

# Le Sueur County COVID-19 Preparedness Plan

## February 16, 2021

At Le Sueur County, it is our priority to keep our employees and their families healthy, especially in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. As such, we will abide by governmental guidelines when possible as we strive to balance public health concerns with the needs of our business. This Preparedness Plan outlines how we open to the public and still keep all of our employees safe to every extent possible.

While we will implement various protocols to ensure your safety, it's up to you and your co-employees to execute on these protocols daily. Le Sueur County hopes to clearly communicate our plans moving forward, highlight workplace protocols in place to protect your safety and establish a level of comfort for all of our employees.

Supervisors and employees are responsible for implementing and complying with all aspects of this Plan. Supervisors are responsible for ensuring the provisions of the Plan are fully implemented and enforced.

We understand that every employee's situation is different and encourage those with specific risks or concerns to reach out to their Department Head/Supervisor or Human Resources to discuss alternate arrangements, should they be necessary.

Due to the evolving nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, creating an exact timeline for resuming "normal" operations is not feasible. Le Sueur County will continue to monitor applicable state and local guidance and determine next steps for reopening to the public. Our Preparedness Plan follows Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) guidelines and federal OSHA standards related to COVID-19.

### Considerations

It's important to note that this plan is subject to change based on state and local guidance, and the pandemic itself. Should an employee test positive for COVID-19 after the office reopens, our plan may change in an effort to protect our employees. In addition, if cases of COVID-19 spike again in our state or in our local area, we will consider whether to remain open or close. We recognize that each individual will need to make a personal decision as to when he or she is comfortable returning to the office based on individual circumstances. Please reach out to your Department Head/Supervisor or Human Resources to discuss your personal situation.

**Understand the signs and symptoms** - stay home if you are feeling sick. Individuals experiencing symptoms or think they may have been exposed to COVID-19, should call their healthcare provider for medical advice and follow current MDH recommendations related to testing.

Symptoms of COVID-19:

- Fever - 100.4 degree or higher or feeling feverish,
- a new cough,
- shortness of breath,
- a new sore throat,
- new loss of smell or taste,
- new muscle aches,
- a new headache,
- chills

## **Practice good hygiene—**

Practicing good hygiene is essential to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Do your part by practicing good hygiene at work and at home:

- Regularly wash your hands for at least 20 seconds throughout the day with warm water and soap, specifically before eating.
- Cough and sneeze into your arm. Post handwashing and “cover your cough” signs.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Require visitors/customers to wear face masks and encourage them to use hand sanitizer.
- Disinfect key areas such as faucets and door handles on a daily basis.
- Wear your face covering/mask when you are away from your desk, when interacting face-to-face with the public or other employees, and when using common areas such as bathrooms, kitchens and the lobby.
- Social distancing should be maintained as much as possible.

**Requirements of wearing face covering – Effective July 25, 2020, Governor Tim Walz issued Executive Order 20-81 Requiring Minnesotans to Wear a Face Covering in Certain Settings To Prevent the Spread of COVID-19. Le Sueur County will follow the Executive Order as outlined below.**

**Exempt individuals.** The following individuals are exempt from face covering requirements of this Executive Order:

- 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 on *How to Wear Cloth Face Coverings*, available at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-gettingsick/how-to-wear-cloth-face-coverings.html> (*i.e.*, without frequently touching or removing the covering).
- 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.

## **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.
- When riding on public transportation, in a taxi, in a ride-sharing vehicle, or in a vehicle that is being used for business purposes.
- For workers only, when working outdoors in situations where social distancing cannot be maintained.

## **Situations where face coverings are required.**

- During indoor or outdoor private social gatherings (e.g., when visiting at a private home with friends or relatives who do not reside in the same household), particularly in settings where it is difficult or impossible to maintain social distancing.
- When riding in a private vehicle with a person or persons who do not reside in the same household.
- Inside your home, if you are infected with COVID-19 or experiencing COVID-19 symptoms and reside with others who could be infected.

- Except for workers required to wear face coverings.
- In any outdoor business or public outdoor space when it is not possible to consistently maintain social distancing, such as when entering or exiting a business, being seated, moving around in a space with others present, using the restroom, ordering food, or waiting in line.

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

- When testifying, speaking, or performing in an indoor business or public indoor space, in situations or settings such as theaters, news conferences, legal proceedings, governmental meetings subject to the Open Meeting Law (Minnesota Statutes 2019, Chapter 13D), presentations, or lectures, provided that social distancing is always maintained. Face shields should be considered as an alternative in these situations.
- 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.
- When asked to remove a face covering to verify an identity for lawful purposes.
- While communicating with an individual who is deaf or hard of hearing 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.
- While receiving a service—including a dental examination or procedure, medical examination or procedure, or personal care 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 (<https://staysafe.mn.gov>).
- 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.

