

COVID-19 Preparedness Plan

Under Gov. Tim Walz's Executive Orders, businesses that are in operation during the peacetime emergency are required to establish a COVID-19 Preparedness Plan. This includes both critical and non-critical businesses.

A business's COVID-19 Preparedness Plan shall establish and explain the policies, practices and conditions the business will implement to meet the industry guidance for the business that are based on Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) guidelines, federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) standards and applicable executive orders related to safety and health in their workplaces. The plan should have the strong commitment of management and be developed and implemented with the participation of workers. Plans must be communicated to workers and posted at the workplace in a manner that is accessible for workers to review. The Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry (DLI), in consultation with the Minnesota Department of Health, has the authority to determine whether a plan is adequate.

COVID-19 Preparedness Plans must include and describe how a business will implement the following, in compliance with the general industry guidance or the specific industry guidance applicable to your business:

1. policies and procedures that assist in the identification of sick workers and ensure sick workers stay home;
2. implementation of protocols for social distancing;
3. worker hygiene and source controls;
4. workplace building and ventilation protocols;
5. workplace cleaning and disinfecting protocols;
6. drop-off, pick-up and delivery protections and protocols; and
7. communications and training practices and protocols.

In addition to the above, the plan must also include protections and protocols included in specific industry guidance applicable to your business for circumstances that are typical, unique or specific to the type of business, including the situations where exposure exists for workers and/or customers. These additional protections and protocols may include, as provided in the specific industry guidance, the following:

1. additional protections and protocols for customers, clients, guests and visitors;
2. additional protections and protocols for personal protective equipment (PPE);
3. additional protections and protocol for access and assignment;
4. additional protections and protocol for sanitation and hygiene;
5. additional protections and protocols for work clothes and handwashing;
6. additional protections and protocol for distancing and barriers;



7. additional protections and protocols for managing occupancy;
8. additional protocols to limit face-to-face interaction;
9. additional protections for receiving or exchanging payment; and
10. additional protections and protocols for certain types of businesses within an industry.



COVID-19 Preparedness Plan for Heartland PCA, LLC

Heartland PCA is committed to providing a safe and healthy workplace for all our workers, clients, guests and visitors. To ensure we have a safe and healthy workplace, Heartland PCA has developed the following COVID-19 Preparedness Plan in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Managers and workers are all responsible for implementing this plan. Our goal is to mitigate the potential for transmission of COVID-19 in our workplaces and communities, and that requires full cooperation among our workers and management. Only through this cooperative effort can we establish and maintain the safety and health of all persons in our workplaces.

The COVID-19 Preparedness Plan is directed by Heartland PCA's Administrator, who maintains the overall authority and responsibility for the plan. However, management and workers are equally responsible for supporting, implementing, complying with and providing recommendations to further improve all aspects of this COVID-19 Preparedness Plan. Heartland PCA's managers and supervisors have our full support in enforcing the provisions of this plan.

Our workers are our most important assets. We are serious about safety and health and protecting its workers. Worker involvement is essential in developing and implementing a successful COVID-19 Preparedness Plan. We have involved our workers in this process by: soliciting their feedback and suggestions and integrating them into the plan.

Heartland PCA's COVID-19 Preparedness Plan follows the industry guidance developed by the state of Minnesota, which is based upon Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) guidelines for COVID-19, Minnesota Occupational Safety and Health Administration (MNOSHA) statutes, rules and standards, and Minnesota's relevant and current executive orders. It addresses:

- ensuring sick workers stay home and prompt identification and isolation of sick persons;
- social distancing – workers must be at least six-feet apart;
- worker hygiene and source controls;
- workplace building and ventilation protocol;
- workplace cleaning and disinfection protocol;
- drop-off, pick-up and delivery practices and protocol; and
- communications and training practices and protocol.

