

# **PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY OPERATIONS PLAN FOR TOWN OF Hartwick, Otsego County**

**Approved: 7/12/2021**

This plan has been developed in accordance with New York State Labor Law section 27-c.

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## Promulgation

This plan has been developed in accordance with New York State Labor Law section 27-c.

This plan has been developed with the input of Teamsters Local 317, as required by the New York State Labor Law.


No content of this plan is intended to impede, infringe, diminish, or impair the rights of us or our valued employees under any law, rule, regulation, or collectively negotiated agreement, or the rights and benefits which accrue to employees through collective bargaining agreements, or otherwise diminish the integrity of the existing collective bargaining relationship.

This plan has been approved in accordance with requirements applicable to the agency, jurisdiction, authority, or district, as represented by the signature of the authorized individual below.

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As the authorized official of Town of Hartwick, I hereby attest that this plan has been developed, approved, and placed in full effect in accordance with New York State Labor Law section 27-c to address public health emergency planning requirements.

Dated: 7/19, 2021

Signature:   
By: Robert O'Brien  
Title: Town Supervisor

## Purpose, Scope, Situation Overview, and Assumptions

### Purpose

This plan has been developed in accordance with the New York State Labor Law section 27-c. Labor Law section 27-c requires public employers to adopt a plan for operations in the event of a declared public health emergency involving a communicable disease. The plan includes the identification of essential positions, facilitation of remote work for non-essential positions, provision of personal protective equipment, and protocols for supporting contact tracing.

### Scope

This plan was developed exclusively for and is applicable to Town of Hartwick. This plan is pertinent to a declared public health emergency in the State of New York which may impact our operations; and it is in the interest of the safety of our residents, employees and contractors, and the continuity of our operations that we have promulgated this plan.

### Situation Overview

On March 11, 2020 the World Health Organization declared a pandemic for the novel coronavirus which causes the COVID-19 severe acute respiratory syndrome. This plan has been developed in accordance with laws to support continued resilience for a continuation of the spread of this disease or for other infectious diseases which may emerge and cause a declaration of a public health emergency.

The health and safety of our residents, employees and contractors is crucial to maintaining our essential operations. The fundamentals of reducing the spread of infection include:

- Using hand sanitizer and washing hands with soap and water frequently, including:
  - After using the restroom
  - After returning from a public outing
  - After touching/disposing of garbage
  - After using public computers, touching public tables, and countertops, etc.
- Practice social distancing when possible
- If you are feeling ill or have a fever, notify your supervisor immediately and go home
- If you start to experience coughing or sneezing, step away from people and food, cough or sneeze into the crook of your arm or a tissue, the latter of which should be disposed of immediately
- Clean and disinfect workstations at the beginning, middle, and end of each shift
- Other guidance which may be published by the CDC, the State Department of Health, or County health officials.

### Planning Assumptions

This plan was developed based on information, best practices, and guidance available as of the date of publication. The plan was developed to largely reflect the circumstances of the current Coronavirus pandemic but may also be applicable to other infectious disease outbreaks.

The following assumptions have been made in the development of this plan:



- The health and safety of our residents, employees and contractors, and their families, is of utmost importance.
- The circumstances of a public health emergency may directly impact our own operations.
- Impacts of a public health emergency will take time for our public officials and Fire Departments to, with appropriate safety measures, put into place and adjustments made to operations to maximize safety.
- The public and our constituency expects us to maintain a level of mission essential operations.
- Resource support from other jurisdictions may be limited based upon the level of impact the public health emergency has upon them.
- Supply chains, particularly those for personal protective equipment (PPE) and cleaning supplies, may be heavily impacted, resulting in considerable delays in procurement.; therefore, the Town of Hartwick should maintain an adequate supply as specified by the Town Council.
- The operations of other entities, including the private sector (vendors, contractors, etc.), non-profit organizations, and other governmental agencies and services may also be impacted due to the public health emergency, causing delays or other disruptions in their services.
- Emergency measures and operational changes may need to be adjusted based upon the specific circumstances and impacts of the public health emergency, as well as guidance and direction from public health officials and the governor.
- Per Labor Law section 27-c, an “essential” employee is defined as a public employee or contractor that is required to be physically present at a work site to perform their job.
- Per Labor Law section 27-c, a “non-essential” employee is defined as a public employee or contractor that is not required to be physically present at a work site to perform their job.

## Concept of Operations

The Town Supervisor of Town of Hartwick, their designee, or their successor holds the authority to execute and direct the implementation of this plan. Implementation, monitoring of operations, and adjustments to plan implementation may be supported by additional personnel, at the discretion of the Town Council Members.