**Inclusion of face covering requirements in businesses’ COVID-19 Preparedness Plans.**

All businesses must update their COVID-19 Preparedness Plans to include the face covering requirements of this Executive Order, including those that have been incorporated into the Industry Guidance applicable to their business available on the Stay Safe Minnesota website (<https://staysafe.mn.gov>), inform their workers how their plan has been updated, and make the revised plan available to their workers. The Industry Guidance applicable to the business may include face covering requirements that are more protective than those of this Executive Order, consistent with applicable law.

**Notice of face covering requirements.**

Businesses must post one or more signs that are visible to all persons—including workers, customers, and visitors—instructing them to wear face coverings as required by this Executive Order.

**Implementation of face covering requirements by businesses.**

- Businesses must require that all persons, including their workers, customers, and visitors, wear face coverings as required by this Executive Order.
- When possible, businesses must provide accommodations to persons, including their workers and customers, who state they have a medical condition, mental health condition, or disability that makes

it unreasonable for the person to maintain a face covering, such as permitting use of an alternate form of face covering (e.g., face shield) or providing service options that do not require a customer to enter the business.

- Businesses may not require customers to provide proof of a medical condition, mental health condition, or disability, or require customers to explain the nature of their conditions or disability.
- Businesses must follow the requirements of other applicable laws with respect to whether a business may require a worker to provide documentation of a medical condition, mental health condition, or disability related to their inability to wear a face covering and what the business may ask regarding the condition or disability.
- Nothing in this Executive Order requires businesses or their workers to enforce this requirement when it is unsafe to do so, or authorizes them to restrain, assault or physically remove workers or customers who refuse to comply with this Executive Order.
- Nothing in this Executive Order authorizes businesses or their workers to violate other laws, including anti-discrimination laws. More protective policies permitted. Nothing in this Executive Order should be construed to prevent a business from developing a policy that imposes more protective requirements with respect to face coverings, consistent with applicable law, than those in this Executive Order or applicable industry guidance.

### **Safe work.**

The protections noted in Executive Order 20-54 (Protecting Workers from Unsafe Working Conditions and Retaliation) remain in full force and effect. Businesses are responsible for the safety and health of their workplaces and must adhere to the requirements set out in the Industry Guidance applicable to the business, available on the Stay Safe Minnesota website (<https://staysafe.mn.gov>), Minnesota OSHA Standards, and MDH and CDC Guidelines, including the face covering requirements of this Executive Order. Under existing law and authority, DLI may issue citations, civil penalties, or closure orders to places of employment with unsafe or unhealthy conditions, and DLI may penalize businesses that retaliate against employees who raise safety and health concerns. Enhanced local measures permitted. Nothing in this Executive Order or previous Executive Orders should be construed to prohibit or prevent political subdivisions from implementing, within their jurisdictions and pursuant to applicable law and authority, requirements beyond those contained in this Executive Order, as long as the additional requirements have a real or substantial relation to the public health crisis caused by COVID-19. Pursuant to Minnesota Statutes 2019, section 12.32, political subdivisions may not relax or reduce this Executive Order's requirements. In other words, to the extent that they have authority to do so, cities and other political subdivisions may take actions that are more protective of the public health, consistent with applicable law, but may not take actions that are less protective of the public health.

### **Business violations.**

Business compliance with this Executive Order. As provided in this Executive Order, a business is compliant with this Executive Order if (1) their workers are wearing face coverings as required by this Executive Order; (2) the business has updated their COVID-19 Preparedness Plan to address the face covering requirements of this Executive Order; (3) the business has posted one or more signs that are visible to all persons—including workers, customers, and visitors—instructing them to wear face coverings as required by this Executive Order; and (4) the business makes reasonable efforts to enforce this order with respect to customers and visitors. For additional information about the steps businesses can take to ensure compliance with this order, refer to the face covering guidance and FAQs available at the Facemasks and Personal Protective Equipment webpage (<https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus.html#masks>). The guidance and FAQs may also be accessed at the following webpages: <https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/facecover.html> (guidance document) and <https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/facecoverfaq.html> (FAQ document).

