



## Continuity of Operations Policy:

**Introduction:** Local governments across the state and nation perform essential functions and services that may be adversely affected by the recent outbreak of COVID-19 or other conditions. Our organization, like many others, should have continuity plans to assist in the continuance of essential functions.

Managers and supervisors are expected to adhere to the guidance provided by this Policy and in responding to employee concerns and questions. Department leadership has a responsibility to ensure compliance with all applicable provisions of these guidelines including those that require greater flexibility in determining schedules, work assignments, locations, scheduling and use of paid time off, and other related employment matters. The Policy applies to all regular and **part-time** employees.

**Purpose:** This plan provides a base level of guidance to the City of New London and shall serve as the plan for maintaining essential functions and services during the emergency situation. This guidance stresses that essential functions can be maintained during an outbreak through mitigation strategies such as social distancing, increased hygiene, additional cleaning procedures and other similar approaches.

**Concept of Operations:** The City will monitor the severity of the outbreak and establish continuity activation triggers to address the unique nature of the threat to essential services. This Continuity of Operations Plan will be implemented as needed to support the continued performance of essential functions.

**Continuity Planning:** Employees will be informed regarding protective actions and/or modifications related to this plan. Within the workplace, social distancing measures could take the form of modifying the frequency and type of face-to-face employee encounters (i.e. placing moratoriums on handshaking, substituting teleconferences for face-to-face meetings, and more), establishing flexible work hours or work site (i.e. telecommuting), promoting social distancing between employees and customers to maintain 6-foot spatial separation between individuals, and implementing strategies that respect and enable infected employees to stay home at the first sign of symptoms.

**Outbreak Planning Assumptions:** The City will follow recommendations given by Federal, State, and County agencies regarding the outbreak.



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**Continuation of Services:** The City strives for the normalcy of operations as this is important to residents and the community. The City will notify employees immediately via email and communicate with involved residents, businesses and partners immediately via email with additional notification via the City's website, social media and press releases as needed.

- A. Community Partners:** The City maintains a good working relationship with its area partners. The City will reach out to community partners and local governments within the New London area, and will work together to share resources. This would include the use of personnel, equipment, and facilities.
- B. Essential Personnel:** For the purpose of this plan, essential personnel will include the Police Department, New London Fire Department, City Administrator, Public Works Department (this includes Electric, Sewer and Water utilities), Facilities Staff, Department Heads, Cleaning Staff and other various personnel as deemed necessary for the situation. Reporting essential employees will be determined by the Mayor and City Administrator with consultation with the department heads.
- C. Non-essential City Services Temporarily Suspended:** Effective 4:30 PM on March\_\_ the City of New London is suspending all non-essential services and suspending public access to all municipal facilities until April 6<sup>th</sup>. The lone exception is City Hall, which will remain accessible to the public by appointment for the purposes of voter registration and voting. Employees will typically continue to work during this time.
- D. No work available/shutdown:** In the event of a shutdown of certain City services, the City will be keeping employees up to date on the City's Website, Facebook page and through City e-mail. Please monitor those places daily. **If an employee is not allowed to work due to a shutdown the employees will continue to receive their regular pay or if work is not available, the employee will allowed to use any accrued time to remain in a paid status until such work becomes available, continue to receive their regular pay for that day.**
- E. Alternative Work Arrangements and Telecommuting:** With the spread of COVID-19, departments are asked to exercise judgement to protect employees and their families. With departmental approval, flexible schedules and working remotely may be allowed

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or required. Appropriateness of such schedules or work from home policies will depend upon employee's position within the City and the assigned job duties. Please check with your departmental staff regarding those options. Our intent is that all employees will continue to work if possible either from home (preferred) or appropriately distancing themselves while at work. Departments can also consider work schedules, such as working four ten-hour days, etc. to allow for staggered shifts.

Additional measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 include hosting videoconferences instead of in-person meetings and canceling or rescheduling trainings, etc. Departments should work with the City's IT department to ensure that decisions regarding allowing work from home options are supported by technology and that the appropriate IT infrastructure needed to ensure the security for remote work is available. IT can also assist with having phones transferred to cellphones, setting up remote meetings, etc.