Heartland PCA has reviewed and incorporated the industry guidance applicable to our business provided by the state of Minnesota for the development of this plan. Other conditions and circumstances included in the industry guidance and addressed in the plan that are specific to our business include:

- additional protections and protocols for customers, clients, guests and visitors;
- additional protections and protocols for personal protective equipment (PPE);
- additional protections and protocol for access and assignment;

- additional protections and protocol for sanitation and hygiene;
- additional protections and protocols for work clothes and handwashing;
- additional protections and protocol for distancing and barriers;
- additional protections and protocols for managing occupancy;
- additional protocols to limit face-to-face interaction;
- additional protections for receiving or exchanging payment; and
- additional protections and protocols for certain types of businesses within an industry.

Ensure sick workers stay home and prompt identification and isolation of sick persons

Workers have been informed of and encouraged to self-monitor for signs and symptoms of COVID-19. These symptoms include fever of 100.4 or higher; new and persistent dry cough; difficulty breathing (unable to hold their breath for 20 to 30 seconds) or unusual fatigue. When any of these symptoms are present, the employee must provide notification according to the following guidelines: 1) Call their assigned QP Supervisor; 2) If the staff is not able to speak directly with the QP Supervisor, they must speak with the branch Office Coordinator and/or Scheduler; 3) If they are also unavailable, staff must call the Branch Manager. The worker is to stay home until the fever has been absent for three consecutive days without the use of medication. If the worker exhibits symptoms while at work, they are to ensure the safety of the client and then leave the premises. If they need to stay until another worker can arrive, they are to self-isolate and make sure they are wearing a mask and following other source control measures (e.g., hygiene and social distancing of at least six feet).

Workers with ongoing symptoms are strongly encouraged to contact their health care provider to determine if they should be tested for COVID-19. If they are tested, they are not to work until they receive the results of the test. **If they receive a positive test, they are to immediately notify the Branch Manager and their assigned QP/Nurse Supervisor.** Employees may not report to work until 14 calendar days have passed since the day of initial symptoms. Results of the test are to be reported to the assigned Branch Manager, who will track positive cases and contact the Minnesota Department of Health. The Minnesota Department of Health will provide guidance regarding reporting and follow up.

Heartland PCA has leave policies that promote workers staying at home when they are sick, when household members are sick, or when required by a health care provider to isolate or quarantine themselves or a member of their household. See the employee policies/handbook.

Heartland PCA will follow the Minnesota Department of Health's guidance for informing workers if they have been exposed to a person with COVID-19 at their workplace and requiring them to quarantine for the required amount of time. Any notification will protect the confidentiality of the individual who has contracted COVID-19 virus, according to the standards of the federal Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act.

Social distancing – Workers must be at least six-feet apart

Social distancing of at least six feet will be implemented and maintained between workers, clients, guests and visitors whenever possible. Due to the nature of Personal Care Assistant services, social distancing between a worker and a client is not always possible.

For office workers at Heartland PCA, workers will be encouraged to work remotely when possible. If they need to work in the office, they will be required to maintain social distancing of more than six feet from other coworkers. If this is not possible both workers are required to wear a cloth facemask. Hand sanitizer will be available in the office and workers are expected to use it and/or wash their hands when they arrive and before they leave. Phones, pens, computer equipment, desks, cubicles, workstations, offices or other personal work tools and equipment will not be shared and, if used by more than one person, will be cleaned and disinfected between users.

Screening and Policies for Persons Served Exhibiting Signs and Symptoms of COVID-19

Qualified Professionals – when a face-to-face visit is required for a Qualified Professional (QP), the QP must ensure that they are not experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19 as described above. If they are, they are to reschedule the visit, or if allowed, use remote technology to perform the visit.

Before conducting the face-to-face visit, the QP or the agency will conduct a screening with the client/responsible party no more than 24 hours before the visit is to occur. The screening shall consist of asking the following three questions:

1. Do you have any signs or symptoms of a respiratory infection, such as a fever, cough, difficulty breathing, or sore throat? Yes or No
2. Have you tested positive for COVID-19? Yes or No, if yes, test date and results, positive, negative or pending?
3. In the past 14 days, have you had contact with a household member who was exposed to the COVID-19 virus? Yes or No. If Yes, explain what the exposure was.

If the person answers “yes” to question 1, the scheduled visit will not be provided until the symptoms have subsided for a minimum of three consecutive days, without the use of medications.

