



# Board of County Commissioners Agenda Request

**3B**  
Agenda Item #

**Requested Meeting Date:** 6/22/2021

**Title of Item:** Sunset

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> REGULAR AGENDA	<b>Action Requested:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Direction Requested
<input type="checkbox"/> CONSENT AGENDA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Approve/Deny Motion	<input type="checkbox"/> Discussion Item
<input type="checkbox"/> INFORMATION ONLY	<input type="checkbox"/> Adopt Resolution (attach draft)	<input type="checkbox"/> Hold Public Hearing* <i>*provide copy of hearing notice that was published</i>

<b>Submitted by:</b> Bobbie Danielson	<b>Department:</b> HR
--	--------------------------

<b>Presenter (Name and Title):</b> Bobbie Danielson, HR Director	<b>Estimated Time Needed:</b> 3 minutes
---	--

**Summary of Issue:**

Temporary policies were adopted in 2020 near the start of the Covid-19 pandemic. Emergency paid sick leave expired on May 31, 2021. This agenda request is to sunset the following Covid-related policies, effective July 1, 2021:

- 1) Interim Policy: Coronavirus Program for Employees
- 2) Covid-19 Preparedness Plan for Aitkin County

Copies are attached.

The following practice will remain in place: Aitkin County employees who are experiencing symptoms of Covid-19 should not report to work, should stay home and self-isolate and consider being tested. Employees should follow CDC guidelines and steps to help prevent the spread of Covid-19 if they are sick (link below). The employer will follow CDC guidelines as it relates to determining when it's safe for employees to end home isolation, return to work, and to be around others after they've had or likely had Covid-19 (link below).

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/steps-when-sick.html>  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/end-home-isolation.html>

**Alternatives, Options, Effects on Others/Comments:**

**Recommended Action/Motion:**  
 Motion to sunset these policies effective 7/1/2021, and to continue the practice noted above moving forward...  
 Sunset Interim Policy: Coronavirus Program for Employees and Covid-19 Preparedness Plan for Aitkin County

**Financial Impact:**  
*Is there a cost associated with this request?*  Yes  No  
*What is the total cost, with tax and shipping? \$*  
*Is this budgeted?*  Yes  No *Please Explain:*



# **Interim Policy: Coronavirus Program for Employees**

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

	<b>PAGE</b>
<b>Article I. PURPOSE:</b>	<b>03</b>
<b>Article II. UTILIZATION OF PAID LEAVE DURING A PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY</b>	<b>04</b>
<b>FORM: REQUEST FOR NEGATIVE SICK LEAVE (OR PTO) DURING A DECLARED PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY</b>	<b>07</b>
<b>Article III. SCHEDULE CHANGES AND WORKING REMOTELY FROM HOME</b>	<b>08</b>
<b>Article IV. SENDING EMPLOYEES HOME WHO APPEAR TO BE SICK</b>	<b>08</b>
<del><b>Article V. POST-TRAVEL MONITORING</b></del>	<del><b>09</b></del>
<i>Post Travel Monitoring Section Deleted by County Board 4/27/2021</i>	
<b>Article VI. NOTIFYING OTHER EMPLOYEES OF A CONFIRMED CASE OF CORONAVIRUS</b>	<b>09</b>
<b>Article VII. WORKERS COMPENSATION</b>	<b>09</b>

**Aitkin County**

**Interim Policy: Coronavirus Program for Employees**

**Article I. PURPOSE:**

Section 1. Aitkin County believes in the importance of a healthy workplace and wellness and wants to work together with employees to ensure essential functions are operational, services can be provided, and employees are supported. In order to assist employees with health concerns and issues related to the current public health environment, this Coronavirus Policy will be in place until abolished by the County Administrator, as directed by the Board of Commissioners.

We recognize that the evolving nature of the pandemic will likely create the need for this policy to be amended, updated, and replaced. This policy is dated in order to identify the most current policy.

Section 2. Paid Leave under the Federal Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) ended on December 31, 2020. Aitkin County is extending emergency paid sick leave (EPSL) to employees who are unable to work (or telework) due to a need for leave because of the Covid-related matters listed below.

**These provisions go into effect January 1, 2021.**

**(A) Aitkin County Emergency Paid Sick Leave (EPSL):**

Emergency Paid Sick Leave (EPSL) is available for employees who are unable to work (or telework) due to a need for leave because:

- 1) The employee has been advised by a health care provider to self-quarantine due to concerns related to COVID-19.
- 2) The employee is experiencing COVID-19 symptoms and seeking a medical diagnosis.
- 3) The County will also provide up to two weeks of paid sick leave at partial pay (2/3 rate), up to a specified cap, when an employee is unable to work because of a need to care for an individual subject to a Federal, State, or local quarantine or isolation order related to COVID-19 or who has been advised by a health care provider to self-quarantine due to concerns related to COVID-19.
- 4) The County will also provide up to two weeks of paid sick leave at partial pay, up to a specified cap, when an employee needs to care for the employee's son or daughter whose school or place of care is closed, or whose child care provider is unavailable, due to COVID-19 related reasons.
- 5) Effective April 1, 2021, the employee is unable to work because they are obtaining a COVID-19 vaccine, or are recovering from an illness, injury or condition related to such vaccine (side effects).
- 6) Effective April 1, 2021, the employee is unable to work because they are seeking or waiting for the results of a diagnostic test or awaiting a medical diagnosis related to Coronavirus.

