account of work activities and time is specified and required.

6. Employees that are sick shall use their sick leave and other accrued leave per the Employees Handbook Policy. Employees that do not have enough leave in their accrual bank may request assistance from the District's donated sick leave bank – if eligible.
7. Employees that have contracted the Pandemic illness, with documented confirmation from their health care provider, shall be eligible to receive up to 10 working days of additional supplemental sick leave benefit if the employee has exhausted their leave bank balance.

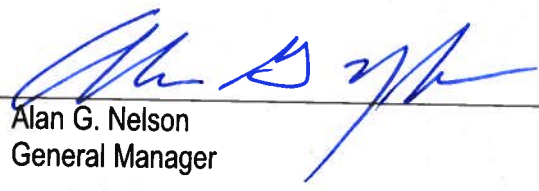
REFERENCES:

- A. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): <https://www.cdc.gov>
- B. Washington State Department of Health: <https://www.doh.wa.gov>
- C. Public Health – Seattle & King County: www.kingcounty.gov/depts/health.aspx
- D. Northshore Utility District – Telecommuting Policy, Safety Manual and Employee Handbook

AUTHORIZATION:

Ratified by the Board of Commissioners on MARCH 23, 2020.

Thomas D. Mortimer



Alan G. Nelson
General Manager

President, Board of Commissioners
Date Signed: _____

Date Signed: 3/23/2020

APPENDIX A.



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
CDC 24/7: Saving Lives. Protecting People™

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

Discontinuation of Home Isolation for Persons with COVID-19 (Interim Guidance)

CDC guidance for COVID-19 may be adapted by state and local health departments to respond to rapidly changing local circumstances.

Summary Page

Who this is for:

Healthcare providers and public health officials managing persons with coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) under home isolation.

Summary of Recent Changes

Guidance as of March 16, 2020

- New guidance is added for a strategy to discontinue home isolation without testing.
- Updated guidance for a test-based strategy: The recommendation to collect both NP and OP swabs at each sampling has been changed so that only one swab is necessary, preferably NP, at each sampling.

Limited information is available to characterize the spectrum of clinical illness, transmission efficiency, and the duration of viral shedding for persons with novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19). This guidance is based on available information about COVID-19 and subject to change as additional information becomes available.

For Hospitalized Patients, see [\(Interim Guidance for Discontinuation of Transmission-Based Precautions Among Hospitalized Patients with COVID-19\)](#).

For Persons with COVID-19 Under Home Isolation:

The decision to discontinue home isolation should be made in the context of local circumstances. Options now include both 1) a time-since-illness-onset and time-since-recovery (non-test-based) strategy, and 2) a test-based strategy.

Time-since-illness-onset and time-since-recovery strategy (non-test-based strategy)*

Persons with COVID-19 who have symptoms and were directed to care for themselves at home may discontinue home isolation under the following conditions:

- 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,
- At least 7 days have passed *since symptoms first appeared*.

Test-based strategy (simplified from initial protocol) Previous recommendations for a test-based strategy remain applicable; however, a test-based strategy is contingent on the availability of ample testing supplies and laboratory capacity as well as convenient access to testing. For jurisdictions that choose to use a test-based strategy, the recommended protocol has been simplified so that *only one swab is needed at every sampling*.

Persons who have COVID-19 who have symptoms and were directed to care for themselves at home may discontinue home isolation under the following conditions:

- Resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications and
- Improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath) and
- 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). See [Interim Guidelines for Collecting, Handling, and Testing Clinical Specimens from Persons Under Investigation \(PUIs\) for 2019 Novel Coronavirus \(2019-nCoV\)](#) for specimen collection guidance.

Individuals with laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 who have not had any symptoms may discontinue home isolation when at least 7 days have passed since the date of their first positive COVID-19 diagnostic test and have had no subsequent illness.