**F. Facility Shutdown:** In the event of a municipal worksite being exposed or suspected of being exposed to COVID-19 person(s), the City will shut down the worksite immediately. A facility shutdown may also be ordered by other government agencies (i.e. health department). The following measures will be taken in order to continue to serve the public:

1. **Phone System:** Phone numbers for City offices will be forwarded to identified essential personnel.
2. **City Issued Laptops/Phones:** Identified essential staff shall have their work laptops and phones with them at all times. Email and all other communication from the public will be addressed as soon as reasonably possible. Staff should be leaving computers on throughout this time period. Staff who have a city issued laptop should be taking those devices home each evening in case of closures the following day.
3. **Website/City Facebook Page/General Phone Messaging/Press Releases:** The use of the City's website and social media will be used as the method of communication to keep the public informed. If possible, a general phone message on the City's main phone line will also be available. Press releases are to be used as the means of informing the public if City operations and locations change. The only personnel



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authorized to issue press releases or other forms of communication are the Mayor, City Administrator, Fire Chief and Chief of Police.

**Infection-Control Measures:** The City will take steps to minimize exposure and spread of infection in the workplace. As appropriate, we recommend measures that employees can take to protect themselves outside the workplace and encourage the employees to discuss their specific needs with a family physician or other appropriate health or wellness professional.

- A. While in the workplace all employees should be taking precautionary measures that follow CDC recommendations. These guidelines are as follows.
- Employees shall not engage in handshakes.
  - Employees shall practice social distancing at all times (6 feet of distance).
  - Employees shall wash their hands with soap and water hourly.
  - Employees shall conduct business via phone or online whenever possible.
- B. **Ill Employees or Employees with Ill People in Their Household:** Employees or employees who have household members with symptoms of respiratory illness are recommended to stay home and not return to work until that employee or household member are free of fever (100.4° or greater using a thermometer), signs of a fever, and any other symptoms for at least 24 hours, without the use of fever-reducing or other symptom-altering medicines (i.e. cough suppressants). Employees should notify their supervisor and stay home if they are sick. **If an employee becomes ill or needs to care for a family members with a potential illness, they must notify their Department Director immediately. The Department Director would then ensure HR is notified to invoke the EFMLA for such employee and follow the compensation process outlined in the EFMLA. This time will be tracked by HR and the employee is required to notify their Department Director and HR when the medical condition has been resolved.**

An employee who appears to have respiratory illness symptoms (i.e. cough, shortness of breath) upon arrival to work or becomes sick during the day will be separated from other employees and be sent home immediately. Work areas will be immediately sanitized as appropriate. Any employees in this situation need to consult a family physician before returning to work. (Source:<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html>).



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C. **Ill Vendors and/or Residents:** The City will encourage those who are visiting municipal facilities to be aware of their own personal health prior to contact with the public. If visitors show symptoms of illness (cough, shortness of breath), staff will avoid close contact (minimum of 6 feet) from the customer and avoid handshaking. All surface areas must be immediately sanitized after the encounter.

D. **Employee Leave:**

† **SICK:** Employees who are sick or who have been exposed to COVID-19, will be eligible to use sick leave or other available leave benefits. Employees with insufficient sick leave hours accrued will be allowed to borrow up to 40 hours of sick leave during the period of exclusion. A request form will be available in the Human Resources Department for those employees with insufficient sick leave that would like to borrow hours. Upon return, the employee **will be required to zero their leave balance back to a positive through the normal accrual rate. This means, the employee accruals would be split until such time the negative balance has been repaid. not be eligible to receive sick leave with pay until the sick leave balance is restored.** An employee who **terminates their employment with the City will be required to pay back a portion of any negative leave balance in accordance with the Fair Labor Standards Act regarding proper deductions,** ~~leaves City employment will have the compensation for the paid sick leave owed the City deducted from the final paycheck and will be expected to pay back any balance to the City.~~

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ii. **Emergency Sick Leave:** Emergency leave may be used for the following:

- The employee is exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19
- Someone in the employee's family or household is exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms.
- The employee has been exposed to someone who is being quarantined due to suspicion of or potential exposure to COVID-19
- A diagnosed case of COVID-19 by receiving a positive test result. An employee diagnosed with COVID-19 should contact the Human Resources Department to determine FMLA eligibility.
- For employee's to care for their children if school or place of care is closed
- The employee or a member of the employee's household meets the CDC's definition of high risk and presents a doctor's note confirming the individual is high risk
- An employee is quarantined