Documentation from the clinic or healthcare provider, supporting the request, including the employee's name and date, is required in order to qualify for emergency paid sick leave (EPSL). Full-time employees may not exceed 80 hours of emergency paid sick leave April 1, 2020 – May 31, 2021 (FFCRA and County EPSL, combined), pro-rated for part-time employees.

Aitkin County emergency paid sick leave (EPSL) will sunset on May 31, 2021.

Full-time employees will be paid for up to 80 hours of work. Part-time employees who have a normal weekly schedule are entitled up to the number of hours of Paid Sick Leave equal to the number of hours that the employee is normally scheduled to work over two workweeks. Part-time employees who lack a normal weekly schedule will be paid up to the number of hours they worked on their last pay period.

Paid emergency sick leave is paid at 100% for an employee's own isolation, diagnosis, or treatment and at 2/3 pay for any other qualifying reason. An employee may choose to supplement their paycheck with available paid leave hours.

Emergency Paid Sick Leave (EPSL) will be utilized prior to other leaves that may be available.

Aitkin County's emergency paid sick leave (EPSL) will run concurrent with FMLA.

## **Article II. UTILIZATION OF PAID LEAVE DURING A PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY**

*County Administrator Jessica Seibert declared this policy to be active on March 18, 2020, following County Board adoption.*

### **Section 1. Policy**

Conditions may occur where a disease, such as influenza, respiratory illness or other contagious disease, has been declared by the World Health Organization (WHO), Centers for Disease Control (CDC), or Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) to be a public health emergency, indicating widespread human infection. When one or more of the above declarations have been enacted, the County Administrator shall have discretion to declare this policy as active, with County Board ratification to follow.

If the County Administrator declares this policy to be active, with County Board ratification to follow, exceptions to the collectively bargained paid leave benefits and related county policies would be permitted to the benefit of employees, as follows:

- A. Full-time employees who have exhausted all paid leave will be allowed to go into the negative of up to 15 days of paid leave (up to a maximum of 120 hours, unless a greater amount is approved at the discretion of the County Administrator) for absence from work due to an infection of the public health emergency or to care for an immediate family member due to an infection of the public health emergency. Pro-rated for part-time employees, see attached form. Refer to the policy manual or applicable contract for definition of immediate family member under the sick leave provision.

- B. Full-time employees may use any available paid leave (and go into the negative up to 120 hours), in the event where a child's school or place of daycare has been closed due to public health emergency and their presence is required to provide care for the family member. Pro-rated for part-time employees, see attached form.
- C. Up to a maximum of 120 hours negative balance may be arrived at in combination between reasons (A) and (B) above, but shall not exceed 120 hours when combined for a full-time employee. Pro-rated for part-time employees.

All other provisions of the collective bargaining agreements remain intact, including but not limited to those pertaining to paid leave benefits.

#### Section 2. Scope

This policy applies to all County employees and is only in effect upon declaration by the County Administrator, with County Board ratification to follow, and it will remain in effect until the County Administrator declares it to be inactive, as directed by the Board of Commissioners. In making the decisions to invoke and end this policy, the County Administrator will consult with the Directors of Public Health & Human Services and Human Resources.

#### Section 3. Responsibilities

Employees will receive a copy of this policy at the time that a declaration is made by the County Administrator that the policy is being activated. Supervisors will be asked to discuss the policy with their employees.

#### Section 4. Background

Among prevention strategies associated with influenza and respiratory illnesses, some of the best ways to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to the virus that causes it. The Minnesota Department of Health strongly encourages people to stay home if they are feeling sick, especially if they are experiencing influenza-like or respiratory symptoms associated with widespread transmission.

Unique circumstances may exist during a declared public health emergency that our collectively bargained agreements and policies do not provide adequate guidance. An example of this may be an immediate family member's school or care provider being closed due to a declared public health emergency.

#### Section 5. Procedures

An employee can go into the negative up to 15 days (120 hours) of paid leave who meet the criteria below. The actual number of paid leave hours will be based on the employee's usual work schedule exclusive of overtime and may not exceed 120 hours, unless a higher level is approved by the County Administrator.

- A. County Administrator has declared activation of this policy, with County Board ratification to follow, consistent with a public health emergency declaration by the World Health Organization, Centers for Disease Control or by the Minnesota Department of Health; and

- B. Employee has an immediate family member affected as a result when a school or place of care has been closed due to public health emergency and their presence is required to provide care for the family member; or
- C. Employee is experiencing symptoms consistent with the public health emergency, or is caring for an immediate family member experiencing these symptoms; and
- D. Employee is within the time period the County Administrator has declared this policy to be active; and
- E. Employee has exhausted all of his/her accumulated sick leave, vacation leave, personal leave, PTO, and compensatory time; and
- F. Employee has not already received the maximum balance allowed under this policy; and
- G. Employee has requested the paid leave hours to go into the negative in writing using the attached form.

