



GILMER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

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GILMER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS Employee Exposure Prevention, Preparedness, and Response Plan for COVID-19

Gilmer County (hereinafter “the County”) takes the health and safety of our employees very seriously. With the spread of the coronavirus or “COVID-19”, a respiratory disease caused by the SARS-CoV2 virus, the County must remain vigilant in mitigating the outbreak. In order to be safe and maintain operations, we have developed this COVID-19 Exposure Prevention, Preparedness, and Response Plan to be implemented, to the extent feasible and appropriate, throughout the County. County employees are considered to be Critical Infrastructure Workers.

This plan is based on information available from the CDC and OSHA at the time of its development, and is subject to change based on further information provided by the CDC, OSHA and other public officials. The County may also amend this plan based on operational needs.

I. Responsibilities of Managers, Supervisors and Department Heads

All managers, supervisors and department heads must be familiar with this plan and be ready to answer questions from employees. Managers, supervisors and department heads must set a good example by following this plan at all times. This involves practicing good personal hygiene and safety practices to prevent the spread of the virus. Managers, supervisors and department heads must encourage this same behavior from all employees.

II. Responsibilities of Employees

The County is asking every one of our employees to help with the prevention efforts while at work. In order to minimize the spread of COVID-19 everyone must play their part. As set forth below, the County has instituted various housekeeping, social distancing, and other best practices. All employees must follow these practices. In addition, employees are expected to report to their managers, supervisors or department heads, if they are experiencing signs or symptoms of COVID-19, as described below. If you have a specific question about the plan or COVID-19, please ask your manager, supervisor or department head. If they cannot answer the question, please contact the Human Resources Department.

OSHA and the CDC have provided the following control and preventative guidance for all workers, regardless of exposure risk:

- **Frequently wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.** When soap and running water are unavailable, use an alcohol-based hand rub with at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Follow appropriate respiratory etiquette, which includes covering coughs and sneezes.
- Wear a mask whenever possible, or when working with the public.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.

In addition, employees must familiarize themselves with the symptoms of COVID-19, which include the following:

- Coughing.
- Fever (100.4 or higher) or chills.
- Shortness of breath, difficulty breathing
- New loss of taste/smell.
- Extreme fatigue.
- Early symptoms such as chills, body aches, sore throat, headache, diarrhea, nausea/vomiting, and runny nose.

If you develop a fever and symptoms of respiratory illness, such as cough or shortness of breath, **DO NOT GO TO WORK** and call your supervisor and healthcare provider right away. Likewise, if you come into close contact with someone showing these symptoms, call your supervisor and healthcare provider right away.

III. Protective Measures

The County has instituted the following protective measures.

- Any employee/vendor showing symptoms of COVID-19 will be asked to leave the jobsite and return home.
- Avoid gathering in groups of more than 10 people.
- Practice social distancing of at least six (6) feet apart.
- Employees must avoid physical contact with others and shall direct others to increase personal space to at least (6) feet apart where possible.
- All in-person meetings will be limited. To the extent possible, meetings will be conducted by telephone.
- Employees will be encouraged to stagger breaks, lunches, if practicable, to reduce the size of any group at any one time to less than ten (10) people.
- The County understands that due to the nature of some of our work, access to running water may be impracticable. In these situations, the County will provide, if available, alcohol-based hand sanitizers and/or wipes.
- Employees should limit the use of co-worker's office supplies, tools and equipment. To the extent that tools must be shared, the County will provide alcohol-based wipes, if available, to clean tools before and after use. When cleaning tools and equipment,

consult manufacturing recommendations for proper cleaning techniques and restrictions.

- Employees are encouraged to minimize ride-sharing. While in vehicles, employees must ensure adequate ventilation.
- If practicable, each employee should use/drive the same truck or piece of equipment every shift.
- In lieu of using a common source of drinking water, such as a cooler, employees should use individual water bottles.
- Employees must sanitize work areas upon arrival, throughout the workday, and immediately before departure.
- All visitors should be screened. If the visitor answers “yes” to any of the following questions, he/she should not be permitted to enter.
 - Have you been confirmed positive for COVID-19?
 - Are you currently experiencing, or recently experienced any acute respiratory illness symptoms such as fever, cough, or shortness of breath?
 - Have you been in close contact with any persons who have been confirmed positive for COVID-19?
 - Have you been in close contact with any persons who have traveled out of the country and are also exhibiting acute respiratory illness symptoms?
- Employees that are required to interact with the public are required to wear PPE; gloves, masks, face shields and/or eye protection.

