



COVID-19 Preparedness Plan

Date Originally Created: July 30, 2020

Date Revised: November 17, 2020

Background:

Executive Order 20-40, issued by Gov. Tim Walz on April 23, 2020, requires each business in operation during the peacetime emergency establish a “COVID-19 Preparedness Plan.”

A business’ COVID-19 Preparedness Plan shall establish and explain the necessary policies, practices, and conditions to meet the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) guidelines for COVID-19 and federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) standards related to worker exposure to COVID-19. The plan should have the strong commitment of management and be developed and implemented with the participation of workers. The Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry, in consultation with MDH, has the authority to determine whether a plan is adequate.

MRCI is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment. To ensure that, we have developed the following Preparedness Plan in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. All branches and divisions of MRCI are responsible for implementing this plan. Our goal is to mitigate the potential for transmission of COVID-19 in our workplaces, and that requires full cooperation among all staff, clients, support teams and volunteers. Only through this cooperative effort can we establish and maintain the safety and health of our workers and workplaces.

We are serious about safety and health of all involved with MRCI. Utilizing the MN DEED template, we have integrated suggestions from various partners, staff, families and other providers throughout the state and shared draft documents for additional feedback prior to developing.

Our Preparedness Plan follows Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) guidelines and federal OSHA standards related to COVID-19 and addresses:

- hygiene and respiratory etiquette;
- engineering and administrative controls for social distancing;
- housekeeping – cleaning, disinfecting and decontamination;
- prompt identification and isolation of sick persons;
- communications and training that will be provided to managers and workers; and management
- and supervision necessary to ensure effective implementation of the plan.

Philosophy

- This document lays out the MRCI’s Preparedness Plan concerning organizational preparedness for the current pandemic of COVID19.

MRCI Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) Preparedness Plan

- MRCI is committed to providing a safe and healthy workplace for all persons served, Staff, volunteers, and guests.
- MRCI is committed to continuing social distancing, remote work, use of PPE, cleaning of locations, and encouraging personal monitoring for symptoms.
- MRCI will resume services with a tiered approach based on current/updated guidelines for social distancing and hygiene outlined by state government or other local authorities.
- MRCI will amend this plan as information is acquired to better provide a safe environment.

Up-to-date guidance from the Department of Health on recommended community mitigation strategies can be found here.

Minnesota Department of Health
COVID-19 Hotline: 651-201-3920
1-877-676-5414
<https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/index.html>
Center for Disease Control (CDC)

General information about COVID-19
1-800-232-5414
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

Programming During Pandemic

MRCI will adhere to programming guidance from the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH), DEED, Minnesota Department of Human Services and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines regarding programming during COVID-19.

- Client Direct Services, MFIP, IPS, and Competitively-Paid Employment programming continue to be supported.
- EASE programming will resume with in-person services in the fall of 2020.
- Virtual Day Services and Virtual Exploration Services will be provided as alternatives to in-person DT&H services and transition programming; however, both will be offered with in-person services with safety in mind as the menu of services is expanded.

All Individuals have a role at MRCI to reduce the spread of COVID-19

- Staff who are able to work from home should continue to do so, unless directed by their supervisor.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes with your elbow or sleeve, or a tissue and then throw the tissue in the trash and wash your hands afterwards.
- Washing your hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom or before eating. If soap and water are not readily available, use an approved hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your face – especially your eyes, nose, and mouth – with unwashed hands.
- Stay home if you have cold- or flu-like symptoms, for seven days after your illness onset and three days after your fever resolves without fever reducing medicine (whichever is longer) and avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- All persons are responsible for implementing and complying with all aspects of this Preparedness Plan.

Screening and Policies for Staff Exhibiting Signs and Symptoms of COVID-19

- Staff have been informed of and will self-monitor for the following signs and symptoms of COVID-19: Fever of 100.4 or higher; new and persistent dry cough; difficulty breathing (unable to hold breath for 20-30 seconds); or unusual fatigue.
- When any of these symptoms are present, the employee must notify their manager or representative by following MRCI call-in policies and stay at home until the fever has been absent for 48 hours, without the use of medications.
- Staff who exhibit symptoms of COVID-19 while at work, will immediately notify their supervisor, sign out and leave the premises. They must stay at home until the symptoms have subsided for a minimum of 48 hours, without the use of medications.
- Staff with ongoing symptoms are strongly encouraged to contact their health care provider. Should they be tested for COVID-19 and receive a positive diagnosis, they must inform their supervisor immediately and not report to work until 14 calendar days have passed since the day of initial symptoms.
- Staff with a household member who has been tested and has received a positive diagnosis of COVID-19, must immediately inform their supervisor and not report to work until 14 calendar days have passed since the day of initial symptoms. Staff should also stay home if a household member is awaiting the results of a test.
- Staff may be eligible for Paid Time Off, Safe/Sick Time Off and/or other benefits as described in the Employee Handbook. Immunocompromised staff members are encouraged to contact Human Resources to explore accommodation opportunities.
 - If the staff is symptomatic and able to continue working remotely, they may choose to do so. If the staff is asymptomatic, they will be expected to work remotely if their duties make remote work possible.