## **Disinfecting the Workplace- Clean first, then disinfect often.**

- Employees should do their part to help keep the office as clean as possible by cleaning and disinfecting their workstations and surfaces they use.
- Employees should also avoid using others' workstations, tools and equipment. If using high touch common equipment/surfaces, wipe them down prior to and following use.
- Employees should wash their hands with warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds after cleaning or sanitizing a surface.
- Entryways and exits
- Electronics
- Tables, chairs and desks, from the lobby to the conference room
- Routinely clean and disinfect all areas, such as offices, bathrooms, common areas, shared electronic equipment, machinery, tools, controls, etc.
- Ensure availability of hand sanitizer and approved cleaning products.
- Decontaminate the workplace if a worker becomes ill with COVID-19.

## **Vehicles / Equipment -**

- When assigned a vehicle, employees shall not allow others to use the vehicle. If employees must have another person in the vehicle with them, do not switch positions (have the same person driving a vehicle an entire shift – or longer). This will reduce the opportunities for cross contamination. In addition, use of masks are required.
- Disinfection supplies shall be available in each vehicle and work area/site and plainly marked with instructions of use.
- Vehicles shall be disinfected by employees at minimum daily, at the end of the shift or when used by another driver.
- Make sure to disinfect all touchpoints in the vehicle, and any other controls in the vehicle.
- Employees shall wash their hands with soap and water or use hand sanitizer (per the product instructions) before getting into their vehicle.

Le Sueur County building maintenance personnel will clean the common areas and other frequently touched surfaces throughout the day. The frequency of this cleaning may change depending on the situation. One of the best defenses against the spread of COVID-19 is keeping your workplace clean and regularly disinfected.

## **Practice social distancing—**

Social distancing is the practice of deliberately increasing the physical space between people to avoid spreading illness. Employees should follow social distancing best practices while at Le Sueur County's facilities, including but not limited to workstations, cafeterias, common areas and office spaces. Specifically, employees are asked to:

- Stay 6 feet away from others when working or on breaks.
- Avoid job tasks that require face-to-face work with others when possible.
- Avoid contact with others whenever possible (e.g., handshakes).
- Avoid touching surfaces that may have been touched by others and sharing equipment.
- Distance themselves from anyone who appears to be sick.
- Avoid gathering/crowding when entering and exiting the facility and nonessential common areas.
- Employees will use the South and East doors when they enter and exit the building.
- Post signage regarding COVID-19 social distancing practices.
- Stagger lunches to limit the number of individuals in the break room or cafeteria.
- Delivering services/products remotely (e.g. phone, video, or web), curbside pick-up or delivery

- Traveling is allowed only for the purposes in the scope and duties of the job

## **Modifying the Workplace**

To prevent the spread of COVID-19 after reopening workplace modifications may need to be made. Most will often be based on social distancing protocols.

**Physical workspace modifications**—Because COVID-19 spreads through close contact, changes may need to be made to employees' desks or workstations, and overall floor plans such as:

- Separating desks and workstations to ensure that there are 6 feet between each station
- Adding partitions to open floor plans
- Avoid common spaces, including conference rooms, break rooms and cafeterias
- Modifying high-touch surfaces (e.g., propping doors open) to avoid employees unnecessarily touching surfaces
- Posting signage around the office to remind employees of social distancing protocols
- Establishing contactless drop zones for all deliveries including mail, packages and food

## **Employee scheduling**

To minimize the number of employees at work at any given time, changes to employee scheduling may need to be made and enforced. Some suggested changes include the following:

- Encourage employees to work remotely if possible
- Implementing flexible work hours (e.g., staggered shifts)
- Wear appropriate face covering, limit customers' and the public access to the worksite, or restrict access to only certain workplace areas, such as by appointment only or virtual meetings.
- Consider strategies to minimize face-to-face contact, (e.g., glass/plexiglass barriers, phone-based communication, telework).

## **Visitor Protocol**

To keep employees safe, changes may need to be made for in-person interactions and physical contact.

Some suggested changes include the following:

- Establish a plan to allow as few visitors/customers in the building at one time; schedule appointments or video conferencing when possible.
- Discouraging in-person meetings whenever possible and encourage the use of virtual meetings instead
- Designate the West doors as visitors/customers entrance and exit
- Limiting the size of in-person gatherings and meetings to less than 10 people and, whenever possible, require social distancing of 6 feet between meeting participants
- Ask visitors/customers to observe the health screening questions posted on the door before entrance and if experiencing symptoms, rescheduled and advise them to go home and contact health care provider.
- Requiring visitors to practice social distancing and good hygiene while on-site.
- Use signs, tape marks, or other visual cues such as decals or colored tape on the floor, placed 6 feet apart, to indicate where to stand when physical barriers are not possible.
- Prohibit handshaking; hand sanitizer should be readily available for use by visitors.
- Require visitors/customers to wear face masks
- Set up deliveries with contactless drop zones for all deliveries, including mail and packages.
- Wear appropriate face covering, limit customers' and the public access to the worksite, or restrict access to only certain workplace areas, such as by appointment only or virtual meetings.

