



HERTFORD COUNTY

Communicable Illness Policy and Response Plan

April 2020

Purpose

The purpose of the Communicable Illness Policy and Response Plan is to minimize the impact (temporary/short term) communicable illnesses may have on Hertford County's workforce. Hertford County Government realizes employees with high risk exposure and communicable illnesses need to continue with normal life activities, including working. Hertford County may need to make a determination on whether or not it is acceptable for an employee with a (temporary/short term) communicable illness or high risk susceptibility to be present in the workplace. In deciding whether an employee with an apparently short-term communicable illness or high risk vulnerability may continue to work, the employee must be able to:

- Perform essential job duties (with or without reasonable accommodation)
- Meet regular performance standards
- In the judgment of management, the employee's continued presence must pose no risk to the health of the employee, other employees, customers or the public

If an employee disputes Hertford County's determination that such a risk exists, the employee may submit a statement from his/her healthcare provider that the employee's continued presence in the workplace poses no significant risk to the employee, other employees, customers or the public.

Hertford County Government Responsibilities

Protect

- Hand sanitizer, disinfectant spray and disposable sanitizing wipes will be provided in high traffic facilities in strategic locations (as available).
- Housekeeping staff will be instructed to routinely disinfect commonly-touched hard surfaces.
- No additional disinfection beyond routine cleaning is recommended by the CDC.
- Limit public's access to workplace and minimize face-to-face contact.

Prevent

- Hertford County provides eligible employees with sick leave in accordance with the Hertford County Personnel Policy, Section VI: Leave of Absence. Employees who have a fever and symptoms of acute respiratory illness are recommended to stay home and not come to work until they are free of fever, signs of a fever, and any other symptoms for at least 24 hours, without the use of fever-reducing or other symptom-altering medicines (e.g. cough suppressants).
- When an employee uses sick leave, it is not reflected as a negative consequence on their annual performance appraisals if the employee complies with the Sick Leave policy.
- Hertford County will comply with Families First Coronavirus Response Act and administer Hertford County's COVID-19 sick leave and family leave policy.
- Social distancing

Prepare

- Hertford County's Communicable Illness Control and Response Plan
- Hertford County will provide educational information to employees regarding:
 - Temporary/short term communicable illness prevention, hygiene, cough etiquette, hand washing, how to identify symptoms and incubation and recovery period.
 - Information will be disseminated through posters, the intranet, flyers, payroll messages, etc.

Employee Responsibilities

Protect

- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective if soap and water are not available.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Help to sanitize routinely touched work surfaces.

Prevent

- Stay home when you are sick, except to get medical care.
- Keep away from others as much as possible to keep from spreading the virus.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it. Cough in your sleeve, if you don't have a tissue available.
- Do not use co-workers phones, equipment or desk.
- Utilize email for disseminating information, conference calls or other remote access applications for meetings.
- Social distancing

Prepare

- Have work tasks organized so the work process is as smooth as possible if you are out.
- Inquire about telecommuting options.
- Be aware a supervisor or department head may send you home if you show signs of respiratory illness in order to protect the health of the public and co workers.
- Be familiar with sick leave policies and office procedures for calling in sick.
- Be mindful of your individual risk factors and implement controls necessary to address those risks.

Supervisor Responsibilities

Protect

- Encourage employees to access educational information on temporary communicable illnesses, how it's spread, it's incubation period and how to prevent it.
- Prompt identification and isolation of potentially infectious individuals

Prevent

- Encourage washing hands thoroughly with soap, the use of hand sanitizer and disinfectant in employee work areas.
- Encourage covering coughs and sneezes.
- Instruct employees with temporary communicable illnesses to stay home.
- Social distancing

Prepare

- Communicate your office protocol for employees to report illness or to request sick leave.
- Develop a plan for the impact of pandemic on your employees and the citizens of Hertford County.
- Cross train employees so when an employee is out of the office, co-workers may step-in to assist or manage the important tasks.
- Be familiar with completion of critical tasks.
- Review telecommute options.

Disclaimers

It is the goal of Hertford County, during any time period of infectious disease outbreak, to strive to operate effectively and ensure that all essential services are continuously provided and those employees are safe within the workplace.

Hertford County will not discriminate against any job applicant or employee based on the individual having a communicable disease. Applicants and employees shall not be denied access to the workplace solely on the grounds that they have a communicable disease. Hertford County reserves the right to exclude a person with a communicable disease from the workplace facilities, programs and functions if the organization finds that, based on a medical determination, such restriction is necessary for the welfare of the person who has the communicable disease and/or the welfare of others within the workplace. Family and Medical Leave time may be granted if the illness or condition qualifies for FMLA designation.

Hertford County will comply with all applicable statutes and regulations that protect the privacy of persons who have a communicable disease. Every effort will be made to ensure procedurally sufficient safeguards are exercised to maintain the personal confidence about persons who have communicable diseases.

The Hertford County Communicable Illness Policy and Response Plan is a guide that is subject to change in accordance with the needs of Hertford County.

The Hertford County Communicable Illness Policy and Response Plan will be effective no later than April 2, 2020.

Resources

- Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers to Plan and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), February 2020 https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/guidance-business-response.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fguidance-business-response.html
- Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19, March 2020, OSHA

Ensuring a healthy workforce requires the participation of everyone. In order to protect the health and operation of Hertford County, it is important to protect our health, to prevent the spread of germs, and to prepare for illness and absenteeism.