If the person answers “yes” to question 2, the scheduled visit can occur if the results are negative. If the results are positive or pending, the visit should be rescheduled. The QP will work with the individual’s team to ensure care is being provide.

If the person answers “yes” to question 3, discuss the exposure with the person and assist them in determining if they should get tested. Follow the guidelines above for when someone has been tested to COVID-19.

If the person answers “no” to all the questions, or it is determined there is not a risk, e.g., the person was tested, but the results were negative, the visit can occur as scheduled. The QP is required to wear a cloth or surgical face mask during the entire visit, shoe covers in the home are optional, depending on the desires of the client or responsible party. The agency will make a good faith effort to provide each QP with a face mask. QPs may acquire and use personal face masks. QPs must ensure face masks are sanitized after each day, using guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), www.cdc.gov or the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH), www.health.state.mn.us .

QPs should wash their hands upon arrival and at departure or use hand sanitizer (consisting of at least 60% alcohol).

Personal Care Assistants – Personal Care Assistants (PCA) are required to self-monitor for symptoms of COVID-19 as described above. PCAs are required to wear face masks when working with clients. Heartland PCA has made good faith efforts to provide PCAs with cloth face masks and continues to have masks available for PCAs at no cost to the employee. PCAs may acquire and use personal face masks. PCAs must ensure face masks are sanitized after each day, using guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), www.cdc.gov or the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH), www.health.state.mn.us . PCAs must use a fresh mask with each client when visiting more than one client per day in order to avoid cross-exposure between households.

Whenever possible clients should be encouraged to wear a face mask as well. Heartland PCA has cloth masks available to clients upon request.

PCAs are required to wash their hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water frequently throughout their shift, but especially upon arrival and prior to departure, prior to mealtimes, after using the restroom, after assisting with personal cares, and after blowing their nose.

PCAs are to wear gloves when assisting with meals, personal cares, cleaning and other duties that carry a higher risk of infection. See the agencies policy on Infection Control.

Management of the agency reserves the right to make wearing masks optional for employees or clients based on recommendations of MDH for those who have a signed directive from their health care provider stating that the person has a health concern that is not compatible with wearing a face mask. Alternative, such as a face shield may be provided.

Worker hygiene and source controls

Basic infection prevention measures are being implemented at our workplaces at all times. Workers are instructed to wash their hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water frequently throughout the day, but especially at the beginning and end of their shift, prior to any mealtimes and after using the restroom. All clients, guests and visitors to the office are required to wash or sanitize their hands prior to or immediately upon entering the office. Hand-sanitizer dispensers (that use sanitizers of greater than 60% alcohol) are at entrances and locations in the workplace so they can be used for hand hygiene in place of soap and water, as long as hands are not visibly soiled.

Workers, clients, guests and visitors are being instructed to cover their mouth and nose with their sleeve or a tissue when coughing or sneezing, and to avoid touching their face, particularly their mouth, nose and eyes, with their hands. They are expected to dispose of tissues in provided trash receptacles and wash or sanitize their hands immediately afterward. Respiratory etiquette will be demonstrated on posters and supported by making tissues and trash receptacles available to all workers and other persons entering the workplace.

Workplace building and ventilation protocol

The offices for Heartland PCA include necessary sanitation, assessment and maintenance of building systems, including water, plumbing, electrical, and heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems. The maximum amount of fresh air is being brought into the workplace, air recirculation is being limited, and ventilation systems are being properly used and maintained. Steps are also being taken to minimize air flow blowing across people.

Workplace cleaning and disinfection protocol

Regular practices of cleaning and disinfecting have been implemented, including a schedule for routine cleaning and disinfecting of work surfaces, equipment, tools and machinery, vehicles and areas in the work environment, including restrooms, break rooms, lunch rooms, meeting rooms, checkout stations, fitting rooms, and drop-off and pick-up locations. Frequent cleaning and disinfecting procedures continue to be conducted of high-touch areas, including phones, keyboards, touch screens, controls, door handles, elevator panels, railings, copy machines, credit card readers, delivery equipment, etc. If a worker is diagnosed with COVID-19 and was in the workplace within 14 days of being diagnosed extra disinfecting will be done of the work area, especially in the areas where the worker was. Employees will be required to wear gloves when disinfecting surfaces and will be provided with information on donning and doffing of gloves. Gloves will not be reused.



