



Pandemic and Public Health Emergency Response and Recovery

Administrative Policy

Date Issued: March 16, 2020

Approved By:

Robert T. Wyman, City Manager

Purpose: The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance and establish procedures in the event a pandemic illness or public health emergency is currently taking place, or is expected to take place, which may affect the City of Newcastle's operations and/or pose a risk to the health and safety of staff and the community.

Scope: This policy applies to all City of Newcastle employees.

Definitions:

1. Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA)
 - a. Non-Exempt: eligible for overtime after 40 hours in work week
 - b. Exempt: ineligible for overtime
2. Outbreak: A widespread occurrence of an infectious disease in a community at a particular time with a hospitalization and/or mortality rate significantly higher than the common flu.
3. Pandemic: A disease that is prevalent over a region, country, or the world.

References:

1. Newcastle Municipal Code (NMC) Chapter 2.35 Emergency Services
2. RCW Chapter 7.05 – Local Health Departments
3. RCW Chapter 7.08 – Combined City-County Health Departments
4. RCW Chapter 38.52.070 – Emergency Powers
5. RCW Chapter 70.26 – Pandemic Influenza Preparedness
6. City of Newcastle – Personnel Policies
7. City of Newcastle – Collective Bargaining Agreement
8. City of Newcastle – Proclamation of Local Emergency
9. City of Newcastle – Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan
10. Washington Department of Health: www.doh.wa.gov
11. Public Health – Seattle & King County: <https://www.kingcounty.gov/depts/health.aspx>

Policy: It is the policy of the City of Newcastle to take all appropriate measures needed to address a pandemic and protect public health. Protecting City employees and the community is a top priority and this policy establishes some of the actions that may be taken to address a pandemic.

Procedures: The following procedures are established to minimize disease exposure and maintain continuity of City operations in the event that a pandemic becomes a threat to the health or safety of City employees, their families, and the community.

1. **Declaration of Pandemic and/or Public Health Emergency:** Public health professionals at organizations such as the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), Washington State Department of Health (DOH), Washington State Governor, and/or Public Health - Seattle & King County (PHSKC) may declare that a pandemic, outbreak, or public health emergency exists. Such declarations may contain instructions or recommendations to both private and public sector entities. The City will follow mandatory instructions and will implement recommendations to the extent it determines these to be applicable and/or feasible or practicable under the particular circumstances.
2. **Procedures to help minimize the spread of germs:** Employees are urged to practice standard Non-Pharmaceutical Interventions (“NPI’s”), including covering coughs by coughing into a tissue, or their elbow, regular hand washing, regular use of alcohol based hand sanitizer, and avoiding touching their eyes, nose, or mouth and shaking the hands of others. Hands and work surfaces should be disinfected frequently. Employees are also urged to utilize social distancing such as maintaining a distance of six feet from others when practical to do so.
3. **Proclamation of Emergency/Disaster Due to Pandemic:** Upon the City’s proclamation of emergency/disaster due to pandemic, the following shall apply:
 - i. Employees who have a communicable illness or are experiencing flu-like symptoms (as then-defined by the applicable health authorities), are prohibited from coming to work and are encouraged to consult their physician. Employees may use their accrued leave as per Personnel Policies.
 - ii. Employees reporting to work who exhibit symptoms of a communicable illness will be sent home and encouraged to consult their physician. Unless otherwise prohibited by law, the employee shall be required to utilize accrued leave, if any, pursuant to adopted Personnel Policies or applicable Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) if they are sent home due to symptoms of an illness.
 - iii. If the illness of an employee or member of the employee’s household interferes with reporting to work in a timely manner, the employee is responsible for notifying their supervisor pursuant to the provisions of the Personnel Policies or applicable CBA. Employees must not return to work until they have been free of illness symptoms (fever, chills, etc.) for at least 72 hours, or longer applicable incubation period determined by the appropriate health authority, or are deemed no longer infectious by a medical professional.
 - iv. Except as otherwise prohibited by law, employees are required to first utilize their accrued sick leave and then any other accrued paid time off (vacation leave, compensatory time, floating holidays, etc.) while recovering from, or caring for a covered family members illness, as defined by the Personnel Policies.

- v. If the school or place of care of an employee's child is closed due to pandemic, the employee may use accrued leave in any increment, to care for the child.
- vi. Employees may donate accrued leave to employees who do not have enough accrued leave balances to cover their absence, in accordance with the City's shared leave policy.
- vii. When quarantine of an employee is ordered by State or County Health Officials due to a pandemic illness, employees may use accrued sick leave (or other accrued paid time off, to the extent the employee does not have sufficient sick leave) for the period of the quarantine.
- viii. At the discretion of the City Manager or designee, City Hall and City facilities may alter its business practices, hours of business, and services provided. Examples of potential measures that could be taken include but are not limited to:
 - a. The City may implement temporary emergency procedures to minimize in-person contact between employees. Such measures may include greater use of email, phone, and teleconferences as opposed to in-person meetings and contact.
 - b. Reduced Reception and Front Counter Service: The City may alter how it conducts business with the public by limiting or halting services at counters and areas of City Hall and other facilities where front-line services are typically provided to the public.
 - c. Telecommuting: Some staff may be permitted to work from an alternate location, such as their home, per the City's Temporary Telework Agreement.
 - d. Full or partial City Hall/City Facility Closure: City Hall or city facilities may be partially or fully closed. During closure, staff who are able to reasonably telecommute will adhere to the Temporary Telecommuting Agreement.

This policy may be changed at any time to address the immediate needs of the city during Pandemic and Public Health Emergency.