Upon the determination of implementing this plan, all employees and contractors of Town of Hartwick shall be notified by telephone, with details provided as possible and necessary, with additional information and updates provided on a regular basis. Town residents will be notified of pertinent operational changes by way of signs posted on doors, media releases and telephone calls. Other interested parties, such as vendors, will be notified by phone and/or email as necessary. Town Supervisor will maintain communications with the public and constituents as needed throughout the implementation of this plan.

The Town Supervisor of Town of Hartwick, their designee, or their successor will maintain awareness of information, direction, and guidance from public health officials and the Governor’s office, directing the implementation of changes as necessary.

Upon resolution of the public health emergency, the Town Supervisor of Town of Hartwick in consultation with the Town Attorney and the Town Council Members, their designee, or their successor will direct the resumption of normal operations or operations with modifications as necessary.

## Mission Essential Functions

When confronting events that disrupt normal operations, Town of Hartwick is committed to ensuring that essential functions will be continued even under the most challenging circumstances

Essential functions are those functions that enable an organization to:

1. Maintain the safety of employees, contractors, and our constituency
2. Provide vital services utilizing the Town of Hartwick Fire Departments and their resources
3. Provide services required by law
4. Sustain quality operations
5. Uphold the core values of Town of Hartwick

The Town of Hartwick has identified as critical only those priority functions that are required or are necessary to provide vital services. During activation of this plan, all other activities may be suspended to enable the organization to concentrate on providing the critical functions and building the internal capabilities necessary to increase and eventually restore operations. Appropriate communications with employees, contractors, our constituents, and other stakeholders will be an ongoing priority.

Essential functions are prioritized according to:

- The time criticality of each essential function
- Interdependency of any one function to others
- The recovery sequence of essential functions and their vital processes

Priority 1 identifies the most essential of functions, with priority 4 identifying functions that are essential, but least among them.

The mission essential functions for Town of Hartwick have been identified as:

| Essential Function     | Description  | Priority |
|------------------------|--|----------|
| Highway Dept           | Provide safe passage over town roads in winter and at other times of the year and <i>during any natural or health disaster</i> | 1        |
| Water and Sewer Dept   | Ensure residents have safe water and sewer services  | 2        |
| Finance and Operations | Ensure the Town continues to operate safely  | 3        |
| Code Enforcement       | Ensure residents are able to maintain safe domiciles   | 4        |
| Public Safety          | Maintain order and communicate with public as needed   | 5        |
| Licensing and Permits  | Issue necessary permits and licenses as needed   | 6        |
| Justice Courts         | Process criminal and civil violations, misdemeanors and felonies   | 7        |

### Essential Positions

Each essential function identified above requires certain positions on-site to effectively operate. The table below identifies the positions or titles that are essential to be staffed on-site for the continued operation of each essential function. Note that while some functions and associated personnel may be essential, some of these can be conducted remotely and do not need to be identified in this section.

| Essential Function   | Essential Position/Title       | Justification   |
|----------------------|--------------------------------|---|
| Highway Department   | Highway Superintendent & MEO's | Keeping roads passable and safe                         |
| Water and Sewer Dept | Water Operator & MEO's         | Ensure safe water and sewer                             |
| Public Safety        | Town Supervisor                | Assist with disseminating information and keeping order |

|                        |  |   |
|------------------------|--|---|
| Code Enforcement       | Code Officer and staff                       | Ensure public is safe at home                 |
| Finance and Operations | Town Supervisor, Bookkeeper,<br>Town Council | Pay bills keep town operations going          |
| Town Clerk             | Town Clerk                                   | Assist residents with necessary permits.      |
| Justice Court          | Justices and Court Staff                     | Process tickets and arraignments accept fines |

## Reducing Risk Through Remote Work and Staggered Shifts

Through assigning certain staff to work remotely and by staggering work shifts, we can decrease crowding and density at work sites and on public transportation

### Remote Work Protocols

Non-essential employees and contractors able to accomplish their functions remotely will be enabled to do so at the greatest extent possible. Working remotely requires:

1. Staff that are able to work remotely will do so as able. The Town recognizes that not all staff can work remotely
2. Department heads may authorize remote where practical and necessary
3. Equipping staff for remote work, which may include:
4. Access to town computers/sever will be set up as necessary
5. If laptops are available and employees do not have any other way of accessing the server to work the town will provide a laptop for use remotely.
6. Phone system has capability of forwarding emails of voice messages left on town phones so that employees may respond to voicemails.

### Staggered Shifts

Implementing staggered shifts may be possible for personnel performing duties which are necessary to be performed on-site but perhaps less sensitive to being accomplished only within core business hours. As possible, management will identify opportunities for staff to work outside core business hours as a strategy of limiting exposure. Regardless of changes in start and end times of shifts, Town of Hartwick will ensure that employees are provided with their typical or contracted minimum work hours per week. Staggering shifts requires:



1. Identification of positions for which work hours will be staggered
2. Approval and assignment of changed work hours
3. Department heads will determine appropriate spacing of shifts as necessary when distancing is not possible and incident requires separation.
4. Highway workers are assumed to be able to work independently in their vehicles to maintain safe roads.
5. Office staff can minimize contact with offices by closing doors.