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- An employee experiencing any other similar condition as defined by HHS or DOL.
- iii. Until further notice, the City will temporarily extend the use of sick leave benefits for the care of immediate family members beyond sick leave. This includes providing child care for employee's children. The use of the time will be approved and managed by individual departments.
- iv. HR Bill 6201 states that employees shall receive (A and B)...
  - a. for a full-time salaried employee, a specified amount of paid sick time that is sufficient to provide the employee with 14 continuous days away from work without a reduction in pay; and
  - b. for a part-time or hourly employee, a specified amount of paid sick time equal to the number of hours that the employee was scheduled to work or, if not so scheduled, regularly works in a 14-day period.
  - c. After the 14 day period, an employee may use previously accumulated sick leave. Employees should contact their department heads if they find themselves sick for more than 14 consecutive days.
  - d. In the case of a mandated closure all employees who are unable to report to work or work remotely will continue to be paid equal to the number of hours that the employee was scheduled to work and budgeted for. This includes all full time and permanent part time employees. These employees must be able to respond within 1 hour of being called between 7:30 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. unless department hours are otherwise stated. If the employee is not willing to be on call, that employee will not be paid. For the hours the employee is on call, all other employee handbook policies apply.
- v. After the initial 14 days of federally funded sick days, during the current COVID 19 situation, sick leave may be used for all of the following circumstances...
  - a. Needing to take off to care for a family member showing symptoms.
  - b. Needing to take off to care for a child/children not in school or childcare.
  - c. Needing to take off because you are showing symptoms.
- vi. Needing to take off because you want to isolate yourself after you believe you were unwillingly exposed to someone who has contracted COVID – 19.



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- vii. Federal and State laws are being discussed and passed as we move throughout this public health emergency. Many of those laws have components designed to aid employees in the event they are not able to work due to COVID – 19. As laws pass we will apply them to our sick leave policies where applicable and alter our policies as needed.
- E. **Employee Work Site:** The City encourages employees to follow the recommended cleaning and disinfection of work areas. Please refer to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines:  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html>.
- The City will have cleaning supplies on hand to be used for workstations and common areas. When antibacterial and other cleaning supplies are no longer available because of limited to no availability from suppliers, bleach and water shall be used. The City will also have rubber gloves on hand and available for employees needing to accept cash payments or other materials from the public. If your department needs additional materials, please contact Facilities Superintendent. Contact information is on the staff contact list.
- F. **Isolation/Quarantine:** At the City's discretion or the discretion of outside authorities, the City can require the isolation and quarantine of any infected employee(s) who come to work despite exposure or in need of medical attention. In the event that an employee is exposed to a person or who becomes ill with COVID – 19 symptoms, said employee must immediately communicate such knowledge to their department head and City Administrator. The employee's direct supervisor will be asked to implement remote work quarantine until additional information about the situation can be determined.
- G. **Reporting:** All employees and residents, who have conducted business at a City facility or directly with a City employee, must report known or suspected exposure to COVID-19 to the City immediately. This would include outside travel to areas identified by the CDC as at-risk. Travel Health Notices can be found at their website:  
<https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices>. The City will consult with the Waupaca County Health Department for further instruction. The employee will be asked to stay home until further direction is given by the Waupaca County Health Department or other appropriate government agency.



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- H. **Managing Travelers:** It is strongly recommended that employees postpone or cancel personal travel outside of Wisconsin. Effective 3/23/2020 all official travel for the City of New London out of the state has been suspended. If an employee has traveled outside of Wisconsin after March 23rd, the employee and employee's supervisor must consult with HR to determine the employee's eligibility to return.

The CDC determines which states are sustained community transmission states. These are considered high risk states.

Self-Quarantine under the following two circumstances:

1. If an employee or a member of their traveling party has come in contact with someone that has been confirmed to have contracted COVID-19.
2. Consistent with direction for Waupaca County Public Health Department, the State Division of Public Health, and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), if the employee has traveled to a state or country currently designated as having "community transmission" or "community spread." This means that transmission is occurring not only through individuals who have traveled, but is expected to be generally prevalent in the community. Please consult the following map to identify states with community transmission: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/cases-in-us.html>. Scroll down the map and hover your mouse over each state; those that indicate "Community Transmission: Yes" are subject to this rule. In this circumstance, self-quarantine means remaining away from work and other public areas, typically in one's home, for 14 calendar days.

Employees who voluntarily choose travel destinations to states designated by the CDC after March 23<sup>rd</sup> as having sustained community transmissions will be subject to a 14-day self-quarantine prior to be allowed to return to work. Compensation during the 14-day self-quarantine period will be through the use of paid time off (excluding emergency paid sick leave and sick leave).



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**Employees who have departed for voluntary travel prior to March 23<sup>rd</sup> that includes travel to a destination that was designated by the CDC as a sustained community transmission state after your arrival or during your stay, will be subject to a 14- day self-quarantine period prior to returning to work. Compensation during the 14-day quarantine period will be through use of sick leave or emergency paid sick leave.**

- I. **Refusing to work due to concerns about exposure to COVID-19:** Generally an employee who refuses to work will not be paid and may be disciplined. However, situations involving high risk employees as defined by CDC (as noted above), or other special circumstances, such as employees with already compromised immune systems or chronic medical conditions will be addressed on a case-by case basis in accordance with applicable laws. Employees may also be permitted to work remotely in accordance with the department's protocols.