The negative hours will automatically be taken from the employee's future accruals. This shall be accomplished by employees receiving half their paid leave accrual for available use while the other half is applied towards the advanced paid leave hours. Once the negative hours are paid back, all leave accruals will again be credited to the employee's balance at their full accrual rate. In the event the employee separates from Aitkin County before the negative hours have been repaid, the county will deduct the value of the remaining hours (number of hours owed times the employee's hourly rate of pay at separation) from the employee's last pay check.

[THIS SECTION INTENTIONALLY BLANK – SEE FORM ON NEXT PAGE]

**Aitkin County**

**Request for Negative Sick Leave (or PTO) during a declared Public Health Emergency**

Name (print): \_\_\_\_\_ Department: \_\_\_\_\_

I am requesting negative sick leave (or PTO) accrual because:

- I am experiencing symptoms consistent with the declared public health emergency, or am needed to care for an immediate family member experiencing these symptoms; or my child's school or daycare has been closed and I am needed to provide care; *and*,
- I am within the period the County Administrator has declared this policy to be active; *and*
- I have exhausted all of my accumulated sick leave, vacation leave, personal leave, PTO, extended sick leave, and compensatory time; *and*
- I have not already received the maximum allowed of 120 hours (or pro-rated hours, if a part-time employee) based on my regular work schedule.

The number of negative sick leave hours I am requesting is:

Select one:

- A maximum of 120 hours. I normally work full-time, 40 hours per week on average, excluding overtime, or 80 hours per pay period.
- A maximum of \_\_\_\_\_ pro-rated hours based on Policy / Union Contract. I normally work part-time. E.g. A maximum of 87 hours for an employee who works 29 hours per week on average, or a maximum of 60 hours for an employee who works 20 hours per week on average.
- Other, specify: A maximum of \_\_\_\_\_ hours (not to exceed 120 hours for full-time employees, or pro-rated for part-time employees).

I agree that the actual number of hours within the maximum specified above will be limited to the actual number of hours needed for this purpose and that they may not be accumulated, transferred, or used for any other purpose.

I agree that negative hours will automatically be taken from my paid leave (vacation/sick or PTO) accruals. This shall be accomplished by having half of my paid leave accruals available for use while the other half is applied towards the advanced paid leave hours. Once the negative hours are paid back, all leave accruals will again be credited to my balance at the full accrual rate.

I agree that if I separate from Aitkin County employment before the negative hours are fully paid back, Payroll will deduct the value of those hours (number of hours owed times my hourly rate of pay at separation) from my last pay check(s). I agree to immediately pay any additional amount owed that is not covered by the final payroll withholding to Aitkin County.

Employee's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_  Approved  Denied, reason \_\_\_\_\_

Department Head: \_\_\_\_\_  Approved  Denied, reason \_\_\_\_\_

Internal Use Only: HR/Payroll Comments:

[Full Paid leave accruals: \_\_\_\_\_ Vac, \_\_\_\_\_ Sick, \_\_\_\_\_ PTO]

[Half applied towards pay back: \_\_\_\_\_ Vac, \_\_\_\_\_ Sick, \_\_\_\_\_ PTO]

### **Article III. SCHEDULE CHANGES AND WORKING REMOTELY FROM HOME**

#### Section 1.

Department Heads will make arrangements to ensure critical/essential functions will continue. Telecommuting and working from home is not appropriate for all positions, and no employee is guaranteed the opportunity to work from home. Based on business need, staff will be given assignments and may be required to have Virtual Private Network (VPN) access in order to work from home or another remote location when assigned by their supervisor. This may include staff who are subject to quarantine. Staff may be reassigned to perform other duties remotely as needed. Schedules, approved leave, and other situations may require changes or adjustments based on essential business needs.

Any work done remotely must meet business needs, follow the Aitkin County Personnel Policies, Remote Access Agreement, and any applicable departmental policies, and be approved in advance by the Supervisor, Department Head, and/or designee. (Remote Access requires approval of IT and the County Administrator.)

### **Article IV. SENDING EMPLOYEES HOME WHO APPEAR TO BE SICK**

*Board adopted 3/18/2020. Revised below.*

#### Section 1

- A. To minimize the spread of the Coronavirus, supervisors may send employees home who exhibit Coronavirus symptoms at work, after consultation between the employee, supervisor or department head, HR Director, and a health care professional. To be eligible for Aitkin County emergency paid sick leave (EPSL), a health care professional must be consulted. If the employee does not wish to contact a healthcare provider, they may consult with an Aitkin County Public Health Nurse who will conduct a screening of symptoms prior to making a final determination. When the public health nurse screening is utilized, the employee is not eligible for paid emergency sick leave, but may utilize their accrued time as stated below. See also Appendix B.
- B. Aitkin County Public Health Nurses or healthcare providers who conduct the screening will state to the employer whether their assessment indicates the employee can remain at work or should go home.
- C. Remote work may be available to employees who are sent home, but are still well enough to work, or the employee may use paid leave until authorized by an Aitkin County Public Health Nurse or healthcare provider to return to work. For the purposes of this section (c), paid leave is defined as comp time, PTO, vacation, sick leave, or personal leave. Return to work will be dependent on duration and severity of the employee's symptoms, and could be 7 calendar days or more. This return-to-work determination will be made in consultation with the employee, supervisor or department head, HR Director and/or a health care provider (or public health nurse as noted in Section 1A above). Household members who work for Aitkin County may also be required to isolate for 14 calendar days (includes incubation period).

