

Township of Rockaway

COVID-19 Pandemic & Continuity of Government



INTRODUCTION

The SARS-CoV-2 virus (the contagious virus that causes COVID-19, commonly known as novel coronavirus) continues to spread globally. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has indicated that COVID-19 is a serious health threat.

While we cannot predict when or if the coronavirus will impact Rockaway Township, we can anticipate that such an impact could result in high rates of employee absenteeism and an increase in demand for public safety services.

PURPOSE

The COVID-19 Pandemic & Continuity of Government plan was developed to assist the Township in preparing, responding to and conducting essential operations during a potential coronavirus pandemic outbreak. This plan establishes the following goals:

1. Protect employees, their families and Township residents
2. Minimize any effects presented by Township employees
3. Communicate accurate information about COVID-19
4. Communicate accurate information about Township closure
5. Continue essential operations and provide primary services to the public

PLANNING

All Township operations included in this plan will be carried out in accordance with the already approved Continuity of Operations/Continuity of Government (COOP/COG) Plan that serves to protect the local government and operations from natural hazard events and the Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan.

Updates to this plan may be forthcoming due to new information learned. The need to develop additional procedures and/or practices related to this plan will be communicated through this document.

Department heads shall plan to expect an increase in worker absentee rates due to personal illnesses, family illnesses, community mitigation efforts, quarantines, childcare issues resulting from school and daycare closures and the overall fear of risking exposure by leaving the sanctity of one's home. Where possible, employees shall be cross-trained within their department to meet the ongoing challenges and demands that will impact their operations.

Goal 1: Protect employees, their families and Township residents

In order to have the personnel resources to fulfil organizational and operational needs during an outbreak, employee protection and safety is the key objective. All other goals and objectives are predicated on successfully carrying out this core responsibility.

Objective 1.1 - Make the workplace safe to ensure the health and wellbeing of our employees and residents.

A. Supporting Initiatives:

- a. Hand sanitizers are available in the restrooms and on counters.
- b. Soap, water and paper towels are abundantly available for handwashing.
- c. Use gloves when handling mail and/or money.
- d. The Public Works Department and the Building and Grounds personnel, as it usually does, will continue to sanitize all surfaces throughout the week. If you observe something that needs immediate attention, please contact Patricia Seger for assistance.
- e. Electronic messages will be sent out to discourage residents with flu like symptoms from entering the building and will encourage them to use the website or call.
 - i. Residents who enter the building and show visible signs of flu-like symptoms may be asked to leave.
- f. Township inspectors shall use their best judgment when entering a home. If homeowner shows visible signs of flu like symptoms, they may re-schedule the inspection.
 - i. When scheduling an inspection, questions may be asked to determine if they have recently travelled to any of the affected countries or have been exposed or come in contact with the COVID-19 virus.
- g. Due to the severity of the virus, please notify the Administration Department (Patricia Seger) immediately if you, a family member or a person with whom you have close contact has:
 - i. Recently travelled to any of the affected countries.
 - ii. Been exposed to or come in contact with COVID-19 virus.
- h. The Township may decide to cancel or postpone attendance at conferences, seminars or other events.

Objective 1.2 – Establish and enact polices to limit the potential spread of illness.

A. Supporting Initiatives:

- a. Out of an abundance of caution, if you are ill – particularly if you have a fever – you are *required* to stay out of the office. If you come to work sick, your supervisor may send you home for the day.
 - Employees who have symptoms of acute respiratory illness are recommended to stay home and not come to work until they 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).

- b. Employees who are well but have a sick family member at home with COVID-19 should notify the Administration Department, speak to their physician and the Rockaway Township Division of Health before returning to work.

Objective 1.3 – Communicate and make information available to minimize exposure.

A. Supporting Initiatives

- a. Stay home when you are sick and if you are able to do so, check emails and monitor phone calls.
- b. Avoid meeting people face-to-face. Instead, use the telephone and video conferencing. Our IT Department may be able to assist with any questions.
- c. If meeting face-to-face, choose a large meeting room and sit at least three feet (3') from each other if possible. A distance of six feet (6') is preferred.
- d. Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- e. Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- f. Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue. If you do not have a tissue available, cover your nose and mouth with your upper sleeve to cough or sneeze.
- g. Clean and disinfect your workspace frequently.
- h. Avoid person-to person contact such as handshakes, hugs and kisses.
- i. Avoid any unnecessary travel and postpone nonessential meetings, workshops and training sessions.
- j. Do not congregate in work rooms, pantries, copier rooms or other small areas where people socialize.
- k. Bring lunch and eat at your desk or away from others.

Goal 2: Minimize the effects served by Township employees

It is essential that we make every effort to provide the public with the services they need. This section shall outline the steps that should be taken to maintain services and mitigate further risk.

Objective 2.1 – Review Township services and identify ways to provide these services without resident interaction.

A. Supporting Initiatives:

- a. Communicate to the public the services that we provide on a day to day basis that may be accomplished through other means.
- b. Potentially reschedule future meetings and large public gatherings. It is recommended that all public gatherings with 250 people or more be postponed until further notice.

