



Brick Township COVID-19 POLICY



Township of Brick COVID-19 Policy



Purpose:

To provide clear guidelines to all employees regarding safety precautions and guidelines to guard against contracting the COVID-19 Virus.

Background:

On average, influenza pandemics occur three times every century, but have no recognizable pattern. (1918-1919 – Spanish Flu, 1957-1958 – Asian Flu, 1968-1969 – Hong Kong Flu), Avian Flu (H5N1 and H9N2). (Currently) COVID-19, 2019-2021

What is COVID-19?

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person. The virus that causes COVID-19 is a novel coronavirus that was first identified during an investigation into an outbreak in Wuhan, China.

COVID-19 is spreading from person to person in parts of the United States. Risk of infection with COVID-19 is higher for people who are close contacts of someone known to have COVID-19, for example healthcare workers, or household members. Other people at higher risk for infection are those who live in or have recently been in an area with ongoing spread of COVID-19. The first case of COVID-19 in the United States was reported on January 21, 2020.

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Transmission

The virus that causes COVID-19 probably emerged from an animal source, but is now spreading from person to person. The virus is thought to spread mainly between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet) through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. It also may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes, but the risk is considered to be low.

Symptoms of COVID-19

Patients with COVID-19 have had mild to severe respiratory illness with symptoms of

- * Fever
- * Fatigue
- * Cough
- * Body Aches
- * Shortness of breath
- * Headaches
- * Nausea
- * Congestion
- * Vomiting
- * Diarrhea
- * New loss of taste or smell

Some patients have pneumonia in both lungs, multi-organ failure and in some cases death.

Other people, referred to as asymptomatic cases, have experienced no symptoms at all.

According to the CDC, symptoms of COVID-19 may appear in as few as 2 days or as long as 14 days after exposure.

Vaccine for COVID-19

Currently there are (3) vaccines to protect against COVID-19. The best way to prevent infection is to take everyday preventive actions, like avoiding close contact with people who are sick and washing your hands often. In addition, get vaccinated.

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Treatment of COVID-19

In October 2020, the FDA approved the antiviral drug remdesivir to treat COVID-19. The drug may be used to treat adults and children ages 12 and older and weighing at least 88 pounds, who have been hospitalized for COVID-19. Clinical trials suggest that in these patients, remdesivir may modestly speed up recovery. Check the latest CDC Guidelines for updated information.

Policy:

The Township's policy in response to the COVID-19 virus is as follows:

We have established a communication and reporting system.

Communication:

We have provided all employees with the following:

- COVID-19 Policy
- Links to governmental information sites
- Employee Protection Guidelines
- Key fact sheets about COVID-19

Reporting:

We have established a risk Level system (Risk level 1 through Risk level 4), designed to advise all Township employees on restrictions based upon the risk level that has been determined. This information will be communicated through the office of the Business Administrator.

The Municipal Emergency Management Coordinator or his designee will be responsible for communicating the latest information from the Ocean County Health Department to the Municipal Business Administrator on a regular basis and will recommend the appropriate Risk Level(s) that will be communicated.

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Risk Level One:

At this Risk Level there are no abnormal viruses that are evident in our specific region.

Risk Level Two:

At this risk level there are normal seasonal influenza viruses evident. Township employees are encouraged to receive vaccinations. Employees are encouraged to practice safe habits such as washing hands on a more frequent basis to avoid spreading germs and to avoid contact with other employees if you are in the beginning stages of illness.

Any employees who are traveling outside their home country or local region should take precautions beforehand including understanding the COVID-19 virus. Employees should follow Government guidelines posted through the websites listed below as well as the World Health Organization (WHO), www.who.int, or the Center for Disease Control (CDC), www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers, to ensure there are no restrictions to travel. The Township has issued travel quarantine policies.

Risk Level Three:

At this level there are reported human-human transmissions of the COVID-19 virus but is highly localized.

- If any Municipal employee resides in an area thus affected, the Business Administrator will:
 - *Affirmatively communicate the Employee Protection Guidelines.
 - *Consult with the Ocean County Health Department to coordinate the most effective treatment in a timely manner.
- If any municipal employee wishes to travel to an affected area on company business, approval must be obtained by the employee's immediate supervisor. The immediate supervisor, in coordination with the Business Administrator, will determine if business travel to this region will be permitted, and if so, if appropriate vaccination is required.

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Risk Level Four: PANDEMIC

At this level, there is wide spread human-to-human transmission of the virus of public health significance. Our policy will focus on three areas.

Prevention:

To minimize the affect of a sizable portion of our workforce not being able to come to work, Brick Township will provide the latest prevention techniques as directed by the CDC to all municipal employees. These include; distribution of masks, gloves, cleaning agents and instruction on the use of each. We will implement these Employee Protection Guidelines (EPG-1) as well as Containment Strategies / Management of Cases at Work (CSM-1), as described in detail further in this policy.