## **Article V. POST-TRAVEL MONITORING**

**The County Board deleted this Post-travel Monitoring section on 4/27/2021**

*This revised post-travel monitoring policy will be in effect until declared inactive by the County Administrator, as directed by the Board of Commissioners.*

### **Section 1**

- ~~A. Employees who travel out of state are required to notify their department head to determine if they will be required to remain at home for 14 calendar days after return, for post-travel monitoring. Department heads will take into consideration the location of travel and precautions being taken to minimize exposure to Coronavirus. Refer to the COVID Preparedness Plan, page 3, for practices asymptomatic employees should follow prior to and during their work shift (pre-screen, regular monitoring, wear a mask, social distance, disinfect and clean work spaces).~~
- ~~B. When quarantined, every effort will be made to allow for remote work. If remote work is not an option, the employee shall utilize paid leave balances. For the purposes of this section (b), paid leave is defined as comp time, PTO, vacation, or personal leave. Utilization of sick leave is not authorized under this section (b), unless or until the sick leave utilization criteria contained in policy or collective bargaining agreement language is met.~~

## **Article VI. NOTIFYING OTHER EMPLOYEES OF A CONFIRMED CASE OF CORONAVIRUS**

### **Section 1**

Department heads and immediate supervisors are required to notify the HR Director when employees are experiencing Coronavirus related matters.

Employees who test positive for Coronavirus are required to immediately (within 2 hours of results notice) notify their immediate supervisor and report their close contacts to the Aitkin County HR Director via 24-hour phone, voicemail, or text at 218-839-8983, As recommended by the CDC, if an employee is confirmed to have Coronavirus, Aitkin County will inform close contacts, including fellow employees, of their possible exposure to Coronavirus in the workplace, but protect privacy as required by state and federal law. Aitkin County will not identify by name an individual who has contracted the disease. Employees exposed to co-worker with confirmed Coronavirus should refer to CDC guidance for how to conduct a risk assessment of their potential exposure. Aitkin County will work closely with healthcare providers and rely on guidance from federal and local authorities about transmission risk and containment.

## **Article VII. WORKERS COMPENSATION**

### **Section 1**



## COVID-19 Preparedness Plan for Aitkin County

**Aitkin County** is committed to providing a safe and healthy workplace for all our employees' customers and citizens. To ensure that, we have developed the following COVID-19 Preparedness Plan in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Department heads, supervisors and employees are all responsible for implementing this plan. Our goal is to mitigate the potential for transmission of COVID-19 in our workplaces and communities, and that requires full cooperation among our employees, administration, customers, and citizens. Only through this cooperative effort can we establish and maintain the safety and health of our workplaces.

Administration and employees are responsible for implementing and complying with all aspects of this COVID-19 Preparedness Plan. **Aitkin County** department heads and supervisors have our full support in enforcing the provisions of this policy.

Our employees are our most important assets. We are serious about safety and health and keeping our employees working at **Aitkin County**. Worker involvement is essential in developing and implementing a successful COVID-19 Preparedness Plan. We have involved our employees in this process by working with our department heads to seek suggestions on how best to serve their citizens while maintaining health and safety. We have sought the assistance of the Public Health Department Operations Incident Command Team in making suggestion and assisting with the plan. Additionally, the county safety committee was convened to review and give feedback on the plan. Our COVID-19 Preparedness Plan follows Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) guidelines, federal OSHA standards related to COVID-19 and current Executive Orders as they pertain to safe workplaces, precautionary practices, and address:

- hygiene and respiratory etiquette;
- engineering and administrative controls for social distancing;
- customer controls and protections for drop-off, pick-up and delivery;
- housekeeping, including cleaning, disinfecting and decontamination;
- prompt identification and isolation of sick persons;
- communications and training that will be provided to managers and employees; and
- management and supervision necessary to ensure effective implementation of the plan.

### Screening and policies for employees exhibiting signs and symptoms of COVID-19

Employees have been informed of and encouraged to self-monitor for signs and symptoms of COVID-19. The following policies and procedures are being implemented to assess employees' health status prior to entering the workplace and for employees to report when they are sick or experiencing symptoms.

If an employee is confirmed to have COVID-19, the employer shall determine which employees may have been exposed to the virus and should take additional precautions. While informing employees of their possible exposure to COVID-19 in the workplace, the employer will maintain confidentiality as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Per Minnesota Data practices and HIPAA, appropriate action will be taken to protect the privacy of workers' health status and health information. Timesheet records that reveal the employee's

reasons for the use of sick or other medical leave are not public data, per Minnesota Statute 13.43, Subd. 2(a)(8). Medical records are maintained confidentially and separate from an employee's personnel file.

