



CITY OF PROVIDENCE

9.2 ADVERSE PUBLIC HEALTH EVENT POLICY

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure the safety of staff during periods of adverse public health events while maintaining the essential functions and operations of the City of Providence.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees who work for the City of Providence, except sworn officers of Providence Public Safety and employees of the Providence Public Schools District. The Chief People Officer, in consultation with senior administration and emergency management and health officials, may declare a Level 1 or Level 2 adverse public health event.

Definitions

Essential Functions: The essential departments of the City of Providence, as follows:

- The Office of the Mayor
- The Office of the City Council
- Providence Water Supply Board
- Providence Public Safety, to include the Providence Police Department, Providence Fire Department, Communications, PEMA, and the Commissioner's Office
- Department of Public Works
- Parks Department
- Mayor's Center for City Services (MCCS)
- City Clerk's Office

Essential Employee: For the purposes of this policy only, an essential employee is any person who performs tasks directly or peripherally to provide necessary service during periods of adverse public health, or emergency support functions that may be mobilized during such an event. Employees ordered to report for duty by their department director, deputy director, or supervisor during adverse public health conditions will, for the purposes of the event in question, be counted as essential staff, even if they are not ordinarily assigned to so-called essential functions.

Policy

1. **Adverse Public Health Operational Categorization**

- A. Employees will be further categorized by the degree to which their functions are mission critical to the City of Providence based on the following categories and guidelines.
 1. **Non-Union Mission Critical Personnel:** Employees essential to the City's direct response to an adverse public health event. These may include department heads, deputy directors, and other management or professional staff.
 2. **Non-Union Support Personnel:** Employees who support those with mission critical responsibilities during the City's direct response to an adverse public health event. While not mission critical themselves, these employees may be called on to support critical functions.
 3. **Union Mission Critical Personnel:** Bargaining unit members who perform mission critical functions that contribute to the City's direct response to an adverse public health event. These include employees working in public safety, sanitation, and other critical operational functions.
 4. **Union Support Personnel:** Bargaining unit members who may be deployed to support those with mission critical responsibilities during the City's direct response to an adverse public health event. While



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not mission critical themselves, these employees may be mobilized as circumstances require their activation.

- B. It is imperative that all employees deemed essential identify a chain of succession to cover decision making and essential duties, in keeping with their department's operational continuity plan.
- C. Any asymptomatic employee who is not ordered to be quarantined or under monitored self-quarantine by the Rhode Island Department of Health, or other authoritative agency of the United States government is expected to report to duty.

2. **Alert Statuses**

A. It is the policy of the City of Providence to remain open during the public health event to ensure essential city functions are executed without interruption. Where circumstances warrant, the city may choose to invoke one of the following statuses during public health events.

1. **Public Health Alert Status – Level 1**

- 1. City operations are open. Non-essential employees who choose to take all or part of the day off must discharge vacation, floating holiday, or personal time.
- 2. All department directors and/or deputy directors are expected to report to work when the City is operating under the Level 1 public health alert status, regardless of whether your department is deemed to be *essential* as defined above.
- 3. Sick time may not be discharged unless the employee is unable to work due to personal illness or to attend to members of the family within the household whose illness requires the care of such employee. Please note that employees may be required to provide medical documentation to substantiate said absence.

2. **Public Health Alert Status – Level 2**

- 1. City buildings will be closed; all employees in the above defined categories 2 and 4 are expected to stay at home and telecommute. Those whose in-person work is deemed essential by their director, may be compelled to come into their place of work, and must be prepared to come to work as their department director deems necessary. Refusal to respond to a directive may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.
- 2. Employees in the above defined categories 1 and 3 are considered mission critical and expected to come to work if they cannot telecommute and perform their duties. Staff who do not have the equipment needed to telecommute will be provided the necessary equipment based on availability and priority. Requests should be submitted to the Information Technology Department or Operations Department by the respective department director or their designee.
- 3. Employees deployed to support mission critical operations of the city are expected to perform their job functions as deemed appropriate by the department director. Employees who are asymptomatic and not ordered to be quarantined by the Rhode Island Department of Health, or other authoritative agency of the United States government, shall report to support operational functions.

3. **Quarantined Employees**

- A. Employees who are under government-imposed quarantine or are under self-monitored self-quarantine by an authoritative state or federal agency such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) or the Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH) will be placed on administrative leave at the discretion of the City. Eligible employees will not have to discharge their paid time off, provided the employee submits documentation or notice of mandatory quarantine status.
- B. Employees must provide the Department of People and Culture (DPC) notification of quarantine status as soon as it begins and must provide DPC written clearance from the government entity monitoring or



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imposing the quarantine advising the employee is able to return to work or attesting that the quarantine period has been completed.

4. **Travel Related Risks**

- A. The city will take its guidance on travel related absences from public health organizations, such as the CDC and the RIDOH or emergency management organizations, such as the Providence Emergency Management Agency, the Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency, or any other authoritative state or federal government appointed public health and emergency response agency.
- B. Guidance on travel related quarantine will be issued on a case-by-case basis and will be disseminated to employees at the time of the public health event.

5. **Paid Time Off Requests**

- A. Any asymptomatic employee who is not under government quarantine ordered or monitored by an authoritative state or federal government health or emergency agency is expected to report for duty. City sick time policies apply unless otherwise indicated in writing by the Chief People Officer.
- B. Employees requesting time off for circumstances related to public health events during normal operating circumstances when the Adverse Public Health Event Policy is not in effect, must discharge benefit time off as they would for any other typical time off request. The Department of People and Culture may issue additional guidance based on the severity of adverse public health events.

6. **Employee Responsibilities**

- A. During a public health event, it is particularly important that all employees adhere to the basic protocols for hygiene and sanitation, to minimize the spread of contagious pathogens. Public health officials recommend the following to reduce the risk of transmission:
 - 1. Stay home when you are sick.
 - 2. Regularly wash hands with soap and clean water.
 - 3. Use sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.
 - 4. Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue, then dispose of the tissue. If unable to utilize a tissue, cough or sneeze into an elbow or sleeve, not hands.
 - 5. Avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
 - 6. Avoid close contact with people who may be sick.
 - 7. Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects, electronics (such as cell phones), and surfaces (especially bedside tables, surfaces in the bathroom, and children's toys) by wiping them down with a household cleaner.
 - 8. Get applicable vaccinations.
 - 9. Get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage stress, drink plenty of fluids, and eat nutritious foods.
 - 10. Follow the recommendations of public health officials, including recommendations aimed at reducing the spread of contagious diseases.
- B. The City of Providence will comply to the best of its ability with the requirements of any emergency order issued by state or federal government entities during any public health emergency which impacts city personnel or city operational capacity.

7. **Government Resources**

In the event of a public health event, current information may be obtained from various official public health governmental sources. Refer to the below informative websites:



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US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:
State of Rhode Island Department of Health:

<https://www.cdc.gov/>

<https://health.ri.gov/>

Related Policies:

Adverse Weather Policy

Essential and Emergency Staffing Policy

Telecommuting Policy