- Consider strategies to minimize face-to-face contact, (e.g., glass/plexiglass barriers, phone-based communication, telework).

### **Employee Screening, Exposure and Confirmed Illness Protocol**

- Employees, before reporting to work, are to self-monitor for signs and symptoms of COVID-19 using the attached Health Screening form.
- Employees will be required to report to supervisor if they will not be coming to work due to symptoms consistent with COVID-19 as outlined in the Health Screening form.
- Employees who develop symptoms during the workday such as fever and/or two or more symptoms consistent with COVID-19 will immediately self-isolate and report to supervisor. Supervisor will send the employee home immediately. Employee will contact their health care provider.
- Employee or their supervisor will notify Human Resources to ensure appropriate forms are completed.
- Sick employees should follow CDC-recommended steps. Employees should not return to work until the criteria to discontinue home isolation are met, in consultation with healthcare providers.
- Employees who are well but who have a sick family member at home with COVID-19 should notify their Department Head/Supervisor and follow CDC recommended precautions.
- **Sick employees are to stay at home.**

Depending on the circumstances, Le Sueur County will notify impacted employees if there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the workplace. Le Sueur County may elect to close the office for a period up to 72 hours following a confirmed case to allow for natural deactivation of the virus and cleaning.

If you may have been exposed or think you have been exposed to someone with COVID-19, refer to the most recent Minnesota Department of Health or CDC guidelines, or contact your supervisor, for further clarification, if you should quarantine yourself for a period of time.

Employees who are symptomatic or who have tested positive should not return to work until they have been directed by their health care provider. When an employee tests positive for COVID-19, deep-cleaning procedures will be triggered. Furthermore, employees who have been in close contact with an individual who has tested positive for COVID-19 will be instructed to self-quarantine.

When employees return to work, they must provide a fitness-for-duty documentation to certify that the employee can safely return to work.

Le Sueur County has implemented leave policies that promote workers 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. Employees should refer to the Personnel Policy or a collective bargaining agreement for the respective leave policies. All policies and collective bargaining agreements can be accessed and viewed on the RtVision Electronic Timecard Program, Pay Stub Icon, Files Tab. Accommodations for workers with underlying medical conditions or who have household members with underlying health conditions should contact Human Resources for further discussions.

### **Communication and Training**

- Employees will receive a copy of this plan, and review the plan. If there are any questions or concerns, they will contact their Department Head/Supervisor.
- If a violation of this policy is witnessed, the violation shall be relayed to Department Head/Supervisor. The employee's supervisor will follow up with any corrective or discipline that may be needed.

### **Individual Departmental Plans**

Each department may have addendums to the Preparedness Plan to provide additional clarification and responsibilities for their department in order to help and maintain the health and safety of all employees. These specific addendums will be provided to all employees within the department.

**Employee Mental Health Considerations**

Le Sueur County understands that the COVID-19 pandemic has increased stress levels of employees across the country. We want to prioritize our employees' mental health during these uncertain times. As such, we have made every effort to ensure that the workplace is safe for employees to return to work and are ready to discuss personal situations. Department Heads/Supervisors are aware of mental health considerations during this transition. Employees with concerns regarding their mental health may contact the Sand Creek EAP Provider (1-800-550-6248) for additional resources.

Le Sueur County looks forward to the future of our employees returning to work. The COVID-19 pandemic has created uncertain times and resulted in unprecedented workplace changes. As communicated throughout this Preparedness Plan, we are prioritizing the health of our employees every step of the way as we consider reopening our business's doors. We will execute on our Plan cautiously, following applicable state and local guidance as much as possible. We also understand that each employee's needs and situations will be different as our doors begin to reopen.

Employees should discuss any concerns they have about returning to work as it relates to their personal health or situation with their Department Head/Supervisor.

Finally, we ask that employees are patient and understanding of the fact that the COVID-19 pandemic may require our Preparedness Plan to change. Employees will be given as much notice as possible in the event of an unforeseen setback or office closure.

Employees should direct questions regarding the content of this action plan to their Department Head/Supervisor.

Furthermore, while the strategies highlighted in this document can protect employees from COVID-19, it's important to follow CDC and Minnesota Department of Health guidance at all times.

Approved by the County Board on February 16, 2021

Certified by:

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Le Sueur County Board Chair

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Date