



Chisago County

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Chisago County Operational Guidelines for COVID-19 Response

The COVID-19 virus is a health pandemic according to the World Health Organization. It is becoming increasingly concerning for the United States and Minnesota. Chisago County continues to prepare and implement the best practices to limit the spread of the virus to you, your family, and your community.

On March 17, 2020 the Chisago County Board of Commissioners Chair declared a local emergency for Chisago County. In confirming the declaration at its meeting on March 18th, 2020, the Chisago County Board of Commissioners authorized the implementation of the following set of Operational Guidelines, effective immediately and until further notice. Any exceptions to County policy that are implemented during a public health emergency are not precedent setting. Below are the strategies implemented upon authorization by the Chisago County Board of Commissioners;

- 1. Effective on Thursday, March 19th, 2020, public access to all County buildings is closed for all non-essential services.** Access to the court administration and courtrooms, and health and human services will remain available on limited/adjusted basis. The Chisago County Courts are still open for high priority cases and will remain open. Any emergency filings which could include; orders of protection, harassment/restraining orders, emergency guardianships and emergency family motions are still open for filing and hearings. Public use of all County meeting rooms is discontinued.

Every County Department must shut and lock their doors and close all windows/counters. Each department must post a sign on the window/counter with the contact phone numbers and email addresses for the staff in the office that day. The County website should also be listed on the sign. Each department should also create a 'drop box' outside of their office for the documents the public may need to deliver.

All staff must update their emails and voicemails to reflect the change in how business is being done at the Chisago County Government Center.

Each Department must ensure staff are answering phones and able to respond to emails from the public 8:00 am – 4:30 pm Monday through Friday or until operations change again.

- 2. Each Department Head must consider remote access for some positions and offer alternative schedules to employees to minimize presence and person-to-person contact.** Department Heads are directed to minimize the staffing presence and person-to-person contact within the Chisago County Government Center thru reduced working hours, time staggering, secondary coverage or minimizing operational hours, while maintaining a level of service.

Department Heads must submit their remote access plan according to the 'Remote Access Policy' (Policy Number 19/1218-1, *attached*). Priority remote access is given to essential

employees, and employees who are high risk based on CDC guidelines. Remote access is NOT available for every position in the County.

Additionally, Department Heads will work with staff on creating alternative schedules such as staggering schedules and/or extending work into the weekends to minimize staff overlap and contact OR reducing work hours based on work necessity (i.e. staff works only 3 or 4 days a week to diminish impact on their sick, vacation, compensation leaves). Employees can use accrued hours (i.e. sick, vacation, or compensation hours) to make up for the loss of hours by the creation of the alternative schedules. If the employee has exhausted their accrued hours, they can use an advance of sick leave according to the *Utilization of Paid Leave during a Public Health Emergency Policy*. Lastly, Employees can take time off without pay during this public health emergency.

If an employee cannot work remotely and prefers to stay home versus coming into the Government Center due to concerns regarding safety, that employee can use accrued sick, vacation, or compensation leave if their supervisor/department head approves. Additionally, at this time, employees may also take time off unpaid as long as they work with their department head to determine the length and duration of the time being taken off.

3. **EVERYONE must use 6 foot distancing practices between staff and any/all public interaction if you are at the Chisago County Government Center.** All meetings should be done by phone or other technology, when possible.
4. **Any employee who is sick/ill or has been exposed to COVID-19 must stay home and use sick, vacation, compensation leave before using an advance of sick leave (*Utilization of Paid Leave during a Public Health Emergency Policy*). Employees with a confirmed COVID-19 individual in their household are required to stay home and use sick, vacation, compensation leave before using an advance of sick leave.**
5. **Employees who think they ‘might’ have been exposed because of recent travel, etc.;**

All employees are required to monitor themselves for symptoms 24/7.

If an employee believes they may have been exposed, they are encouraged to SELF-QUARANTINE, monitor their temperature two-times per day, watch for cough or trouble breathing, and stay in contact with their supervisor to determine a safe return to work timeline. Use of sick, vacation or compensation time is required during this self- quarantine unless the employee’s position allows work from home (employee’s supervisor determines this).

All specific questions related to quarantine, should be directed to your supervisor or department head to then seek a case-by-case determination by Courtney Wehrenberg, Chisago County Public Health Director.

6. **All Employees are encouraged to avoid all unnecessary travel**

Employees are subject to the ‘Personal Travel during a Public Health Emergency Policy’ (*attached*).

7. **Communication will continue with staff through Email and or phone trees through their Department. The County will continue to issue press releases through the Chisago County Press, and the County News Review. Additionally, the County website will be used to update the public and staff.**