

Le Sueur County COVID-19 Preparedness Plan August 17, 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 serve the public and still keep all of our employees safe to every extent possible.

While we 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. 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 is 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, our plan may change in an effort to protect our employees. Please reach out to your Department Head/Supervisor or Human Resources to discuss the Department's work plan.

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,
- difficulty breathing
- a new cough,
- a new sore throat,
- new loss of smell or taste,
- new muscle aches,
- a new headache,
- chills,
- nausea, diarrhea, or vomiting,
- runny nose or congestion,
- fatigue

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.
- Encourage them to use hand sanitizer.
- Disinfect key areas such as faucets and door handles on a daily basis.
- Social distancing should be maintained as much as possible.

Face Covering Requirements and Recommendations

There is no longer a statewide requirement to wear face coverings in most settings.

Recommendations for Wearing Masks

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) recommend that people, both fully vaccinated and unvaccinated, continue to wear a well-fitted mask in some settings or situations. Other federal, state, or local laws may require masks, and businesses may set their own requirements.

It is important to wear a mask in some settings to help limit the spread of COVID-19. Viruses constantly change and new variants of a virus are expected to occur over time. New data suggests that an emerging variant, the Delta variant, is different than past versions of the virus and spreads about twice as easily from one person to another. With the Delta variant, fully vaccinated people may be able to pass the disease to others. However, the vaccines still work. Fully vaccinated people are less likely to get infected, and if a vaccinated person gets infected, the illness will likely be mild. The vaccine also greatly reduces the chance of hospitalization and death. Learn more at [About COVID-19: COVID-19 variants](#).

Because the Delta variant is shown to spread more easily, MDH and CDC recommend everyone, **both fully vaccinated and unvaccinated**, wear a mask in the following situations:

- **In public, indoor settings in areas with substantial or high transmission.** Refer to the map on [CDC COVID Data Tracker: COVID-19 Integrated County View](#) to find community transmission levels in your county.
- **Where there is a high risk of COVID-19 spread or complications from COVID-19 infection, such as schools, health care settings, homeless shelters, and correctional facilities.** Refer to:
 - [Schools and Child Care COVID-19 Best Practice Recommendations](#)
 - [CDC: Updated Healthcare Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations in Response to COVID-19 Vaccination](#)
 - [CDC: COVID-19 Vaccine FAQs in Correctional and Detention Centers](#)
- **If you are immunocompromised or at an increased risk for severe disease from COVID-19.** People who are at increased risk for severe disease include older adults and those who have [certain medical conditions](#) such as diabetes, overweight or obesity, and heart conditions. Immunocompromised people, even if fully vaccinated, should talk to their health care providers for other specific recommendations.
- **If you live or frequently interact with someone who is immunocompromised, not fully vaccinated, or at an increased risk for severe disease from COVID-19.**

If you have symptoms of COVID-19, it is important to stay home and away from others. If you must go out (e.g., to go to a medical appointment), wear a mask. Refer to [If You Are Sick: COVID-19](#) for guidance on staying home and away from others (isolation).

If you have been close to someone with COVID-19, follow recommendations for [COVID-19 testing](#) and [close contacts](#).

- If you are not fully vaccinated, stay home and away from others (quarantine) and wear a mask if other people are around.
- If you are fully vaccinated, you should wear a mask in public, indoor settings for 14 days following exposure or until your test result is negative.

Fully vaccinated people may choose to wear a mask in any situation where it feels needed, regardless of whether others around them are masked.

People who are not vaccinated

People who are not vaccinated, including children, are at much higher risk for getting and spreading the virus that causes COVID-19 than those who are fully vaccinated.

In addition to the above recommendations for everyone, anyone who is not fully vaccinated, including children ages 2 and older, should continue to wear well-fitted facemasks in the following settings:

- Indoor public settings
 - Around people from other households
 - Outdoors when social distancing cannot be maintained
- When wearing a mask in these situations is impractical or impossible (for example, when eating or drinking, or when presenting or performing in situations where it is necessary for faces to be visible), it is particularly important to maintain social distancing of at least 6 feet from others as much as possible.
- CDC requires facemasks on buses, trains, trolleys, subways, ride-shares, maritime transportation, air travel, and other public transportation. Visit [CDC: Requirement for Face Masks on Public Transportation Conveyances and at Transportation Hubs](#).
 - Passengers and drivers must wear a mask on school buses, including on buses operated by public and private school systems.
 - Health care settings – including long-term care – may be required by federal, state, and/or local regulatory authorities to require facemasks in certain situations.
 - Local authorities (such as a city, town, or county) are permitted to establish mask requirements and those requirements must be followed.

- Businesses and entities can also set their own mask rules, and workers and customers may be legally required to follow those requirements.
Note that this is not an exhaustive list of federal, state, or local requirements. Be sure you understand your region and industry's legal requirements. Businesses that are uncertain about applicable legal requirements should seek legal advice.

Reasonable accommodations

People who have certain disabilities, behavioral needs, or other health, mental health, or developmental conditions may have difficulty wearing a mask or other face covering safely. Existing law requires most businesses and public services to offer reasonable and safe accommodations to people who are unable to wear a mask due to their disability. Businesses that choose to require masks should provide guidance to employees and patrons on reasonable accommodations or exemptions and be aware.