Appropriate and effective cleaning and disinfecting supplies have been purchased and are available for use in accordance with product labels, safety data sheets and manufacturer specifications, and are being used with required personal protective equipment for the product.

For PCAs working in the client's home, they should assist with disinfecting surfaces, focusing on the high touch areas such as door knobs, handles, counters, etc.

Communications and training practices and protocol

This COVID-19 Preparedness Plan was communicated to all workers the week of June 29, 2020 via email or postal mail if email is unavailable. Additionally, it posted on the Heartland PCA, and supplemental training will continue to be provided as needed. Additional communication and training will be ongoing as we learn more about COVID-19 and ways to reduce the spread by updating this plan and using the same process to communicate with all workers. Training will be provided to all workers who did not receive the initial training and prior to initial assignment or reassignment.

Instructions will be communicated to all workers, including employees, temporary workers, staffing and labor-pools, independent contractors, subcontractors, vendors and outside technicians, customers, clients, patrons, guests and visitors about protections and protocols, including: 1) social distancing protocols and practices; 2) drop-off, pick-up, and delivery; 3) practices for hygiene and respiratory etiquette; 4) recommendations or requirements regarding the use of masks, face-coverings and/or face-shields by workers clients, guests and visitors. They will also be advised not to enter the workplace if they are experiencing symptoms or have contracted COVID-19.

Managers and supervisors are expected to monitor how effective the program has been implemented. Each branch maintains a COVID-19 log book to record employee reports of COVID exposure, as well as to monitor the effectiveness of the program and identify successes, challenges and deficiencies. All management and workers are to take an active role and collaborate in carrying out the various aspects of this plan, and update the protections, protocols, work-practices and training as necessary. This COVID-19 Preparedness Plan has been certified by Heartland PCA management and the plan was posted throughout the workplace and made readily available to employees on June 29, 2020. It will be updated as necessary by Heartland PCA's Administrator.

Certified on June 29, 2020 by:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Renée Graves".

Renée Graves, M.S. | Heartland PCA Administrator

Appendix A – COVID-19 Resources for the Preparedness Plan

General

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): Coronavirus (COVID-19) – www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV

Minnesota Department of Health (MDH): Coronavirus – www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus

State of Minnesota: COVID-19 response – <https://mn.gov/covid19>

Businesses

CDC: Resources for businesses and employers – www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/businesses-employers.html

CDC: General business frequently asked questions – www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/general-business-faq.html

CDC: Building/business ventilation – www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html

MDH: Businesses and employers: COVID-19 – www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/businesses.html

MDH: Health screening checklist – www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/facilityhlthscreen.pdf

MDH: Materials for businesses and employers – www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/materials

Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED): COVID-19 information and resources – <https://mn.gov/deed/newscenter/covid/>

Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry (DLI): Updates related to COVID-19 – www.dli.mn.gov/updates

Federal OSHA – www.osha.gov

Handwashing

MDH: Handwashing video translated into multiple languages – www.youtube.com/watch?v=LdQuPGVcceg

Respiratory etiquette: Cover your cough or sneeze

CDC: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html

CDC: www.cdc.gov/healthywater/hygiene/etiquette/coughing_sneezing.html

MDH: www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/prevention.html

Social distancing

CDC: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html

MDH: www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/businesses.html

Housekeeping

CDC: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html

CDC: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/disinfecting-your-home.html

CDC: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA): www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2

Employees exhibiting signs and symptoms of COVID-19

CDC: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/steps-when-sick.html

MDH: www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/basics.html

MDH: www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/facilityhlthscreen.pdf

MDH: www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/returntowork.pdf

State of Minnesota: <https://mn.gov/covid19/for-minnesotans/if-sick/get-tested/index.jsp>

Training

CDC: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-small-business.html

Federal OSHA: www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3990.pdf

MDH: www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/about.pdf