Notification of Exposure to COVID-19

If an employee or person served is diagnosed with COVID-19 or there is a presumption of a positive test result, should notify Renae Schenk (Human Resources). She shall notify the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) and follow the protocols as directed by MDH.

- MDH will work with MRCI to determine the risk level of other Staff and persons served and will provide guidance regarding communication and other steps. MRCI will follow CDC guidelines for quarantining staff impacted by exposures.
- The notification will protect the confidentiality of the individual whom has contracted the COVID-19 virus, according to the standards of the federal Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)

Handwashing/Sanitizing

- Staff and persons served will wash their hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water frequently throughout the day, but especially upon arrival and prior to departure, prior to any mealtimes and after using the toilet.
 - All guests, when permitted, will be required to wash or sanitize their hands prior to or immediately upon entering the site.
- Hand-sanitizer stations are placed throughout the site and can be used if hand wash stations are not available.

- If a person is diagnosed with COVID-19, extra sanitizing measures will be conducted in the exposed areas.

Respiratory etiquette: Cover your cough or sneeze

- Staff, persons served and guests are instructed to cover their mouth and nose with their sleeve or a tissue when coughing or sneezing and to avoid touching their face, in particular their mouth, nose and eyes, with their hands. They should dispose of tissues in the trash and wash or sanitize their hands immediately afterward.
- Staff must wear face masks while transporting persons served in MRCI or private vehicles. Persons served must wear face masks while riding in MRCI vehicles or private vehicles driven by an MRCI employee. Persons served who refuse to wear a face mask will not be transported by MRCI or Staff of MRCI. Face masks cannot be shared with others.
- The organization can provide disposable face masks for Staff to use while conducting MRCI business upon request.
 - Staff may acquire and use personal face masks.
 - Persons served will be required to acquire personal face masks.
- Using guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), www.cdc.gov or Minnesota Department of Health (MDH), www.health.state.mn.us, Face Masks need to be sanitized after each day.
- Persons employed by or MRCI Staff visiting community-based jobs will be required to follow the COVID19 plan as mandated by the employer.

Face Coverings

As of July 25, 2020, per the [Governor's Executive Order 20-81](#), people in Minnesota are required to wear a face covering in all indoor businesses and public indoor spaces, unless alone. Additionally, workers are required to wear a face covering when working outdoors in situations where social distancing cannot be maintained.

- Types of face coverings can include a paper or disposable mask, a cloth mask, a neck gaiter, a scarf, a bandanna, or a religious face covering.
- A face covering must cover the nose and mouth completely. The covering should not be overly tight or restrictive and should feel comfortable to wear.
- Any mask that incorporates a valve that is designed to facilitate easy exhaling, mesh masks, or masks with openings, holes, visible gaps in the design or material, or vents are not sufficient face coverings because they allow droplets to be released from the mask.
- A face covering is not a substitute for social distancing, but is especially important in situations when maintaining at least a 6-foot distance from other individuals who are not members of the same household is not possible.
- Although medical-grade masks (e.g., surgical face masks, N95 respirators) are sufficient face coverings, members of the public who do not work in health care or an occupation that requires medical-grade protective equipment (e.g., certain construction professions) are discouraged from wearing them as they should be reserved for those workers.

People exempted from the face covering requirement

- Children under age 2 years must not wear face coverings. Children between the ages of 2 and 5 years old are not required to wear face coverings, but are encouraged to wear a face covering when in public if they can do so reliably in compliance with CDC guidance on [How](#)

[to Wear Cloth Face Coverings](#) (i.e., without frequently touching or removing the face covering).

- People who have medical or other health conditions, disabilities or mental health, developmental, or behavioral needs that make it difficult to tolerate wearing a face covering.
- Any person who has trouble breathing, is unconscious, sleeping, incapacitated, or is otherwise unable to remove the face covering without assistance.
- People at their workplace when wearing a face covering would create a safety hazard to the person or others as determined by local, state, or federal regulators or workplace safety guidelines.
- Alternatives to masks such as clear face shields may be considered for those with health conditions or situations where wearing a mask is problematic. Face shields may also be used as an alternative to face coverings when specifically permitted in the applicable Industry Guidance available at [Stay Safe Minnesota](#).

When it is required to wear a face covering

- In all indoor businesses and public indoor spaces, including when waiting outside to enter the public indoor space or business.
- When riding on public transportation such as buses or trains, or in a taxi, ride-sharing vehicle, or vehicle that is being used for a business purpose.
- When working outdoors in situations where social distancing (i.e., maintaining physical distance of at least six feet from other individuals who are not in the same household) cannot be maintained.