Workforce Plan:

The Business Administrator, in cooperation with the Emergency Management Coordinator, will consult with each department head to identify specific needs and requirements for each division to maintain essential business activities. It is the responsibility of each department head to formulate specific policies for their division to be put into motion once we enter the Level Four condition.

Cure:

Brick Township will strive to provide the most effective known vaccination information available to all municipal employees, Public Safety personnel and their families. Brick Township will rely on guidance from the County, State and Federal health organizations for availability of such vaccinations.

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Employee Protection Guidelines

In preparation for any potential outbreak of the COVID-19 Virus, the Township has taken the following precautions by maintaining a supply of the following items:

- Antiseptic waterless hand wash and wipes.
- Facial masks.
- Rubber gloves.
- Disinfectant and cleaning cloths.
- Protective gowns and eyewear for first responders.

In the event of a Risk Level Four activation, the Township will implement the following guidelines.

- Distribution of facial masks and gloves.
- Distribution of waterless antiseptic hand wash.
- Increase regular building maintenance procedures for sanitizing public areas such as door handles, sinks, etc.
- Desist in the use of the Municipal hand swipe time system.
- Check temperatures on all persons entering the Municipal Building (One entry point)
- Modified work schedule for civilian employees to minimize exposure risk.
- Social Distancing.
- Virtual meetings when possible.

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How to stop the spread of germs

Groups:

- Employees should avoid congregating in unnecessary groups and or social gatherings.

Cover your nose and mouth when you cough or sneeze:

- Cough or sneeze into a tissue and then throw it away.
- Cover your cough or sneeze if you do not have a tissue, then clean your hands, and do so every time you cough or sneeze.

Clean your hands often:

- When available, wash your hands with warm water and soap. Scrub your hands together vigorously to scrub all surfaces for 20 seconds. It is the scrubbing and the soap that dislodges and removes the germs.

When soap and water are not available:

- Use at least 60% alcohol based disposable hand wipes or gel sanitizers.
- These items can be found in most supermarkets and drug stores. The Township will maintain a supply of these items for employee use at all municipal sites.

Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth:

- Germs are often spread by touching something that is contaminated with germs and then touching their eyes, nose, or mouth.
- Germs can live for a long time (some hours or up to 5 days) on surfaces like doorknobs, desks, and tables.

Stay at home when you are sick and check with a health care provider when needed:

- When you are sick or have Flu symptoms, stay home, get plenty of rest and fluids, and check with a health care provider as needed.
- Remember contract requirements for a doctor's note for excused absences.
- Keeping your distance from others may protect them from getting sick.

Practice good health habits:

- Get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids and eat nutritious food. Practicing healthy habits will help you stay healthy during Flu season and all year long.

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**Containment Strategies
&
Management of cases at work**

Reducing the risk of infected persons entering our premises:

- The Township Safety Officer will manage all health-related activities under the direction of the Business Administrator.
- Upon the announcement by local health Officials that we have reached Pandemic state, each Department Head responsible for each Division will do the following:
 - Set up notices at all entry points to inform staff and visitors not to enter if they have symptoms of influenza.
 - Post and distribute Employee protections guidelines around the workplace and on DMS.
 - Ensure adequate supplies of tissues, medical and hand hygiene products, cleaning supplies as well as masks for employees.
 - Suspend use of the hand swipe time keeper machine to help prevent transference of the COVID-19 virus from one employee to another.

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Social Distancing:

- Social Distancing refers to strategies to reduce the frequency of contact between people.
- Where operationally feasible workgroups should be made and work in different locations in an attempt to avoid cross contamination.
- Where feasible shift changes should be managed as follows:
When one shift goes off duty, there should be an interval before the next shift begins so the worksite can be cleaned and ventilated.

Social Distancing strategies include:

- Employees should avoid face to face meetings if possible – virtual meetings are ideal and the Township has set up four Zoom accounts for this reason. Use the telephone or internet as much as possible for communication, even when the participants are in the same building.
- Avoid unnecessary travel and cancel or postpone non-essential meetings.
- Department heads may elect to use flex hours or modify scheduling to stagger office employees on duty with prior approval from the Business Administrator.
- Employees are to avoid congregating in kitchens or other areas where people socialize.
- If face to face meetings unavoidable, minimize the meeting time, choose a large meeting room and sit at least 6 feet away from each other. Avoid shaking hands.
- The installation of barriers in office workspaces between employees.

