



**The Corporation of the Township of
Madawaska Valley**

COVID-19 Response Plan

Effective: March 2020



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SECTION 1 – INTRODUCTION

COVID-19 has been identified as a specific hazard that could imminently disrupt the operations of the Township of Madawaska Valley, the health care system and society. It is a possible emergency for which appropriate planning is required to ensure all staff are equipped with the knowledge, skills and resources to respond and protect themselves, and to ensure the essential functions of the Township of Madawaska Valley continue to operate. This Response Plan (Plan) was developed to assist the Township of Madawaska Valley to remain operational in the face of a potential pandemic, as well as strengthen its ability to resume operations following a pandemic.

The Plan has been designed as one aspect of the Township of Madawaska Valley's broader emergency plan. It provides guidance to the Township of Madawaska Valley and its employees, and may serve as the plan for maintaining essential functions and services during a pandemic.

This Plan reflects current knowledge and available information. It will be reviewed and updated on a regular basis to ensure it remains aligned with national, provincial and local developments and reflects current knowledge on COVID-19. Discretion may be required in the implementation of the Plan depending on changing circumstances.

The Township of Madawaska Valley's goals of this pandemic response are to prevent infection transmission, minimize serious illness, and minimize disruption to operations as a result of a COVID-19 pandemic.

SECTION 2 – BACKGROUND ON COVID-19

The information contained in this section is reproduced from the World Health Organization (WHO):

2.1 The COVID-19 Virus

COVID-19 is the infectious disease caused by the most recently discovered coronavirus. This new virus was unknown before the outbreak began in Wuhan, China in December 2019.

The most common symptoms of COVID-19 are fever, tiredness, difficulty breathing and dry cough. Some patients may have aches and pains, nasal congestion, runny nose, sore throat or diarrhea. These symptoms are usually mild and begin gradually. Some people become infected but don't develop any symptoms and don't feel unwell. Most people (about 80%) recover from the disease without needing special treatment.¹

2.2 How Does COVID-19 Spread?

¹ World Health Organization, "Q&A on coronaviruses (COVID-19)", February 23, 2020: <https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/q-a-coronaviruses>.

People can catch COVID-19 from others who have the virus. The disease can spread from person to person through small droplets from the nose or mouth which are spread when a person with COVID-19 coughs, sneezes or exhales. These droplets land on objects and surfaces around the person. Other people then catch COVID-19 by touching these objects or surfaces, then touching their eyes, nose or mouth. People can also catch COVID-19 if they breathe in droplets from a person with COVID-19 who sneezes, coughs out or exhales droplets. This is why it is important to stay more than 1 meter (3 feet) away from a person who is sick.²

2.3 Providing Current Information

Information regarding the COVID-19 is developing. The Township of Madawaska Valley will convey clear, relevant information about the source and nature of the risk, updated as frequently as required.

SECTION 3 – LEGAL OBLIGATIONS

3.1 Pursuant to the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* (OHSA), the Township of Madawaska Valley, its supervisors and employees all have duties and responsibilities to control hazards in the workplace and ensure a safe working environment. The Township of Madawaska Valley will continue to comply with and satisfy its obligations pursuant to the OHSA in the event of a potential COVID-19 pandemic, including its obligations with respect to:

- (a) the provision of information, instruction and supervision;
- (b) taking reasonable precautions for the protection of workers;
- (c) providing required equipment, material and protective devices;
- (d) reporting occupational illnesses; and
- (e) considering work refusals in accordance with the OHSA.

3.2 The Township of Madawaska Valley will continue to comply with its obligations under the *Human Rights Code*, including its duty to accommodate.

SECTION 4 TOWNSHIP OF MADAWASKA VALLEY TOWNSHIP OF MADAWASKA VALLEY- PRE-PANDEMIC MITIGATION STRATEGIES AND CARE

4.1 All employees are encouraged to:

- (a) Regularly and thoroughly clean their hands with an alcohol-based (at least 60% alcohol) hand rub or wash them with soap and water for at

² Ibid.

least 20 seconds and dry hands with paper towels, rather than jet dryers, where possible.