IV. Cleaning and Disinfecting

The County has instituted regular housekeeping practices, which include cleaning and disinfecting all work areas frequently. Employees should do the same in their assigned work areas.

- Break/lunchroom areas will be cleaned at least once per day.
- Employees performing cleaning will be issued proper personal protective equipment.
- Any trash collected must be changed frequently by someone using latex/vinyl gloves.
- Vehicles and equipment/tools should be cleaned at least once per day and before any change in operator or rider.
- The County will ensure that any disinfection shall be conducted using one of the following:
 - Common EPA-registered household disinfectant
 - Alcohol solution with at least 60% alcohol; or
 - Diluted household bleach solutions (if appropriate for the surface)

V. Exposure Situations

- ***Employee Exhibits COVID-19 Symptoms***

If an employee exhibits any COVID-19 symptoms, the employee must remain at home until her or she is symptom free for 72 hours (3 full days) without the use of fever-reducing or other symptom-altering medicines (E.g., cough suppressants). The County will similarly require an employee who reports to work with symptoms to return home until he or she is symptom free for 72 hours (3 full days). To the extent practical, employees are required to obtain a doctor’s note clearing them to return to work.

- ***Employee Tests Positive for COVID-19***

If an employee tests positive for COVID-19, the employee will be directed to self-quarantine away from work. Employees that test positive and are symptom free may return to work when at least ten (10) days have passed since the date of his or her first positive test, and have not had a subsequent illness. Employees who test positive are directed to care for themselves at home and may return to work when: (1) At least 72 hours (3 full days) have passed since recovered; and (2) at least ten (10) days have passed since symptoms first appeared. Employees who test positive and have been hospitalized may return to work when directed to do so by their medical providers. **The County will require an employee to provide documentation clearing his or her return to work.**

- ***Employee that has tested positive for COVID-19 antibodies***

Antibody tests should **not** be used to diagnose COVID-19.

If an employee is showing symptoms of COVID-19, they should have a viral test and they will be required to stay at home for 72 hours (3 full days) symptom free.

- ***Employee Has Close Contact with an Individual Who Has Tested Positive for COVID-19***

County employees are considered Critical Infrastructure Workers. Therefore, employees who have come into contact with an individual who has tested positive for COVID-19 (co-worker or otherwise) will be permitted to work following potential exposure to COVID-19, provided they remain asymptomatic and additional precautions are implemented to protect them and the community.

- **Pre-Screen:** Employee's temperature and assessment of symptoms should be done prior to them starting work each day. (Ideally, temperature checks should happen before the individual enters the facility.)
- **Regular Monitoring:** As long as the employee does not have a temperature or show any symptoms, they should self-monitor and report any changes in their health to their supervisor.
- **Wear a Mask:** The employee should wear a mask at all times while in the workplace for 14 days after their last exposure.
- **Social Distancing:** The employee should practice social distancing and maintain a six (6) feet distance, as work duties permit in the workplace.
- **Disinfect and Clean Work Spaces:** Clean and disinfect all areas such as offices, bathrooms, common areas, shared electronic equipment routinely.

If an employee becomes sick during the work day, they should be sent home immediately.

Surfaces in their workspace should be cleaned and disinfected. Information on persons who have been in contact with the ill employee during the time the employee had symptoms and 2 days prior to symptoms should be compiled.

VI. Confidentiality/Privacy

Except for the circumstances in which the Company is legally required to report workplace occurrences of communicable disease, the confidentiality of all medical conditions will be maintained in accordance with applicable law and to the extent practical under the

circumstances. When it is required, the number of persons who will be informed that an unnamed employee has tested positive will be kept to the minimum needed to comply with reporting requirement and to limit the potential for transmission to others. The County reserves the right to inform other employees that the unnamed co-worker has been diagnosed with COVID-19 if the other employees might have been exposed to the disease so the employees may take measures to protect their own health. The County also reserves the right to inform vendors/suppliers or visitors that an unnamed employee has been diagnosed with COVID-19 if they might have been exposed to the disease so those individuals may take measures to protect their own health.

VII. Instructional/Training Videos

Instruction/Training Videos can be found on the county website under Departments, Human Resources & Hiring, Current Employees (Password is: greatemployees), COVID-19.

VIII. General Questions

Given the fast-developing nature of the COVID-19 outbreak, the County may modify this plan on a case by case basis. If you have any questions concerning this plan, please contact Human Resources.