

## **PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY**

A Public Health Emergency may occur due to a variety of causes, including disease outbreaks, pandemic/epidemic events, and/or hazardous materials releases. Whenever reasonably possible, District administrators and public safety personnel will provide advance notification of conditions which may present increased risks for a public health emergency.

### ***If a Public Health Emergency Occurs or is Imminent:***

- Remain calm.
- Whenever possible, avoid becoming directly involved in the situation yourself.
- Quickly assess the situation and identify existing/potential hazards.
- In all cases where multiple, sudden, and unexplained illnesses occur, consider the possibility that hazardous materials may be involved and take appropriate action. If danger is imminent, alert others in the immediate area to the situation and, if it is safe to do so, move or direct them to safety.
- If the situation is life-threatening, dial **9-1-1** (or **9-9-1-1** from office phones). In all other cases, dial the police non-emergency number. If there are no telephones immediately available and it is safe to do so, send someone to request assistance. Provide the dispatcher/responders with the nature of the injury or illness and the location of the injured/ill person. Remain on the line or available to answer questions and provide other critical information.
- If it is safe to do so, provide first aid and appropriate care for the injured or ill person. Whenever possible, if blood, vomit, or other bodily fluids are present, avoid contact with these and use appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (gloves, mask, etc.). Do not move seriously injured people unless movement is necessary to protect them from immediate, life-threatening danger. Consider the possibility that injured persons may have been contaminated and take appropriate precautionary measures.
- Unless otherwise directed by competent authority, the District will remain open and business and instructional operations will continue to the greatest extent possible.

### ***If a Public Health Emergency Warning is Issued:***

- Review district emergency plans, guides, and checklists.
- Ensure all community members and coworkers are informed about the event or warnings.
- Monitor news and official sources for emergency information and updates. Current information may be obtained on the internet at: <http://www.cdc.gov>
- Anticipate needs if illnesses affect your workplace or family, paying particular

attention to the requirements of any critical facilities or persons with special needs (i.e., small children, elderly, and those who are medically fragile or who have disabilities).

- Facility administrators should consider and plan for possible facility closures.
- Inform affected populations of contingency plans and pre-position appropriate personnel to assist. Contingency plans should address:
  - Notification
  - Public information
  - Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
  - Evacuation
  - Traffic control
  - Security and access control
  - Medical needs
  - Special attention areas (Child Care Centers)
  - Alternative methods for the conduct of business (telecommuting or distance learning, for example)
  - Coordination with public safety, facilities maintenance, and health authorities.
  - Post-incident communication and potential recall of essential personnel.
  - Re-opening of facility.
- Consider supply issues when planning for contingencies. If a pandemic event continues for an extended time, it may be necessary to acquire stocks of water, sanitation supplies, latex gloves, safety glasses and/or dust masks.
- If the decision is made to close the facility and cancel activities, assist in an orderly closure of the workplace, securing office areas and buildings as you leave.

### ***Preparedness/Mitigation Efforts***

To minimize the risk and impact of Public Health Emergencies within District facilities and/or buildings, it is critical to employ basic hazard mitigation practices.

To assist in this effort, employees should:

- Take common-sense steps to limit the spread of germs. Make it a habit to maintain proper hygiene:
  - ✓ Wash your hands frequently with soap and water.
  - ✓ Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze.
  - ✓ Put used tissues in a waste basket.
  - ✓ Cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve if tissues are not available.
  - ✓ Wash your hands with soap and water or use an alcohol-based sanitizer after coughing or sneezing.
  - ✓ Stay at home if you are sick.

- Stay informed:
  - ✓ Learn more about the risks and protections from pandemic flu at <http://www.pandemicflu.gov>.
  - ✓ Information for Contra Costa County may be obtained through the Health Emergency Information Line: 1-888-959-9911, or on the Internet at <http://www.cchealth.org>.
  
- If a Public Health Emergency occurs, expect disruptions of normal services:
  - ✓ Services normally provided by hospitals and other health care facilities, banks, stores, restaurants, government offices, and post offices could be disrupted.
  - ✓ Transportation services and supplies of fuel could be disrupted. Consider alternative means of travel to work or school. Limit trips to those that are necessary and work from home when possible.
  - ✓ Prepare backup plans in case public gatherings, such as volunteer meetings and worship services, are canceled.
  - ✓ Consider how to care for people with special needs in case the services they rely on are not available.
  - ✓ Stock a supply of water and food. During a pandemic you may not be able to get to a store. Even if you can get to a store, it may be out of supplies. Public water supplies may also be interrupted.
  - ✓ Stocking supplies can be useful in other types of emergencies, such as power outages and disasters.
  - ✓ Plan for the possible reduction or loss of income if you are unable to work or your workplace is closed. Be familiar and comply with District leave policies.
  - ✓ Consider the effects of a Public Health Emergency on your site or facility and plan for continued operation under minimal staffing conditions.
  - ✓ Schools may be closed for an extended period of time. Consider child care needs and become familiar with the emergency plans for your child's school. Plan home learning activities and exercises.

### ***When Facilities Are Reopened***

- When appropriate, in accordance with instructions provided by public health officials, provide for proper clean-up and/or sanitization of facilities and equipment. Whenever possible, this should be completed before buildings are reoccupied.
- Return any emergency equipment used to its proper place and restock any depleted supplies.
- Assess and appropriately report any event-related losses to the workplace.

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