**Aitkin County** has implemented leave policies that promote employees staying at home when they are sick, when household members are sick, or when required by a health care provider to isolate or quarantine themselves or a member of their household. See ***Aitkin County Personnel Policy: Article VIII Organizational Standards and Rules, Effective March 19, 2020 (pages 3-4).***

#### **How will employees report if they are experiencing symptoms while at home?**

**Aitkin County** employees who are experiencing COVID-like symptoms or who have been test-confirmed to have COVID-19 are requested to report according to normal procedures for that department and inform their Supervisor, so that follow-up can be conducted. Aitkin County will follow the CDC's [COVID-19 Critical Infrastructure Sector Response Planning](#), MDH's [COVID-19 Recommendations for Critical Infrastructure Businesses and Industries](#) and MDH's [Employee Exposure to COVID-19: Contact Tracing Guidelines for Critical Infrastructure Businesses and Industries](#), or further revisions thereto.

Employees experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 should not report to work, should stay home and self-isolate and consider being tested. The employee who tests negative:

- May return to work if their symptoms are better
- Should stay home if they still have symptoms and consult a health care provider

Any employee to be lab confirmed positive for COVID-19 will not be allowed to work in the workplace regardless of their symptomatic status. The employee who tests positive should follow [CDC-recommended steps](#). Employees should not return to work until they have met the criteria to [discontinue home isolation](#) and have consulted with their Supervisor.

Employees who are symptomatic but do not seek testing should follow [CDC-recommended steps](#). Employees should not return to work until they have met the criteria to [discontinue home isolation](#) and have consulted with their Supervisor.

#### **How will employees report they are sick or experiencing symptoms while at work:**

If the employee becomes sick during the day, they should be sent home immediately and told to seek medical consultation about being tested. Any employee to be lab-confirmed positive for COVID-19 will not be allowed to work in the workplace regardless of their symptomatic status. The period of isolation will be dependent on the diagnosis given, intensity and duration of symptoms. Sick employees should follow [CDC-recommended steps](#). Employees should not return to work until they have met the criteria to [discontinue home isolation](#) and have consulted with their Supervisor.

#### **What will happen once Aitkin County has been notified?**

Upon notification that an employee is ill with COVID-like symptoms or has been test confirmed to have COVID-19, any areas the employee has been in contact with for a prolonged period of time by the sick person should be closed off.

- Wait 24 hours before cleaning and disinfecting to minimize potential for other employees being exposed to respiratory droplets. If waiting 24 hours is not feasible, wait as long as possible.
- During this waiting period, open outside doors and windows to increase air circulation in these areas.

Surfaces in the ill employee's workspace should be cleaned and disinfected by trained staff after the waiting period, using CDC's [COVID-19 Critical Infrastructure Sector Response Planning](#) .

### **Exposure or Potential Exposure of Aitkin County Employees**

For purposes of identification and notification of close contacts and COVID-19 exposures, Aitkin County will define a close contact using CDC's definition of [close contact](#):

- Within 6 feet of an infected person
- A cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24 hour period
- Starting from 2 days before illness onset (for symptomatic patients) or 2 days before specimen collection (for asymptomatic patients) until the time the patient is isolated

Per MDH's [Employee Exposure to COVID-19: Contact Tracing Guidelines for Critical Infrastructure Businesses and Industries](#), coworkers can be exempted from this definition of contact, if during their period of contact, everyone is using a face covering **and** a face shield, **OR**, if everyone was using a face covering **and** there was a physical barrier between them, such as a full Plexiglas screen.

- Aitkin County employees who believe or have been notified that they have had exposure to a suspected or confirmed-positive COVID-19 case outside of work must report this to their Supervisor and/or Department Head.
- Every effort will be made to notify any Aitkin County employee who may have had exposure to a suspected or confirmed-positive COVID-19 case while in the workplace.

The Minnesota Department of Health notes the **safest option is to stay home and away from others for 14 days past the last date of exposure**. Efforts will be made to follow the 14-day quarantine recommendation when circumstances allow, such as but not limited to, remote work being a viable and logical option for the employee to conduct their regular and routine business.

For critical infrastructure employees, which include all Aitkin County employees, MDH does permit employees who have had exposure to a person with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 to continue working provided they follow COVID-19 prevention protocols and remain symptom-free.

To best control disease spread in the workplace, while providing for workforce needs, and when a shortened quarantine period is being considered, Aitkin County will make effort to adhere to the following quarantine strategy for return to work:

- Employees should quarantine at home for a minimum of 10 days and get tested on day seven. If the COVID-19 test is negative and the employee does not develop symptoms, they may return to work on day 11.
- Symptomatic employees should follow [CDC-recommended steps](#). Employees should not return to work until they have met the criteria to [discontinue home isolation](#) and have consulted with their Supervisor.

There are times when an alternative return to work strategy may be considered. These circumstances may include inadequate access to or limited testing or severe staffing shortages. These conditions and which return to work strategy will be utilized should be carefully considered and determined through consultation between

the Department Head and/or Supervisor and the Human Resources Director. Additional strategies to be considered include:

- Employees should quarantine at home for a minimum of 7 days and get COVID-19 tested on day 5 or later. If the test result is negative and the employee has not developed symptoms, they may return to work on day 8 or later. Negative test results must be received prior to returning to work.
- Employees should quarantine at home for a minimum of 10 days. If symptoms develop the employee should get tested and remain home until results are available. If the employee has not developed symptoms, they may return to work on day 11.
- Sick employees should follow CDC-recommended steps. Employees should not return to work until they have met the criteria to discontinue home isolation and have consulted with their Supervisor.