- (b) Maintain at least 1 metre (or 3 feet) distance between the employee and anyone who is coughing or sneezing.
 - (c) Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth.
 - (d) Ensure that they, and the people around them, follow good respiratory hygiene, including but not limited to covering their mouth and nose with their bent elbow or tissue when they cough or sneeze and disposing of used tissues immediately.
 - (e) Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.
 - (f) Avoid shaking hands with colleagues or customers.
- 4.2 Within the workplace, the Township of Madawaska Valley may also implement social distancing measures, which include: modifying the frequency and type of face-to-face employee encounters (e.g. placing moratoriums on hand-shaking, substituting teleconferences for face-to-face meetings, staggering breaks, posting infection control guidelines); establishing flexible work hours or worksites (e.g. telecommuting); and promoting social distancing between employees and customers to maintain 3-foot spatial separation between individuals. Such measures will be communicated to employees in accordance with this Plan.
- 4.3 The Township of Madawaska Valley will increase its cleaning operations, particularly of common areas and include, for example, surfaces of desks, phones, doorknobs and elevator buttons.
- 4.4 All business travel to “High Risk Jurisdictions” and conferences shall be cancelled.

SECTION 5 – PANDEMIC RESPONSE TEAM

- 5.1 The Township of Madawaska Valley’s goal is to maintain operations and continuity to the extent possible during a pandemic.
- The Township of Madawaska Valley has designated the Emergency Management Control Group as the Pandemic Response Team, comprised of:
 - Mayor (or Acting Mayor, or Member of Council)
 - CAO/Clerk (or designate)
 - Chief Fire Official/CEMC (or designate)
 - Deputy Clerk/CEMC Alternate /Communications (or designate)
 - Operations Manager (or designate)
 - Treasurer (or designate)

- 5.2 Each member of the Pandemic Response Team has also designated a back-up in the event that member becomes ill or is otherwise unable to perform their duties.
- 5.3 The role of the Pandemic Response Team is to:
- (a) monitor information related to the pandemic;
 - (b) establish when the various steps of the Plan must be implemented, and whether any steps of the Plan need to be amended to address the unique nature of the pandemic threat;
 - (c) determine how long the Plan will be kept in effect;
 - (d) communicate with public health agencies, emergency responders and others as required in the event that an employee, client, customer or visitor is confirmed as having the virus, or is displaying symptoms;
 - (e) confirm or define “High Risk Jurisdictions” on an ongoing basis for the purposes of notification under this Plan;
 - (f) review the Township of Madawaska Valley’s policies regarding paid and unpaid leaves of absence and determine whether any changes need to be made on a temporary or interim basis;
 - (g) coordinate the distribution of information and materials to employees;
 - (h) enact pre-pandemic mitigation strategies;
 - (i) identify the essential functions or services of the Township of Madawaska Valley which will be continued and how they will be carried out during the pandemic outbreak
 - (j) develop a plan for continued operations, in accordance with Section 9.

SECTION 6 – SELF-IDENTIFICATION, NOTIFICATION AND TREATMENT

- 6.1 Employees who feel unwell or have symptoms of a respiratory illness of any kind should remain at home in isolation. If an employee has a fever, cough and difficulty breathing, the employee should call their local health authority and seek medical attention.
- 6.2 Employees should stay informed on the latest developments about COVID-19, and follow the advice of their healthcare provider, national and local public health authorities or the Township of Madawaska Valley on how to protect themselves and others from COVID-19. In the event mandatory quarantines or other protective measures are required by health authorities, the Deputy Clerk will issue an emergency communication to all employees.

- 6.3 Any employee who has recently visited a “High Risk Jurisdiction”, as defined and communicated by the Response Team, must immediately report to the CAO/Clerk via email or telephone prior to returning to work for further instructions regarding whether or not a self-quarantine is required based on current direction from health authorities.
- 6.4 Any employee who has been in contact with someone who (i) has been in a High Risk Jurisdiction and (ii) is exhibiting symptoms of, or tests positive for, COVID-19 must immediately notify the CAO/Clerk by email or telephone. Employees will be required to work remotely for 14 days following such contact, and will be permitted to return to work only if they are not showing symptoms at the conclusion of that 14 day period.
- 6.5 Any employee who is planning travel, whether within Canada or outside of Canada, must contact the CAO/Clerk before returning to the workplace to ensure that they are informed of any updates to Township of Madawaska Valley guidelines or changes to the jurisdictions considered as “high risk”.