Footnote

*This recommendation will prevent most, but may not prevent all instances of secondary spread. The risk of transmission after recovery, is likely very substantially less than that during illness.

**All test results should be final before isolation is ended. Testing guidance is based upon limited information and is subject to change as more information becomes available.

Additional Resources

NOTE: Specific guidance for return to work for healthcare facilities for healthcare personnel can be found at: [Criteria for Return to Work for Healthcare Personnel with Confirmed or Suspected COVID-19 \(Interim Guidance\)](#)

- [Discontinuation of In-Home Isolation for Immunocompromised Persons with COVID-19 \(Interim Guidance\)](#)
- [Interim Guidance for Implementing Home Care of People Not Requiring Hospitalization for 2019 Novel Coronavirus \(2019-nCoV\)](#)
- [Interim guidance for persons who may have 2019 Novel Coronavirus \(2019-nCoV\) to prevent spread in homes and residential communities](#)

References

- Al-Abdely HM, Midgley CM, Alkhamis AM, et al. Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus infection dynamics and antibody responses among clinically diverse patients, Saudi Arabia. *Emerg Infect Dis.* 2019 Apr;25(4):753-66.
- Al-Abdely HM, Midgley CM, Alkhamis AM, et al. Infectious MERS-CoV isolated from a mildly ill patient, Saudi Arabia. *Open Forum Infect Dis.* 2018 May 15;5(6):ofy111.

APPENDIX B.

**CONTINUITY OF OPERATIONS PLAN
(COVID -19 - 3/23/2020)**

DEPT	POSITION TITLE	Position Count		Enhances Work Environment	Position Impact			Essential Service Positions	Remote * Eligible
		Current Service Level	Min. Service Level		Functional Day-to-Day Business	In-Office Staff Reduction	Essential Service Positions		
ADMIN	Executive Assistant (Board)	1	1		X		X	R	
ADMIN	Admin Svc Man/Executive Assistant (HR)	2	1		X			R	
ADMIN	Communications Support Specialist	1	1		X		X	R	
ADMIN	General Manager	1	1		X		X	R	
ENG	Administrative Specialist-(Engineering)	1	0	X				R	
ENG	Permit/Engineering Technician	2	1		X			R	
ENG	Engineering Inspector (All)	3	2		X		X	SB	
ENG	Engineer Director/Engineer-Senior	3	2		X		X	R	
FIN	Administrative Specialist/Receptionist-All (Finance)	4	2		X			R	
FIN	Finance Specialist Accountant (Finance)	1	1		X			R	
FIN	Finance Supervisor (Finance)	1	1		X			R	
FIN	Inventory & Purchasing Specialist	1	1		X		X	R	
FIN	Finance Director	1	1		X			R	
IT	IT Technician	1	0	X				R	
IT	IT Engineer (Lead)/GIS-Specialist	2	1		X			R	
IT	IT Director/Systems Administrator	2	1		X			R	
M&O -FF	Facilities Maintenance Tech (Change Safety Officer)	1	0		X		X	R	
M&O -FF	Fleet Mechanic (All)	2	1		X		X	SB	
M&O -FF	Fleet & Facilities Supervisor	1	1		X		X	SB	
M&O-UTL	Maintenance Aide	1	0	X				R	
M&O-UTL	Safety & Water/Wastewater Quality Coordinator	1	1		X		X		
M&O-UTL	SCADA System Specialist	1	0		X				
M&O-UTL	Utility Worker-Senior (Locator/Cust Svc)	1	1		X		X	R	
M&O-UTL	Utility Worker	10	5		X				
M&O-UTL	Utility Worker-Lead	4	2		X		X		
M&O-UTL	M&O Analyst/Dispatcher	1	1		X		X		
M&O-UTL	Utility Supervisor	2	1		X		X	R	
M&O	M&O Director/Utility Superintendent	2	1		X		X	R	
TOTAL STAFFING COUNT		54	31		31		21	14	

* R = Working Remote, SB = Standby