

Cohoes Housing Authority Health Emergency Plan

DATE OF APPROVED PLAN: March 16, 2021

***This plan has been developed in accordance with New York Labor Law §27-c**

Purpose, Scope, Situation Overview, and Assumptions

Purpose

This plan has been developed in accordance with New York State Labor Law §27-c which requires that public employers 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 by Cohoes Housing Authority to be used during a declared public health emergency in the State of New York which may impact the operations of Cohoes Housing Authority.

Overview

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.

Implementation

The Executive Director of Cohoes Housing Authority and his/her designees are responsible for executing and directing the implementation of this plan.

Upon the determination to implement this plan by the Executive Director, all employees and contractors of Cohoes Housing Authority shall be notified. Department heads may be asked to communicate with their employees in this regard. Tenants and the public will be notified of pertinent operational changes. The Executive Director will maintain communications with tenants and the public as needed throughout the implementation of this plan, with support from department heads.

The Executive Director and Department Heads will maintain awareness of information, direction, and guidance from public health officials and the Governor's office and authorize amendments to this plan as necessary.

The Executive Director will direct the resumption of normal operations or operations with modifications as necessary.

Essential Functions and Positions

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

Each essential function identified above requires certain positions on-site to effectively operate. Identified below are 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 are not identified in this section.

1.
Justification: Building Maintenance Mechanic – two (2) essential employees are needed for this position. This position performs a variety of skilled building repair and maintenance duties. This positions work sites are rotated on a semi-annual basis. The housing authority work sites are Roulier Heights, Saratoga Sites, Manor Sites and Dr. Jay McDonald Towers, which are all located in Cohoes, NY.
2.
Justification: Building Maintenance Worker – three (3) essential employees are needed for this position. This position performs a variety of semi-skilled building repair and maintenance tasks. This positions work sites are rotated on a semi-annual basis. The housing authority work sites are Roulier Heights, Saratoga Sites, Manor Sites and Dr. Jay McDonald Towers, which are all located in Cohoes, NY.
3.
Justification: Independent Contractors – there may be various independent contractors on the housing authority work sites depending on the type of professional, general and specialty building and/or property repairs needed.

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. Cohoes Housing Authority employees will be directed to work remotely by the Executive Director. Employees whose positions are appropriate

for remote work and who are assigned to work remotely will be notified by the Executive Director and will work with information technology personnel to ensure that staff assigned to work remotely have access to email and voice messages, and other needed information to support their jobs.

Where possible, “essential” staff may be assigned to work remotely for part of their work week to reduce exposures. Further, work hours may be altered to best accommodate public health protective protocols for employees and the public. Alterations to building access and the means by which the public interacts with Cohoes Housing Authority employees may also take place to support these protections. Protective actions may include, but are not limited to: occupancy restrictions, protective barriers, and increased conduct of business by internet, phone, drop boxes, or other means. Protective actions will be taken in accordance with County and State Health Departments and CDC guidelines and requirements.

Staggered Shifts

Implementing staggered shifts may be possible for personnel performing duties which 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, Cohoes Housing Authority 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

Cohoes Housing Authority has the ability to stagger shifts in four (4) departments. Department heads will support the Executive Director in identifying the optimum scheduling to ensure essential services are delivered to the public. Department heads will notify their staff of scheduling changes. For a staggering of shifts which alternates days on-site, staff will be provided with technology and access to support remote work for the days they are off-site. Staff assigned off-site will continue to be paid at their normal rate.

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:

1. Masks
2. Face shields
3. Gloves
4. Disposable gowns and aprons

While cleaning supplies are not PPE, cleaning supplies are needed to sanitize surfaces.

Protocols for providing PPE include:

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.

Cohoes Housing Authority department heads are responsible for ensuring an adequate supply of PPE and cleaning supplies to meet the requirements of this protocol. Staff may obtain PPE directly from their department heads as needed. Various local and national vendors (Ace Hardware, Lowes, HD Supply, Grainger, Share Corp.) will be the primary source.

Staff Exposures, Cleaning, and Disinfection

Staff Exposures

Cohoes Housing Authority will follow CDC/public health recommendations and requirements and coordinate with our local public health officials 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:

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/constituents will be disinfected at least hourly.
 - b. Department heads will ensure that employees clean and disinfect work areas according to this protocol. The Building Maintenance Mechanic and/or Building Maintenance Worker will clean and sanitize all public spaces and high touch surfaces in accordance with this protocol.
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 and Contractor Leave

Due to extenuating and unanticipated circumstances, Cohoes Housing Authority may reduce the burden on employees by altering leave policies. Employees continue to be eligible for protections under federal and state employment laws, FMLA, executive orders, and other potential sources.

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 Cohoes Housing Authority to support contact tracing within the organization and may be shared with local public health officials.

Housing for Essential Employees

Under extreme circumstances, a public health emergency may require that essential employees be 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 Cohoes Housing Authority's essential operations. If such a need arises, hotel rooms are expected to be the most viable option.

As the Executive Director of Cohoes Housing Authority, I hereby attest that his plan has been developed, approved, and placed in full effect in accordance with New York State Labor Law §27-c to address public health emergency planning requirements.

DATE: 3/17/2021

BY: Katherine Oliver

TITLE: Executive Director

SIGNATURE:

