

Pelican River Watershed District
COVID-19 Infectious Disease Continuity of Operations Plan
Adopted March 24, 2020

March 11, 2020 – World Health Organization Declares status of Covid-19 Pandemic

March 13, 2020 – Governor Walz, Minnesota Declares “Peacetime Emergency” pursuant to Minn. Stat. § Chapter 12 – Emergency Management

March 18, 2020 – President Trump signed the Federal Families First Coronavirus Response Act

1. The District needs to protect its available workforce in order to maintain government services while doing its part to contain the outbreak and reduce its impact on public health. Depending upon the severity of the outbreak, some of these measures may be implemented gradually or not at all.
2. The decision for implementing any level of the COVID-19 Infectious Disease Continuity of Operations Plan rests with the Administrator as directed by the PRWD Board of Managers, and its designee(s) and are authorized to take other appropriate emergency actions directed or recommended by the federal and state government or health organizations, or deemed necessary by Becker County or City of Detroit Lakes emergency management authorities, and to take those actions deemed necessary to protect the public health and safety.
3. As authorized by the MN Governor’s Declarations, Minn. Stat. §12.31 and Minn. Stat. §12.32, to the extent that normal state laws and District policies and procedures impede an efficient response or compliance with federal and state directives or recommendations, the Administrator, PRWD President, and designees are authorized to suspend compliance with those laws, policies, and procedures to the extent permitted. Decision-makers should use advice from appropriate state and federal agencies such as the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), Minnesota Department of Health (MDH), and the Minnesota Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (MSEM) to make decisions about plan implementation.
4. Meetings of the Board of Managers will be conducted as outlined in the District’s “Policy for Meetings Conducted Via Interactive Television/Technology Purpose (Minn. Stat. §13D.02) or by Telephone or Other Electronic Means (Minn. Stat. §13D.021) adopted November 15, 2018. If the meetings of the Board of Managers are not practical or prudent due to the COVID-19 health pandemic and the peacetime emergency declared by Governor Walz pursuant to Minn. Stat. § Chapter 12, the meetings shall be conducted by telephone or other electronic means, and that District staff be directed to take such action as may be necessary to enable such meetings to occur via telephone or other electronic means pursuant to Minn. Stat. §13D.021, until such time as it is no longer impractical or imprudent for the District Board of Managers to resume in-person meetings.
5. This plan authorizes a District interim sick leave extension bank of up to 10 days for employees presenting with COVID-19 symptoms, or other by arrangement as agreed to by the Board of Managers.
6. On March 18, 2020, President Trump signed the federal government Families First Coronavirus Response Act which authorizes temporarily expanding the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) and the Emergency Paid Sick Leave Act (Division E), effective around April 2, 2020 and will sunset on Dec. 31, 2020 to address concerns around COVID-19. Division E requires the District to provide employees two weeks of paid sick leave (at their full regular rate) if they are unable to work or telework because they need to quarantine or seek a diagnosis or preventive care for coronavirus. However, two-thirds of the employee’s regular rate must be paid to care for a family member who has been quarantined or advised by a health care provider to self-quarantine or to care for a child whose school has closed or whose child care provider is unavailable, due to the coronavirus. Full-time employees are entitled to two weeks (80 hours) and part-time employees are entitled to the typical number of hours they work in a two-week period. The amount paid is capped at \$511 per day (\$5,110 in the aggregate) for personal sick leave and \$200 per day (\$2,000 in the aggregate) for leave to care for others. Any unused paid leave granted by the act does not carry over into 2021.

Pelican River Watershed District COVID-19 Infectious Disease Continuity of Operations Plan

Updated March 19, 2020

Response One: Preparation: putting in place policies, procedures, equipment, supplies, and technology during a pandemic to maintain highest levels of customer service possible to the public. Develop and update an Operations Continuation Plan and policies. Recommended actions include:

- **Identify PRWD Critical Services/Functions during the COVID-19 State of Emergency pandemic**
 - **Board Meetings** – conduct critical business (financial, program related authorizations); Meetings may be conducted via telephone or skype following MN Statutes. Ensure Open Meeting Law requirements are adhered to during the state of emergency.
 - **Permitting Program**–(site visits, application processing, approval) no in-person meetings – encourage electronic processing.
 - **Monitoring Program**
 - **Rice Lake Project**
 - **Projects 1B, 1C, and LMP-01 – Aquatic Plant Management**
 - **Financial.** QuickBooks related (payroll, bills, etc.) – review protocol updates; Be prepared to issue paper checks if needed. All Board Manager Officers are signatories.
 - **Reports** – Board Packet Information, Annual Report, Emails, Facebook and website updates, meetings via skype, answering machine set up to take messages.
 - **Data Requests** – check the prwdinfo@arvig.net email on a daily basis; respond to requests remotely if possible, otherwise stagger or use off-hours to go into office and collect data and make copies as necessary (10-business day response time remains in effect).
- **Implement Social Distancing Sequencing to mitigate spread of virus**
 - **Decrease social contacts** in office (limit in-person meetings, meeting for lunch in a break room; staff meetings, increase physical spacing between employees (> 6 feet; separate offices).
 - Limit non-essential work travel
 - Consider taking turns staffing the office/teleworking to increase social distancing.
- **Develop communications.** Notify residents, businesses and other stakeholders of potential changes in PRWD services using remote technology tools including email, website, Facebook, radio; post information on Wells-Fargo outside doors.
- **Know where to find local and updated information on COVID-19 and local trends of COVID-19 cases.**
- **Know the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and what to do if staff become symptomatic at the worksite.**
 - Consider regular health checks (temperature, respiratory symptom screening of staff and public if feasible); require workers who are ill to stay home).
- **Communicate with Staff Preventative Actions/Supplies/Environmental Cleaning**
 - Establish notification requirements from employees who have potentially been exposed to the infectious disease.
 - Ensure hand hygiene supplies are readily available in building – soap, disposable disinfectant wipes, tissues, no-touch receptacles, hand Sanitizer
 - Instruct employees to clean their hands often following CDC guidelines
 - Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily. Routinely clean and disinfect all frequently touched surfaces in the workplace, such as workstations, countertops, and doorknobs. Use the cleaning agents that are usually used in these areas and follow the directions on the label.
 - Place posters that encourage [staying home when sick](#), [cough and sneeze etiquette](#), and [hand hygiene](#) at the entrance to your workplace and in other workplace areas where they are likely to be seen.
- **Review PRWD Personnel Policies in relation to preventative health measures and pandemic-related employment policies:**
 - Follow CDC COVID-19 Recommendations – social distancing, hand washing, no handshaking, or as updated.
 - Under MN Law – PRWD may ask employee if experiencing influenza-like symptoms (fever, chills, and a cough or sore throat) – All information about illness is confidential medical record (compliance with State /Federal); may not inquire about underlying medical conditions; however if employee volunteers medical condition, such information will be kept confidential.
 - PRWD will not penalize, discharge, discipline employees for missing work due to COVID-19 or care for a minor or adult family member who MDH recommends isolation or quarantine. This employment protection is available for 21 workdays.

- FMLA Act provides employees job-protected, unpaid leave for family and medical reasons, which may include COVID-19 where complications arise and are entitled to continued insurance coverage (monthly stipend) under the same terms as existed before FMLA leave is taken.
- Any employee with disabilities that affect risk for contracting COVID-19 or being harmed if the virus is contracted, may request "reasonable accommodations" who are subject to the Americans Disability Act /or the MN Human Rights Act (telework or paid/sick/unpaid leave may be a reasonable accommodation).
- Consider an interim COVID-19 sick leave extension up to 10- days for employees with COVID-19 symptoms or contraction of the virus.

Response Two: COVID-19 threat is sufficiently severe and to be prepared for the possibility of staff and other shortages. Recommended actions include:

- **Cancel outside meetings or events as necessary** – review on daily/hourly basis; depending upon severity of the outbreak, some measures may be implemented gradually or not at all. PRWD may be on "Stand ready" to implement measures but may choose not to implement the more drastic measures.
- **Update communications.** Notify residents, businesses and other stakeholders of potential changes in PRWD services using remote technology tools including email, website, Facebook, radio; post information on Wells-Fargo outside doors.
- **Office Closure to the Public-** Coordination with bank building and other government offices or as directed by State and Federal government.
- **Implement preventative health measures and Interim COVID-19 extended sick leave policies** and notify employees and Board of Managers the policies are in effect (including the Interim COVID-19 sick leave extension)
- **Board of Managers' Meetings.** Meetings may be conducted via telephone or video conferencing as outlined in MN State Statutes and in the District's policy for conducting meetings via telephone and electronic means (Nov 15, 2018)
- **Implement telecommuting or remote work policies** for designated positions as appropriate and devote resources to most **Critical Services/Functions as Identified in Phase One.** All meetings and contacts will be conducted via email, phone, or web-conferencing; Staff may work remotely from home; ensure staff has access to computer/internet if working remotely; stagger work schedules as needed.
- **Implement back-up staffing plans as needed such as split scheduling, reduced hours of operation, and minimum staffing levels.** If warranted assignment of duties outside of job description may be necessary; Overtime – Administrator Authorize if down to one person if necessary. Enlist Dick or managers if necessary; if Administrator out on sick leave, staff should notify Dennis Kral, Orrin Okeson for sick leave approval.

Response Three: Extensive Outbreak in Becker County and within District Staff and resources are exhausted. Recommended actions include:

- Close/discontinue all non-essential services as identified by Federal and State government.
- Implement quarantine measures as recommended by MDH or by Federal and State government.
- Implement available aid, contracted services (temps), and other emergency contracts to continue operations.
- Continue communication with staff, colleagues and the community, operations and services may be temporarily impacted or cutback such as permitting, etc.

PRWD Employee Communication – March 2020

What to do if you feel ill? At the first sign of illness, you should not come in to work or upon arrival to work or become sick during the day, you should separate yourself and leave work immediately to avoid exposing coworkers and should stay home until you are completely recovered, or until the pandemic flu virus has been ruled out. You should cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing (or an elbow or shoulder if no tissue is available). You should notify the Administrator of your illness, or if the Administrator is out of the office due to illness, notify the PRWD President, Dennis Kral. Per the CDC's guidance, the District will generally NOT require a doctor's statement during the COVID-19 pandemic as medical facilities are likely to be extremely busy and unable to provide such documentation in a timely manner. This includes a medical certification required for Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) purposes.

What to do if you've been exposed to the virus? If you have been in contact with someone who is suspected of having the virus, you should report this information to your supervisor and stay home until the pandemic virus has been ruled out for the original contact person or for you or until you have recovered fully from the flu. Refer to CDC guidance for [how to conduct a risk assessment](#) of their potential exposure. If an employee is confirmed to have COVID-19, employers should inform fellow employees of their possible exposure to COVID-19 in the workplace but maintain confidentiality as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

When you can return to work? If you have symptoms of acute respiratory illness you should stay home and not come to work until you are free of fever (100.4° F [37.8° C] or greater using an oral 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 (e.g. cough suppressants).

Administrator authority to send ill employees' home. As always, the Administrator has the authority to require an ill employee to leave the workplace, as a safety consideration for the health of other employees. While the Administrator should not make judgments about a medical diagnosis, they may rely on symptoms to make a determination to send an employee home. (Coronavirus symptoms are respiratory in nature and may include fever, cough and shortness of breath.) You are encouraged to telework (when feasible), particularly if you have an underlying medical condition.

What will happen with your Monthly Stipend? If you are eventually forced to use unpaid leave due to a pandemic related illness or complication thereof, PRWD will continue to pay the monthly supplemental benefit for up to a three-month period.

What will happen with regards to employee travel? You should check yourself for symptoms of [acute respiratory illness](#) before starting travel or if you become sick while traveling, you should notify the Administrator and promptly call a healthcare provider for advice if needed. Work-related travel may be suspended temporarily during the COVID-19 pandemic.

How will the District communicate with employees? E-mail and website postings will likely be our primary means of contact, but please make sure the Administrator has up to date contact information for you (e.g., cell phone number).

What Preventative Measures should you take? Please follow the CDC and MN Department of Health Recommendations.

Sick Leave Policy. PRWD current policy on sick leave allows an employee to use sick leave "when you have been exposed to a contagious disease of such a nature that your presence at the work place could endanger the health of others with whom you would come into contact." It also allows use of sick leave to care for injured or ill children, spouses, fathers, fathers-in-laws, mothers, mothers-in-laws, stepparents, grandparents, grandchildren, sisters or brothers. The Sick leave policy is flexible and consistent with public health guidance and that employees are aware of these policies. **Interim COVID-19 Extended Sick Leave.** The District is providing an interim COVID-19 extended sick leave pay bank of up to 10 days, if you are under quarantine, present with COVID-19 symptoms, or contract the COVID-19 virus.

What will happen if all your sick leave is exhausted? If your interim COVID-19 extended sick leave and your regular accrued sick leave runs out or is insufficient and you do not have any paid leave available through the PRWDs paid leave programs, other arrangements may be made by the District Board of Managers.