- For more information on communication access when wearing a mask, including clear masks and speech to text apps, visit [Minnesota Department of Human Services Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services: Communication while wearing masks](#). Hospitals and health care organizations should have a plan in place for providers to use that ensures accessible accommodations are available. For further information on accessibility, visit [Best Practices for COVID-19 Testing and Vaccination Sites: Disability-related Accessibility](#).

If someone near you is not wearing a mask

Medical conditions, disabilities, or special needs may make wearing a mask difficult or impossible, and a person's needs or condition may not be visible or obvious.

Unless you are a business responsible for ensuring worker and customer compliance with masking requirements, do not confront a person about why they are not wearing mask. If possible, ask them to maintain a distance of at least 6 feet.

How to wear a mask

- Wash your hands before putting on your mask and after taking it off.
- A mask must cover the nose and mouth completely and fit snugly against your face without gaps. The mask should not be overly tight or restrictive and should feel comfortable to wear.
- For children 2 years and older, find a mask that is made for children to help ensure proper fit. Children under age 2 should NOT wear a mask.
- If you wear glasses, find a mask that fits closely over your nose or one that has a nose wire to limit fogging.
- Do **NOT** touch the mask when wearing it. If you often have to touch or adjust your mask, it does not fit you properly and you may need to find a different mask or make adjustments.
- Wash your mask after each time you wear it.

Refer to the Minnesota Department of Health or Center for Disease Control websites for additional guidance on masks.

Safe work.

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 Minnesota Department of Health website (<https://www.health.state.mn.us>) Minnesota OSHA Standards, and CDC Guidelines requirements. 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 should be construed to prohibit or prevent political subdivisions from implementing, within their jurisdictions and pursuant to applicable law and authority, 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 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.

Le Sueur County supports employees getting vaccinated. Below is the link to find out where to get vaccinated. Employees may also contact Le Sueur County's Public Health Department.

Vaccine Connector Link: <https://vaccineconnector.mn.gov/en-US/>The Minnesota COVID-19 Vaccine Connector is a tool that helps Minnesotans find out when, where, and how to get a COVID-19 vaccine.

If you have questions or need language assistance, please call our Minnesota Department of Health COVID-19 Public Hotline at **1-833-431-2053**.

Clean and disinfect 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.
- Thoroughly clean 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.
- 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.
- 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

Employee scheduling

Refer to Appendix A, Le Sueur County COVID/Pandemic Response Work Protocols

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:

- Visitors are required to wear masks regardless of vaccination status.
- 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
- 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.

- Discourage handshaking; hand sanitizer should be readily available for use by visitors.
- Set up deliveries with contactless drop zones for all deliveries, including mail and packages.
- 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.
 - Employees will be required to report to supervisor if they will not be coming to work due to symptoms consistent with COVID-19.
 - 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.

As communicated throughout this Preparedness Plan, we are prioritizing the health of our employees every step of the way. We will execute on our Plan cautiously, following applicable state and local guidance as much as possible.

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 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 August 17, 2021

Certified by: _____
Le Sueur County Board Chair

Date: _____

County Incident Rate Monitoring and Protocols

In response to COVID-19 or other pandemics, county officials will monitor incidence rates weekly and make the following changes to work protocols. The incident numbers need to be sustained for a 14-day period to trigger moving to the next Phase. Incidence rates will be collected on a weekly basis (Sunday through Saturday) through MEDSS (Minnesota Electronic Disease Surveillance System).

Phase #1 (County incident rate of confirmed cases 10-49 per 100,000 residents)

- Unvaccinated employees and visitors **encouraged** to wear masks.
- County office buildings open, but departments encouraged to schedule visitor appointments to limit number of people in the building.
- Ensure social distancing of employees (implement telework to accommodate appropriate social distancing requirements if necessary).

Phase #2 (County incident rate of confirmed cases 50-99 per 100,000 residents)

- All employees and visitors, regardless of vaccination status, **strongly encouraged** to wear masks.
- County office buildings open to business critical visits. Appointment scheduling strongly encouraged. Walk-in business and in-person meetings discouraged to avoid congregation of people.
- Ensure social distancing of employees (implement telework to accommodate appropriate social distancing requirements and if necessary).

Phase #3 (County incident rate of confirmed cases 100 per 100,000 residents)

- **Required masking** for all employees and visitors in building.
- County buildings remain open, but no unnecessary visitors in county office buildings.
- Appointment scheduling strongly encouraged.
- Departments to fully exercise virtual means to conduct business with customers.
- Ensure social distancing of employees (implement telework to accommodate appropriate social distancing requirements if necessary).
- No unnecessary in-person meetings in buildings.

Positive Employee Tests and Protocols**Scenario #1 (Single employee tests positive)**

- Follow "Quarantine Guidance for COVID-19"
<https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/quarguide.pdf>

Scenario #2 (Multiple employees test positive)

- Follow "Quarantine Guidance for COVID-19"
- Evaluate if additional actions are warranted (limiting visitor access, employees, etc.)
<https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/quarguide.pdf>

Scenario #3 (Widespread Exposure/Outbreak Amongst Employees)

- Government buildings closed to public and employees
- All employees placed in quarantine to be tested
<https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/quarguide.pdf>