Cleaning:

- Office cleaning will be stepped up during the Pandemic period.
- Telephones and other common office areas will be cleaned at a minimum of daily or at shift change.
- Anti-bacterial solutions will be applied to all areas such as counters, railings, door handles, washbasins, toilet bowls, and urinals.
- Professional cleaning of entire municipal building and off-site buildings as often as deemed necessary.

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If an employee gets sick at work, or if someone observes that another person is exhibiting symptoms of influenza at work, they are to immediately contact their immediate supervisor.

You should:

- Avoid visiting this person if it can be avoided.
- Contact and inform the affected employee's immediate supervisor.
- The supervisor will contact the Township Safety Officer, who will verify with the employee any symptoms they may have.
- The Township Safety Officer, along with the affected employee's supervisor, will decide as to the appropriate course of action.
- The affected employee's workstation is to be cleaned and disinfected prior to being used by another employee.
- If an employee has left, or has been asked to leave the worksite, the affected employee will contact their direct supervisor on a daily basis and apprise them as to their ability to return to work. Doctor's notes for return to work may be required based on contractual agreements and length of absence.

Restricted Workplace Entry of people with Influenza Symptoms:

- GOCANVAS health screen form completed daily to be cleared for work.
- Employees are advised not to come to work when they are feeling ill, particularly if they are exhibiting any influenza symptoms,
- Employees who are ill should stay at home until symptoms resolve. (Fever free for 24 hours).
- Sick employees are advised to see a doctor.
- Employees must notify a supervisor if he/she or a household member are exhibiting signs of influenza or have tested positive.
- Place employee on quarantine when appropriate for the recommended amount of time.

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Quarantine Practices

- The quarantine policies are administered through the HR Department.
- Supervisors must immediately report to HR if an employee has tested positive, has reported experiencing symptoms, or is living with a family member who has tested positive.
- All employees, consultants and outside contractors must complete the Township's self-assessment checklist prior to reporting to work. If any of those responses results in an automated response of "Alert: Symptoms or Risk Reported STAY AT HOME" the employee must speak with his/her supervisor, HR, the Township's Safety Officer or Business Administrator before reporting to work.
- Employees who test positive must quarantine for 10 days from the date of the test. If the symptoms have not significantly improved, a doctor's note clearing the employee or a negative COVID test may be required. Employees must provide the positive test results to HR.
- If an employee is living with someone who has tested positive, the employee must self-quarantine for 10 days from the family member's positive test. The family member's positive test results must be provided to HR. If during the 10-day self-quarantine, the employee starts experiencing symptoms, he or she must be tested. A new 10-day quarantine period may be required.
- All Township policies regarding travel quarantines must be followed.
- HR, or a supervisor, will notify employees of workplace exposures. Employees directly exposed in the workplace must self-quarantine for 10 days. If during the 10-day self-quarantine, the employee starts experiencing symptoms, he or she must be tested. A new 10-day quarantine period may be required. Not all cohorts in each department will require a quarantine. The exposure risk is specific to working proximity and duration. HR will assess those parameters in each instance and direct the quarantine protocols accordingly.

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- Exposure that was limited to indirect contact with someone who has tested positive does not require quarantine. For instance, if your family member was exposed to a coworker who tested positive, you would not have to quarantine. Please share any concerns or questions with HR.

Communication and Reporting System Policy

While we are closely monitoring the COVID-19 virus as it pertains to its spreading we need to monitor this on a closer to home scale. A large outbreak of this virus would greatly affect Brick Township's ability to provide essential services to its residents. In order to ensure these services are maintained the following guidelines will be utilized to monitor employee absenteeism as it relates to any Flu sicknesses. By monitoring this we can get an early warning on any potential serious outbreak and take the appropriate action.

The following is the Township's policy on monitoring flu illnesses of our employees:

1. The Township's Self-Assessment checklist is in place and must be used daily by all employees, subcontractors and consultants.
2. In the event any employee is diagnosed with the COVID-19 virus the possibility of activation of the COVID-19 Policy will be examined by the appropriate persons with a decision on activation to follow.

Early detection of the presence of the virus and appropriate response could significantly reduce the risk of spreading the virus to fellow workers. Cooperation by both Supervisors and staff would greatly assist us in handling this threat.

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COVID-19 Vaccination Policy

Employees who have been vaccinated against COVID-19 must continue to comply with all COVID-19 policies and procedures.

Employees who experience vaccination side effects such as fever, vomiting, etc. may not report to work. Accrued time used in accordance with existing policies must be utilized.

Employees who are vaccinated should provide a copy of their vaccine record to Human Resources for inclusion in their confidential medical file.

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Links to governmental information sites COVID-19

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

<https://www.usa.gov/coronavirus>

<https://covid19.nj.gov/>

<https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/topics/ncov.shtml>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

Chief James Riccio

Emergency Management Coordinator

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Reviewed Emergency Management Committee

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