## Personal Protective Equipment

The use of personal protective equipment (PPE) to reduce the spread of infectious disease is important to supporting the health and safety of our residents, employees and contractors. PPE which may be needed can include:

- Masks
- Face shields
- Gloves
- Disposable gowns and aprons

Note: Cleaning supplies are not PPE, there is a related need for cleaning supplies used to sanitize surfaces, as well as hand soap and hand sanitizer. The Coronavirus pandemic demonstrated that supply chains were not able to keep up with increased demand for these products early in the pandemic. As such, we are including these supplies in this section as they are pertinent to protecting the health and safety of our residents, employees and contractors.

Protocols for providing PPE include the following:

1. Identification of need for PPE based upon job duties and work location
2. Procurement of PPE
  - a. As specified in Labor Law 27-c, public employers must be able to provide at least two pieces of each required type of PPE to each essential employee and contractor during any given work shift for at least six months
  - b. Public employers must be able to mitigate supply chain disruptions to meet this requirement
3. Storage of, access to, and monitoring of PPE stock
  - a. PPE must be stored in a manner which will prevent degradation
  - b. Employees and contractors must have immediate access to PPE in the event of an emergency
  - c. The supply of PPE must be monitored to ensure integrity and to track usage rates.

The Town Clerk will maintain a running inventory of PPE; the clerk will also, on that list, identify vendors each of the PPE items listed and the stock number of each PPE item. Inventory will be updated weekly when in regular use and monthly when not. Cleaning supplies will be stored in the utility room, PPE will be stored in the clerk's office. Items will be deducted from inventory when disseminated.

## Staff Exposures, Cleaning, and Disinfection

### Staff Exposures

Staff exposures are organized under several categories based upon the type of exposure and presence of symptoms. Following CDC guidelines, we have established the following protocols:

- A. If employees or contractors are exposed to a known case of communicable disease that is the subject of the public health emergency (defined as a 'close contact' with someone who is confirmed infected, which is a prolonged presence within six feet with that person):
  1. Potentially exposed employees or contractors who do not have symptoms should remain at home or in a comparable setting and practice social distancing for the lesser of 14 days or other current CDC/public health guidance for the communicable disease in question.
    - a. As possible, these employees will be permitted to work remotely during this period of time if they are not ill.
    - b. General employees will report to the Town Supervisor, Highway employees will report to the Highway Superintendent, and Court employees will report to the Justices
    - c. See the section titled Documentation of Work Hours and Locations for additional information on contact tracing
  2. CDC guidelines for COVID-19 provide that critical essential employees may be permitted to continue work following potential exposure, provided they remain symptom-free and additional precautions are taken to protect them, other employees and contractors, and our constituency/public.
    - a. Additional precautions will include the requirement of the subject employee or contractor, as well as others working in their proximity, to wear appropriate PPE at all times to limit the potential of transmission.
    - b. In-person interactions with the subject employee or contractor will be limited as much as possible.
    - c. Work areas in which the subject employee or contractor are present will be disinfected according to current CDC/public health protocol at least every as practical. See the section on Cleaning and Disinfection for additional information on that subject.
    - d. If at any time they exhibit symptoms, refer to item B below.
    - e. The Town supervisor will be responsible for ensuring the proper protocols are followed
  
- B. If an employee or contractor exhibits symptoms of the communicable disease that is the subject of the public health emergency:
  1. Employees and contractors who exhibit symptoms in the workplace should be immediately separated from other employees, customers, and visitors. They should immediately be sent home with a recommendation to contact their physician.
  2. Employees and contractors who exhibit symptoms outside of work should notify their supervisor and stay home, with a recommendation to contact their physician.
  3. Employees should not return to work until they have met the criteria to discontinue home isolation per CDC/public health guidance and have consulted with a healthcare provider.