It is recommended that asymptomatic employees returning to work prior to a full 14-day quarantine should adhere to the following practices prior to and during their work shift:

- **Pre-Screen:** Employees should measure their temperature and assess symptoms before reporting to work. Thermometers will be made available in each county building if temperature checks have not been completed before work.
- **Regular Monitoring:** As long as the employee doesn't have a temperature or symptoms, they should self-monitor for 14 full days.
- **Wear a Mask:** The employee should wear a face mask at all times while in the workplace for 14 days<sup>1</sup> after last exposure. Employers can issue facemasks or can approve employees' supplied cloth face coverings in the event of shortages.
- **Social Distance:** The employee should maintain 6 feet and practice social distancing as work duties permit in the workplace.
- **Disinfect and Clean work spaces:** Clean and disinfect all areas such as offices, bathrooms, common areas, shared electronic equipment routinely.

**The above quarantine strategies and guidance does not apply to employees working in sectors for which there is specific Minnesota State Guidance. For those employees, separate guidance documents should be consulted and followed.**

Per MDH's Quarantine Guidance for COVID-19, if someone has recovered from COVID-19 in the past 90 days and is exposed again, they do not need to quarantine if **ALL** of the following are true:

- Their illness was laboratory confirmed in the past 90 days
- They have fully recovered
- They do not currently have any symptoms of COVID-19

If someone has completed COVID-19 vaccination (two doses in a two-dose series or one dose in a one-dose series) and is exposed, they do not need to quarantine if **ALL** of the following are true:

- The COVID-19 exposure was at least 14 days after their vaccination series was fully completed (last dose is day 0)
- They do not currently have any symptoms of COVID-19

**People who live or work in a health care or long-term care facility, have been vaccinated, and have a COVID-19 exposure should refer to COVID-10 Recommendations for Health Care Workers.**

Even after a person has recovered from COVID-19 or is fully vaccinated they should still continue to stay distanced, wear a mask that fits well, wash their hands often, and follow other precautions.

<sup>1</sup>**Refer to Face Covering (Mask) Section below for current policy effective 7/25/2020 per Executive Order 20-81.**

**Aitkin County** has made accommodations for employees with underlying medical conditions or who have household members with underlying health conditions. **See *Aitkin County Personnel Policy: Article VIII Organizational Standards and Rules, Effective March 19, 2020 (page 9)***.

**Aitkin County** has additionally developed and implemented the **Aitkin County Remote Access Agreement** to allow more employees to work from home.

## Face Covering (Mask) Policy, effective 7/25/2020 updated 2/24/2021

**Notice Effective Date:** 07/25/2020 according to Emergency Executive order 20-81 a face covering must be worn in indoor business and indoor public settings that cover the nose and mouth completely until such time it is deemed unnecessary during the COVID-19 health crisis.

**Purpose:** To respond to Emergency Executive Order 20-81 requiring Minnesotans to wear a face covering in certain settings to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

**Goal:** Protect our staff and members of the public should one or other have pre-symptomatic or asymptomatic COVID-19 infection. A face covering decreases the risk of the wearer spreading infection.

### **Exempt Individuals:**

Individuals with a medical condition, mental health condition, or disability that makes it unreasonable for the individual to maintain a face covering. This includes, but is not limited to, individuals who have a medical condition that compromises their ability to breathe, and individuals who are unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove a face covering without assistance. These individuals should consider using alternatives to face coverings, including clear face shields, and staying at home as much as possible.

Children who are five years old and under. Those who are under two-years old should never wear a face covering due to the risk of suffocation. Those who are at least two are encouraged to wear a face covering if they can do so in compliance with CDC guidance.

Individuals at their workplace when wearing a face covering would create a job hazard for the individual or others, as determined by local, state or federal regulators or workplace safety and health standards and guidelines.

### **Guidelines:**

#### ***Situations where face coverings are mandatory:***

In an indoor business or public indoor space, including when waiting outdoors to enter an indoor business or public indoor space.

For workers only, when working outdoors in situations where social distancing cannot be maintained.

#### ***Circumstances where mandatory face coverings may be temporarily removed.***

While communicating with an individual who is deaf or hearing impaired or has a disability, medical condition, or mental health condition that makes communication with that individual while wearing a face covering difficult, provided that social distancing is maintained to the extent possible between persons who are not members of the same household.

When asked to remove a face covering to verify an identity for lawful purposes.

When eating or drinking in an indoor business or indoor public space, provided that at least 6 feet of physical distance is maintained between persons who are not members of the same party.

While receiving a service: service that cannot be performed or would be difficult to perform when the individual receiving the service is wearing a face covering. Workers performing services for an individual who is allowed to temporarily remove their face covering under this provision must comply with face covering requirements in the applicable industry guidance, available at the Stay Safe Minnesota website.