When can a face covering can be temporarily removed

- While eating or drinking, if you can maintain 6 feet of physical distance from others who are not a member of the same party.
- While communicating with someone who is deaf or hard of hearing, or who has a medical condition, disability, or mental health condition that makes communication with that individual while wearing a mask difficult, provided that social distancing is maintained to the extent possible between people who are not members of the same household.
- When alone, such as when working in an office or a cubicle with walls higher than face level when social distancing is maintained, in an enclosed indoor area, in a vehicle, or in the cab of heavy equipment or machinery. In such situations, people should still carry face coverings to be prepared to wear when no longer alone.
- Even in situations where face coverings are not required, all people should carry a face covering to prepare for close interactions with others or to enter an indoor space.

Social distancing

- Staff and persons served will be strongly reminded to keep 6 ft distances while engaged in site-based and community activities.
- All persons driving or persons served riding in MRCI vehicles must wear face masks, if more than one person is in the vehicle (see Transportation for more guidance).
- Staff using shared office space will use social distancing strategies.
 - Physical environments have been adapted to limit group sizes.
 - Coordinating time spent in the office to ensure the time is not overlapping.
- Shaking hands, hugging, fist bumps, high fives and other physical forms of greetings or celebrations will not be allowed.
 - After-work MRCI-sponsored functions and events will be temporarily suspended.
 - Communal food and sharing of food will not be permitted until further notice.

- Lunchroom spaces may be used, but users must be at least 15 feet apart.
- In-person meetings or gatherings between staff at MRCI facilities will be temporarily suspended. All meetings are encouraged to be held via remote teleconference.
 - Any in-person or on-site meetings that need to occur for business purposes will be permitted with prior approval by CEO or delegate as necessary, but must use social distancing strategies.
 - In-person programming will be permitted with established protocols; however, non-essential staff will not be permitted in program space without prior approval of CEO or delegate.
- Non-essential visitors will be restricted from all locations until further notice. All essential visitors need to sign-in to the building after meeting screening protocols. (Exceptions need to be approved by your supervisor).
- We will be good community members by addressing those who do not adhere to the protocols and inform them of our protocol expectations within MRCI properties.

Housekeeping/Sanitizing

- All persons will be encouraged to participate in disinfecting tables, chairs, door handles, and other common touch points throughout the day. Staff will be required to sanitize tables, other surfaces, door handles, light switches, and other common touch points throughout the day using an approved sanitizer.
- MRCI vehicles will be sanitized at the completion of each route or trip. Surfaces include: door handles, arm rests, seats, seatbelt buckles/straps, control knobs, window controls, etc.
- Shared computers, mobile devices and office equipment will be sanitized using a sanitizer at the end of each day. Additional sanitization is encouraged before and after each individual use.
 - Gloves shall be worn while cleaning.
- Persons will not be permitted to directly drink from water fountains.

Transportation

- Larger vehicles should be utilized when transporting multiple individuals to provide spacing.
- Drivers will be equipped with a car kit that contains symptom check supplies, extra masks, gloves and cleaning supplies.
- Drivers will ask a person how they are feeling today prior to letting anyone enter the vehicle.
 - Staff will complete a visual check. If signs are present, the person will be required to stay home.
 - Riders and Drivers are always required to wear masks (see exception for disabilities) while in the vehicle.
 - Vehicle occupants will space 6 feet apart, when possible.
 - Vehicles will operate with no more than 4 riders whenever possible.
 - Windows will be slightly open to allow for fresh air-flow into the vehicle.

Communications and training

This Preparedness Plan was provided via email to Staff. Necessary training will be ongoing and will occur as Staff are called back to work.

- The latest versions of COVID Preparedness Plans have been shared on mymrci.org.
 - Revisions to this plan will be communicated to persons served after guidance is obtained through DHS for person-to-person services.

- Addendums for Community Based Day Services, In-Person Day Services (EASE) and Exploration Services have been developed on a case-by-case basis as programming as is rolled out with safety in mind. Additional procedures may be developed as necessary.
- Extra precautions have been prepared for the MRCI Thrift Shop customers and staff. These expectations have been communicated on the MRCI Thrift Shop Facebook page and the front door of the retail store.
- Extra precautions (MRCI CDS Addendum) have been prepared for the MRCI CDS in-home workers. These expectations have been communicated via the June MRCI CDS newsletter and an email on May 18, 2020 and will be maintained on www.mrcicds.org.
- As integration into various community settings and workplaces occurs, MRCI will work to best communicate changing expectations and conditions.

Everyone will be responsible to monitor effectiveness of implementation and training will be updated as necessary. This Preparedness Plan has been certified by MRCI and was posted on its internal website and throughout the branches. It will be updated as necessary.

Submitted by



Brian Benshoof, CEO
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