4. Town of Oneonta will not require sick employees to provide a negative test result for the disease in question or healthcare provider's note to validate their illness, qualify for sick leave, or return to work; unless there is a recommendation from the CDC/public health officials to do so.
  5. CDC criteria for COVID-19 provides that persons exhibiting symptoms may return to work if at least 24 hours have passed since the last instance of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications. If the disease in question is other than COVID-19, CDC and other public guidance shall be referenced.
  6. The Town supervisor is person who shall be notified and will ensure that the appropriate action is taken
- C. If an employee or contractor has tested positive for the communicable disease that is the subject of the public health emergency:
1. Apply the steps identified in item B, above, as applicable.
  2. Areas occupied for prolonged periods of time by the subject employee or contractor will be closed off.
    - a. CDC guidance for COVID-19 indicates that a period of 24 hours is ideally given before cleaning, disinfecting, and reoccupation of those spaces will take place. If this time period is not possible, a period of as long as possible will be given. CDC/public health guidance for the disease in question will be followed.
    - b. Any common areas entered, surfaces touched, or equipment used shall be cleaned and disinfected immediately.
    - c. See the section on Cleaning and Disinfection for additional information on that subject.
  3. Identification of potential employee and contractor exposures will be conducted
    - a. If an employee or contractor is confirmed to have the disease in question, the Town Supervisor or their designee should inform all contacts of their possible exposure. Confidentiality shall be maintained as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
    - b. Apply the steps identified in item A, above, as applicable, for all potentially exposed personnel.
  4. The Town Supervisor or the Highway Superintendent will be responsible to ensure the appropriate protocols are taken dependent on the position affected.

We recognize there may be nuances or complexities associated with potential exposures, close contacts, symptomatic persons, and those testing positive. We will follow CDC/public health recommendations and requirements and coordinate with our local public health office for additional guidance and support as needed.

#### Cleaning and Disinfecting

CDC/public health guidelines will be followed for cleaning and disinfection of surfaces/areas. Present guidance for routine cleaning during a public health emergency includes:

1. As possible, employees and contractors will clean their own workspaces in the beginning, middle, and end of their shifts, at a minimum.
  - a. At times when conditions require, the building will be closed to the general public. Provisions will be made to allow access as necessary by appointment only.
  - b. The person or contractor hired to clean the building will be responsible for cleaning public areas weekly.



2. Staff tasked with cleaning and disinfecting areas will be issued and required to wear PPE appropriate to the task.
3. Soiled surfaces will be cleaned with soap and water before being disinfected.
4. Surfaces will be disinfected with products that meet EPA criteria for use against the virus in question and which are appropriate for that surface.
5. Staff will follow instructions of cleaning products to ensure safe and effective use of the products.

## Employee and Contractor Leave

Public health emergencies are extenuating and unanticipated circumstances in which Town of Hartwick is committed to reducing the burden on our employees and contractors. The *Families First Coronavirus Response Act* provided requirements related to the COVID-19 pandemic, which form the policies outlined below. This policy may be altered based upon changes in law or regulation, as applicable.

It is our policy that employees of Town of Hartwick will not be charged with leave time for testing. Employees will be provided with up to two weeks (80 hours) of paid sick leave at the employee's regular rate of pay for a period which the employee is unable to work due to quarantine as ordered by either the County Department of Health, or a medical professional (in accordance with federal, state, or local orders or advice of a healthcare provider), and/or experiencing symptoms and seeking medical diagnosis.

Further, Town of Hartwick will provide up to two weeks (80 hours) of paid sick leave at two-thirds the employee's regular rate of pay if the employee is unable to work because of a bona fide need to care for an individual subject to quarantine (pursuant to federal, state, or local orders or advice of a healthcare provider), or to care for a child (under 18 years of age) whose school or child care provider is closed or unavailable for reasons related to the public health emergency, and/or the employee is experiencing a substantially similar condition as specified by the CDC/public health officials. This provision may be modified if an employee is able to effectively work remotely and the need exists for them to do so.

Consideration will be given for extended leave at 2/3 of regular pay in accordance with FMLA policy and the current employee handbook standards if effect at the time.

Additional provisions may be enacted based upon need and the guidance and requirements in place by federal and state employment laws, FMLA, executive orders, and other potential sources.

Contractors, either independent or affiliated with a contracted firm, are not classified as employees of Town of Hartwick, and as such are not provided with paid leave time by Town of , unless required by law.

## Documentation of Work Hours and Locations

In a public health emergency, it may be necessary to document work hours and locations of each employee and contractor to support contact tracing efforts. Identification of locations shall include on-site work, off-site visits.



This information may be used by Town of Hartwick to support contact tracing within the organization and may be shared with local public health officials.

Time sheets will be prepared as is typically done. Scans of the sheets will be submitted either by dropping them off at Town Hall or scanning and emailing them to the bookkeeper on the Friday before payroll is prepared.

## Housing for Essential Employees

There are circumstances within a public health emergency when it may be prudent to have essential employees lodged in such a manner which will help prevent the spread of the subject communicable disease to protect these employees from potential exposures, thus helping to ensure their health and safety and the continuity of Town of Hartwick's essential operations.

If such a need arises, hotel rooms are expected to be the most viable option. If hotel rooms are for some reason deemed not practical or ideal, or if there are no hotel rooms available, Town of Hartwick will coordinate with the Otsego County Emergency Services Department and with the adjacent Towns to help identify and arrange for these housing needs. The Town Supervisor is responsible for coordinating these activities.