When an individual is alone, including when alone in an office, a room, a cubicle with walls that are higher than face level when social distancing is maintained, a vehicle, or the cab of heavy equipment or machinery, or an

enclosed work area. In such situations, the individual should still carry a face covering to be prepared for person-to-person interactions and to be used when no longer alone.

When a public safety worker is actively engaged in a public safety role, including but not limited to law enforcement, firefighters, or emergency medical personnel, in situations where wearing a face covering would seriously interfere in the performance of their public safety responsibilities.

When speaking in a public indoor space, in situations or settings such as governmental meetings subject to Open Meeting Law, provided social distancing is always maintained.

**Other Information:**

Cloth face coverings are not surgical or N-95 masks. The face coverings do not have to be hospital grade but need to cover the nose and mouth. Choose masks that have two or more layers of washable, breathable fabric, fit snugly against the sides of your face and do not have exhalation holes, valves or vents. For example, bandanas, scarves, or fabric masks.

Certain departments have current directives for wearing of masks or Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). Departments that currently have or develop a specific notice, those guidelines will supersede these. This includes but not limited to employees in the Sheriff Department, Public Health Department, Detention Center and Community Corrections.

The COVID-19 virus can spread between people interacting in proximity—for example, speaking, coughing, or sneezing—even if those people are not exhibiting symptoms. The intention of the Executive Order 20-81 to wear masks or face coverings indoors is to catch the droplets that the wearer might emit. Facial coverings help protect people around the wearer, as well as offering some protection to the wearer.

Continue to follow CDC and Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) recommendations to stay home if you are sick. Masks are recommended for pre-symptomatic or asymptomatic individuals. If you feel sick, stay home.

The following are typical signs or symptoms associated COVID-19 infection; Fever, cough, and shortness of breath.

**Obtaining a Facial Covering (Mask)**

The County has offered all staff a mask and will continue to provide them. Contact your supervisor, department head, or Aitkin County Building Maintenance (218-927-7363) to obtain a mask.

Below is an example of a county-approved facial covering. Paper masks are also available through Aitkin County Building Maintenance.



If you make cloth face covering, follow the CDC guidelines on Homemade Cloth Face Coverings or the MDH Guidance on Alternative Facemasks.

As Aitkin County staff, it is important we maintain a level of professionalism. Inappropriate messages or symbols should not be worn which include those advertising alcoholic beverages, bars or restaurants, other business establishments/vendors, and offensive language or messages.

Please be respectful of your coworkers on following social distancing protocols and wearing a mask or face covering as required.

## Handwashing

Basic infection prevention measures are being implemented at our workplaces at all times. Employees are instructed to wash their hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water frequently throughout the day, but especially at the beginning and end of their shift, prior to any mealtimes and after using the toilet. All visitors to the facility will be required to wash their hands prior to or immediately upon entering the facility. Some workplaces may have hand-sanitizer dispensers (that use sanitizers of greater than 60% alcohol) that can be used for hand hygiene in place of soap and water, as long as hands are not visibly soiled.

- Restroom facilities with soap and water are available in each building. Maintenance staff checks soap dispenser and refills as needed each evening.
- Hand sanitizer has been made available at all service counters and in all congregate work areas.
- Each staff person has been given a personal sized bottle of hand sanitizer.
- Employees are have been given a link to the following CDC handwashing tutorial:  
<https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=cdc+handwashing+video+2020&docid=608028173184467298&mid=5CE9AB72CAAF423D66595CE9AB72CAAF423D6659&view=detail&FORM=VIRE>  
and instructed to wash their hands or use approved hand sanitizer after handling documentation from citizens.

## Respiratory etiquette: Cover your cough or sneeze

Employees and visitors are being instructed to cover their mouth and nose with their sleeve or a tissue when coughing or sneezing and to avoid touching their face, in particular their mouth, nose and eyes, with their hands. They should dispose of tissues in the trash and wash or sanitize their hands immediately afterward. Respiratory etiquette will be demonstrated on posters and supported by making tissues and trash receptacles available to all employees and visitors.

- Each county employee has been issued a cloth face covering.
- Face coverings will available and recommended to all visitors, customers and citizens to be worn while on county premises.
- The following documents are hung in all county buildings and will be sent to employees via e-mail when the county buildings begin to re-open.
  - **Stop the Spread of Germs:** <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/stop-the-spread-of-germs.pdf>
  - **Cover Your Cough** <https://www.health.state.mn.us/people/cyc/cycphceng.pdf>
- Tissues have been made available at customer service counters and in congregate work areas.
- Plexiglas sneeze guards have been put in place at all customer service counters.

## Social distancing

Social distancing is being implemented in the workplace through the following engineering and administrative controls:

**Aitkin County** Employees continue to be encouraged to work from home if possible and will be supported by the ***Aitkin County Personnel Policy: Article VIII Organizational Standards and Rules, Effective March 19, 2020 (page 9)***.

**Aitkin County** has additionally developed and implemented the **Aitkin County Remote Access Agreement** to allow more employees to work from home.