Objective 2.2 – Review Township material and supplies that may be impacted due to supply chain disruptions.

A. Supporting Initiatives:

- a. Encumber funds and order essential materials and supplies that may be needed to protect public safety.

Goal 3: Communicate accurate information about COVID-19

It is essential that the Township communicates a concise and accurate message when disseminating information. This section shall outline the steps that should be taken to ensure residents are receiving the proper information.

Objective 3.1 - Establish a chain of command for disseminating information to the public.

A. Supporting Initiatives:

- a. The Rockaway Township Division of Health (RTDH) will be the lead agency as it relates to disseminating information for the Township. RTDH will update the Administration Department, Mayor's Office and Office of Emergency Management of any residents being monitored or testing positive for COVID-19.
- b. One concise message will be used to disseminate information. RTDH will post all relevant information on their department homepage, www.rockawaytownship.org, and information will also be posted on the RTDH Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/RockawayTownship/>. All other Departments may share the information once posted.
- c. The IT Department shall assist with webpage administration, if needed.

Goal 4. Communicate accurate information about Township closure

It is essential that employees and residents receive timely and accurate information as it relates to the closure of the Municipal Building and any disruption of services. This section shall outline the steps that should be taken to ensure employees and residents are receiving the proper information.

Objective 4.1 – Establish a chain of command for disseminating information to employees.

A. Supporting Initiatives:

- a. The RTDH will recommend to the Administration Department whether a workplace closure is needed.
- d. The Administration Department will communicate with department heads, via the Township email account (cell phones as back up), the need to close the Municipal Building. Department heads will disseminate this information to their staff members.
- e. The Administration Department will announce any closures on the Township website and Township Facebook page. All other Departments may share the information once posted.
- f. The IT Department shall assist with webpage administration, if needed.

Goal 5. Continue essential operations and provide primary services to the public

The initiatives for this goal are intended to address inadequate staffing due to absenteeism, establish a process for remote access to workstations, and ensure the continuity of essential operations.

Objective 5.1 – Prepare and execute personnel resource plan

A. Supporting Initiatives:

- a. The Administrator will review available personnel resources and coordinate with department heads to establish staffing level needs.

Objective 5.2 – Establish a process for remote access to workstations and telephones

A. Supporting Initiatives:

- a. All essential office employees will have access to their workstation through a remote access. Voicemail is available by dialing in.
- b. All other office employees shall be readily available during normal office hours if needed for assistance.

Objective 5.3 – Ensure the continuity of essential operations

A. Supporting Initiatives:

- a. The Administrator will review with department heads the essential operation and determine how it will be delivered.
- b. At a minimum, the following services shall be continued and/or have a contingency plan:
 - i. Payroll
 - ii. Tax Collection
 - iii. Public Safety and Dispatch Services
 - iv. Public Health Services that effect public safety
 - v. Sanitation Collection
 - vi. Emergency Utility and Road Repairs
 - vii. Sewer Facility Operations
 - viii. Building Cleaning and Disinfection
 - ix. Fleet Maintenance on Emergency and Essential Vehicles
 - x. IT Support & Maintenance
 - xi. Emergency Structural and Electrical Inspections that Effect Public Safety
 - xii. Emergency Fire Prevention Inspections and Investigations that Effect Public Safety

APPENDIX A

In an effort to minimize exposure to COVID-19, it is recommended that you call/email the Municipal Building first. Many services can be provided online or over the phone. Below is a list of services that do not require a visit to the Municipal Building. The list is not all encompassing; please visit www.rockawaytownship.org for more information or call 973-627-7200. The non-emergency Police Department contact number is 973-625-4000.

Administration

Job Applications

Township Clerk

Request for Public Records

Code Book Minutes/Agendas

Election Information

Citizen Leadership Form

Limo Permit Application

Peddler/Solicitor Permit Application

Taxi Permit Application Bingo/Raffle

Application

Liquor Licenses

Landlord Registration Form

Certified Copies of birth, death, marriage certificates (via State Health Department website)

Finance

Tax/Water/Sewer Payments and Account Lookup

Senior/Veteran Deduction Applications

Construction

Building & Fire Plan Review and Permitting

Permit and Inspection Research

Recreation

Program Registration and payment

Scheduling

Permit and Rental Applications

Public Works

Service Requests
Garbage Schedule

Planning and Zoning

Zoning Maps
Master Plan
Minutes/Agendas
Zoning/Variance Applications
Vacant and Abandoned Property Registration Application
Grading/Sidewalk/Driveway Applications

Health

Dog & Cat License Applications
Food Handler's License Applications/Renewal
Temporary Food Event License Applications
Water Analysis Payment/Well Installation Application & Permit
Septic Permit Application & Permit
Health Education Materials

Police

Crash Reports Firearms
Application Press
Releases Handicapped
Placards
Business Emergency Contact Form
Police Records Request

Court

Pay a ticket on-line