**Resources:** This document is fluid and is subject to change at any time. All changes will be communicated with City Council, staff, and other necessary members (i.e. vendors). We encourage employees to keep themselves informed via resources available by Waupaca County Health Department, the State of Wisconsin, and the CDC.

**Waupaca County Health:**

[https://www.co.waupaca.wi.us/departments/health\\_and\\_human\\_services/covid-19.php](https://www.co.waupaca.wi.us/departments/health_and_human_services/covid-19.php)

**State of Wisconsin Health:**

<https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/index.htm>

**Centers for Disease Control & Prevention:**

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

**FAQ's**

1. ***What do I do when an employee says that someone in their family, or living in their household, has COVID-19?***

Inform the employee to stay home and call the health department in the jurisdiction in which they live.

2. ***How do I know when the employee is to be allowed to return to work?***



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If diagnosed with COVID-19 employees should work with their medical provider and the health department to determine when it is safe to return.

**3. *Is this a violation of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA)?***

No. HIPAA provides protection of personal health information. It does not prohibit an employee from providing information to his/her employer. It is the healthcare provider's responsibility to obtain consent from the employee prior to releasing any protected health information.

**4. *Can an employee receive FMLA leave because of COVID-19?***

FMLA may be concurrently approved or designated in accordance with State and Federal laws and City of New London's FMLA policy. The employee is required to provide the appropriate medical certification to document the serious health condition of him/herself or a qualifying family member, and must give appropriate notice according to the laws and policy. For FMLA questions call Human Resources.

**5. *During a COVID-19 outbreak can my supervisor cancel my vacation time off request that has already been approved?***

Yes, your supervisor has the authority to cancel any pre-approved vacation request, especially in situations where there are serious staff shortages as a result of illness.

**6. *If an employee is scheduled for vacation and they meet the eligibility for emergency paid sick leave or sick time, will they still need to use their vacation?***

Employees will likely be allowed to change their leave use time to emergency paid sick leave or sick time. Employees should work with their supervisor for approval.

**7. *If an employee is on FMLA, but eligible for emergency paid sick leave, can the employee use emergency paid sick leave while on FMLA?***

That will be on a case by case basis. Supervisors should consult with HR and the City Administrator.

**8. *If an eligible employee is in a position in which they could telecommute, with approval from their supervisor, should that employee use emergency paid sick leave or sick leave?***



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In most instances, the employee would not be eligible for emergency paid sick leave if they are not sick and have the ability to telecommute.

**9. *What type of leave time should an employee use first (emergency paid sick leave or sick time)?***

Employees would typically use the emergency paid sick leave first as that is an additional leave time to use only in the year 2020.

**10. *Will a department be notified if an employee has a confirmed case of COVID-19?***

When an employee has a confirmed case of COVID-19, the Waupaca County Health Department will notify appropriate personnel as required.

**11. *What assistance is available to me to help me cope with the emotional impact of a COVID-19 outbreak?***

City of New London provides resources to help employees and eligible dependents cope with these and other types of life events through its Employee Assistance Program (EAP). Call XXX-XXXX (24 hours a day, 365 days a year). The EAP provides confidential, short-term counseling at no cost to the employee.



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### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

#### **PROTECT YOURSELF**

Social Distancing: Viruses like COVID-19 are primarily spread by respiratory droplets expelled by coughs and sneezes. These droplets travel less than 6 feet before dropping out of the air due to gravity. Therefore, strategies of social distancing, staying about 6 feet or more away from other people, can be one of the most effective strategies to keep from becoming infected or spreading infection to others.

Other social distancing practices include:

1. Reducing face-to-face exposure by using conference calls
2. Cancelling meetings, training sessions and scheduled events
3. Avoiding public gatherings

Employees should take these everyday steps to protect their health and lessen the spread of this new virus:

- Cover your nose and mouth with your elbow or tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Forgo the customary handshakes
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers are also effective and will be available in your department.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread this way.
- If you are sick, you may be ill for a week or longer. You should stay home and keep away from others as much as possible, including avoiding travel and not going to work.

#### **COVID-19 SYMPTOMS**

Patients with COVID-19 have had mild to severe respiratory illness with symptoms of:

Fever  
Cough  
Shortness of breath