**Aitkin County** recommends the following protocol to ensure worker safety:

- Signage has been posted on each building reminding persons not to enter if they are sick.
- Employees have been instructed to meet virtually whenever possible and not to meet with more than 10 persons at any time.
- Single occupancy or a six foot distance is recommended in county vehicles or in any vehicle when travelling for county business. If this is not possible, use of cloth face masks is required.
- Employees are encouraged to continue monitoring and prioritizing the necessity of one on one visits.
- Plexiglas sneeze guards have been put in place at all customer service counters.
- An external drop box will be installed outside the Government Center entrance to encourage items to be dropped off outside reducing the need to enter the building.
- Floors have been marked off every six feet to encourage social distancing.
- Toys have been removed from waiting areas and offices.
- Each county employee has been issued a cloth face covering and face coverings will be provided to all visitors, customers and citizens, who are encouraged to wear them while on county premises.
- "To Go" bags have been prepared for home visits with instructions on when to where masks and/or gloves and when to require they be worn by citizens.
- Employees are instructed to clean and sanitize counters after each customer.
- Hand sanitizer has been made available at all service counters and in all congregate work areas.
- Each staff person has been given a personal sized bottle of hand sanitizer.

Additionally, employees, visitors, customers and citizens are prohibited from gathering in groups. Employees and visitors are prohibited from gathering in confined areas, including elevators, and from using other employees' personal protective equipment, phones, computer equipment, desks, cubicles, workstations, offices or other personal work tools and equipment. Signage has been hung in congregate work and break areas to remind employees to respect social distancing guidelines.

## Housekeeping

Regular housekeeping practices are being implemented, including routine cleaning and disinfecting of work surfaces, equipment, tools and machinery, delivery vehicles and areas in the work environment, including restrooms, break rooms, lunch rooms, meeting rooms, and drop-off and pick-up locations. Frequent cleaning

and disinfecting will be conducted in high-touch areas, such as phones, keyboards, touch screens, controls, door handles, elevator panels, railings, copy machines, credit card readers, delivery equipment, etc.

- Maintenance disinfects high touch areas throughout the day and all countertops nightly.
- Employees are instructed to clean and sanitize counters after each customer.
- Hand held UV wands have been added to each maintenance cart to be used on electronic and high touch surfaces.
- UV Room Sanitizers have been ordered to clean jail cells between inmates and in areas where persons found to have COVID-19 have been working.
- All cleaning products used have been approved for coronavirus. Kill time appropriate for each product is considered for choosing the appropriate product. Appropriate PPE is being used as recommended by manufacturer.

Aitkin County will follow CDC's *Implementing Safety Practices for Critical Infrastructure Workers Who May Have Had Exposure to a Person with Suspected or Confirmed COVID-19* if there is a suspected or confirmed case in any of Aitkin County's buildings.

## Communications and training

This Preparedness Plan and CDC recommended steps "What to do if you are sick?" will be communicated via e-mail to all employees and posted throughout county buildings and necessary training will be provided to employees upon approval of department heads and the county board.

Instructions **have been posted on all buildings** regarding use of face coverings on county premises the process for drop-off, pick-up and delivery by customers, citizens and vendors to ensure social distancing between the customer/client/vendor, the worker and others.

It will be updated as necessary. CDC change and the County Administrator discontinues the policy.

Certified by:

[Signature]

[Title of management official]

## Guidance for COVID-19

### General

CDC Coronavirus (COVID-19) – [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV)

MDH Coronavirus – [www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus](http://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus)

State of Minnesota COVID-19 response – <https://mn.gov/covid19/>

### Businesses

CDC Resources for businesses and employers – [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/businesses-employers.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/businesses-employers.html)

CDC General business frequently asked questions – [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/general-business-faq.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/general-business-faq.html)

MDH Businesses and employers: COVID-19 – [www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/businesses.html](http://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/businesses.html)

Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) COVID-19 information and resources – <https://mn.gov/deed/newscenter/covid/>

DLI Updates related to COVID-19 – [www.dli.mn.gov/updates](http://www.dli.mn.gov/updates)

Federal OSHA – [www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov)

### Handwashing

[www.cdc.gov/handwashing/when-how-handwashing.html](http://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/when-how-handwashing.html)

[www.cdc.gov/handwashing](http://www.cdc.gov/handwashing)

<https://youtu.be/d914EnpU4Fo>

### Respiratory etiquette: Cover your cough or sneeze

[www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html)

[www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/prevention.html](http://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/prevention.html)

[www.cdc.gov/healthywater/hygiene/etiquette/coughing\\_sneezing.html](http://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/hygiene/etiquette/coughing_sneezing.html)

### Social distancing

[www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html)

[www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/businesses.html](http://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/businesses.html)

## **Housekeeping**

[www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html)

[www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/disinfecting-your-home.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/disinfecting-your-home.html)

[www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2](http://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2)

[www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html)

## **Employees exhibiting signs and symptoms of COVID-19**

[www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/steps-when-sick.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/steps-when-sick.html)

[www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/basics.html](http://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/basics.html)

[www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/facilityhlthscreen.pdf](http://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/facilityhlthscreen.pdf)

## **Training**

[www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/about.pdf](http://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/about.pdf)

[www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-small-business.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-small-business.html)

[www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3990.pdf](http://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3990.pdf)