SECTION 7 - EMPLOYEE ABSENCES

- 7.1 As part of its duties, the Response Team will develop a contingency plan for increased absenteeism within the Township of Madawaska Valley’s workforce.
- 7.2 Employees who are required to remain at home will be on an unpaid leave, unless they are eligible for sick leave, bank time or have other paid leaves available to them. The Township of Madawaska Valley may make additional paid leaves and/or inform of available programs to employees for the purposes of the pandemic, which will be communicated to employees.

SECTION 8 – VISITORS [CUSTOMERS, CLIENTS

- 8.1 All visitors/customers/clients will be asked to decline attending the workplace if they develop any flu-like or respiratory illness symptoms, or if they have been in a “High Risk Jurisdiction” in the 14 day period that precedes their visit.
- 8.2 All visitors/customers/clients are encouraged to contact employees of the Township of Madawaska Valley by e-mail or telephone, instead of through a physical visit. can be offered participation through audio conference for those who cannot attend in person.
- 8.3 If the “High Risk Jurisdiction” list changes after the initial invitation, employees must update previously sent invitations.

SECTION 9 – COMMUNICATIONS

- 9.1 The Deputy Clerk will advise on all communication strategies, including the use of appropriate channels for dissemination, and coordinate the production of materials for internal and external communications, including those for social media, media relations and mass communications, in conjunction with the Emergency Control Group.
- 9.2 In the event emergency communications are necessary, they will be communicated by the Deputy Clerk via email to employees' of the Township of Madawaska Valley
- 9.3 Signage promoting hand hygiene, cough and sneeze etiquette, proper use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and social distancing will be posted throughout the workplace as applicable.
- 9.4 The Township of Madawaska Valley's CEMC will work with the Response Team to ensure that the Township of Madawaska Valley's Pandemic Response Plan is communicated and implemented in the workplace. Messaging and risk communications during an emerging infectious disease or pandemic will be conducted by the Deputy Clerk. During a pandemic response, all communications will be approved by the CAO/Clerk.
- 9.5 The Emergency Management Control Group will determine strategies for internal and external communication and for media. Other individuals shall refrain from *ad hoc* or spontaneous comments or communications, as contradictory or unclear information can create confusion and detract from the Response Plan. Communication will be as warranted and will be carried out in a controlled fashion, only by designated spokespersons and using official channels.
- 9.6 Privacy and Confidentiality
- When addressing requests for information in the event of a pandemic response, it is important to consider issues of privacy and confidentiality. Depending on the situation, confidentiality may be required by statutes, regulations, policies or contracts.
- Before responding to any requests for disclosure of information or providing such information to anyone, consult with a member of the Emergency Control Group. This includes requests for information from police, government officials or media. If disclosure is made, the CAO/Clerk should be informed immediately.
- Nothing in this section prohibits the release of personal information of any person to police or other government officials if the purpose is to mitigate an imminent risk of harm to any person or significant damage to Township of Madawaska Valley resources.

SECTION 10 –BUSINESS CONTINUITY

- 10.1 The Pandemic Response Team is responsible for developing contingencies for dealing with the impact a health emergency may have on the continued operation of the Township of Madawaska Valley's business. This may involve the following considerations:
- (a) determining the core aspects of the business which must be carried on in order to sustain operations;
 - (b) identifying the personnel systems, sites, supply methods, transportation requirements, utilities etc. that are required to maintain core functions;
 - (c) identifying whether aspects of the operation would have to be closed temporarily;
 - (d) developing, in conjunction with the Communications designate, plans for communicating to vendors, suppliers and customers;
 - (e) identifying internal and external dependencies;
 - (f) identifying essential positions and considering cross-training employees or training and drawing upon an ancillary workforce (for example, contractors or retirees);
 - (g) identifying and planning for employees who may be at higher risk, for example pregnant women and employees with certain chronic conditions, and considering accommodations as necessary in accordance with human rights obligations;
 - (h) determining in advance the level of absenteeism that can be tolerated before key business functions are affected and business operations must be changed;
 - (i) maintaining a list of duties that employees can perform from home, as well as any equipment that may be necessary to perform those duties. Supervisors can then draw on this list to have those duties performed by employees from home should it become necessary;
 - (j) considering how business activities can be modified to reduce face to face contact, for example by setting up meetings through teleconferencing rather than in person;
 - (k) considering staggered work hours, flexible worksites, different work reporting structures or work assignments, telecommuting and reduced travel; and

- (l) ensuring communications and information technology infrastructures can accommodate a large number of employees working from home.