

# COVID-19 Preparedness Plan For Minnesota State Academies

## Introduction

The **Minnesota State Academies (MSA)** is committed to providing a safe and healthy workplace for all our employees. To ensure that, we have developed the following Preparedness Plan in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Directors/Supervisors and employees are all 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 employees and management. Only through this cooperative effort can we establish and maintain the safety and health of our employees and workplaces.

Management and employees are responsible for implementing and complying with all aspects of this Preparedness Plan. **MSA** directors and supervisors have our full support in enforcing the provisions of this policy.

Our employees are our most important assets. We are serious about safety and health and keeping our employees working at **MSA**. Employee involvement is essential in developing and implementing a successful COVID-19 Preparedness Plan. MSA has involved our employees in this process by requesting input from employees in a survey sent out on 4/30/2020 and discussing the content of this plan with all directors and supervisors at MSA.

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

- Hygiene and respiratory etiquette;
- Engineering and administrative controls for social distancing;
- Housekeeping – cleaning, disinfection, and decontamination;
- Prompt identification and isolation of sick persons;
- Communications and training that will be provided to managers and employees; and
- Management and supervision necessary to ensure effective implementation of the plan.

## Screening and policies for employees exhibiting signs and symptoms of COVID-19

Employees have been informed of and encouraged to self-monitor for signs and symptoms of COVID-19. The following policies and procedures are being implemented to assess employees' health status prior to entering the workplace and for employees to report when they are sick or experiencing symptoms. Prior to employees' arrival at MSA, they must use a thermometer to

take their temperature and check for a fever. Each employee must complete a self-screening form prior to starting work on campus. Employees must be able to answer NO to all required questions on this form in order to be allowed to work on campus. If they experience any symptoms described on the form and/or are not feeling well, employees are required to stay at home. If teleworking is an option, employees may continue to work at home as appropriate.

Employees must notify their supervisor if they are sick and/or experiencing COVID-19 symptoms as described on the self-screening form at home. If employees are sick, stay home for at least 10 days since symptoms first appeared AND at least 3 days with no fever (without medication), AND improvement of other symptoms. If employees become aware that they have been exposed to the COVID-19 virus, they must stay at home for 14 days, even if they feel healthy.

Visit this website - <https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/basics.html> for more information.

It is expected that employees notify their doctor (if possible) of said symptoms and supply the MSA Human Resources department with a Doctor's note regarding the length of sick leave needed. The HR department will advise the employee of the type of leave to be used based on the doctor's note. If the employee develops symptoms while at work, they must report to their supervisor who will then place the employee in an area away from other workers until they can be sent home. After an assessment by a medical doctor and notification of assessment, results must be sent to the MSA Human Resources Department.

**MSA** has implemented leave policies that promote employees 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. In order to determine the appropriate leave for illness and/or COVID-related illness, the employee needs to contact MSA HR in order to determine FMLA eligibility, type of sick leave, or COVID-19 leave.

Accommodations for employees with underlying medical conditions or who have household members with underlying health conditions have been implemented. MSA follows Minnesota Management Budget (MMB)'s COVID-19 policy for such situations. An employee may be approved to use Paid COVID-19 leave if they cannot telework and must be absent from work because they are caring for an individual who depends on the employee to care for them and the individual has been advised by their health care provider to self-quarantine based on the health care provider's belief that the individual has COVID-19; or the individual may have COVID-19 due to known exposure or symptoms; or the individual is particularly vulnerable to COVID-19; or the individual is subject to a Federal, State, or local quarantine or isolation order related to COVID-19. However, if those circumstances are not present, the employee cannot use Paid COVID-19 Leave simply because they share a household with someone who is at high risk of complications from COVID-19. The employee needs to contact MSA Human Resources for approval by filling out the MMB COVID-19 leave form.

**MSA** will follow the CDC, MDH, and MMB's guidance on notifying employees with instructions if they have been exposed to a person with COVID-19 at their workplace. In addition, to protect the privacy of employees' health status and health information, MSA will follow all aspects of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPPA) as well as provide staff with Tennessee warnings when private health information is disclosed during daily self-screening. MSA will not disclose private health information unless given permission by the individual employee or as mandated by law or court order.

## **Handwashing**

Basic infection prevention measures are being implemented at our workplaces at all times. Employees 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 toilet. All employees and visitors entering our campuses or buildings will be required to wash their hands immediately upon entering the facility. Some work areas may have hand-sanitizer dispensers (that use sanitizers of greater than 60% alcohol) that can be used for hand hygiene in place of soap and water, as long as hands are not visibly soiled. Employees and visitors are encouraged to refrain from touching their faces as much as possible. Our physical plant department will ensure that all buildings are supplied with hand sanitizer and soap in bathrooms, meeting rooms, and other predetermined locations.

## **Respiratory etiquette: Cover your cough or sneeze**

Employees 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, 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. Respiratory etiquette will be demonstrated on posters and supported by making tissues and trash receptacles available to all employees and visitors. All employees and visitors must wear masks if interacting with other people at MSA, taking into consideration social distancing expectations described below. Reminders for employees and visitors will be posted on all entrance doors to our buildings on campus.

## **Social distancing**

Social distancing is being implemented in the workplace through the following engineering and administrative controls: A majority of our employees will continue to telework, only coming to campus as needed for supplies or critical duties/responsibilities. Employees must obtain permission from supervisors before coming to campus. For those employees who will be working on campus, supervisors will designate appropriate work spaces that abide by social distancing expectations, including possible adaptations to work hours, staggered shifts, use of alternate work spaces, and/or splitting shifts between on-campus work/teleworking. Employees must abide by the following expectations:

- Avoid social interactions with others - maintain at least six feet of distance between individuals as much as possible.
- If six feet of distance is not possible, masks must be worn to protect both parties.
- No employees will be allowed to ride together in vehicles unless wearing masks. Vehicles must be cleaned before and after use, using disinfectant wipes.
- Signs reminding people about social distancing expectations will be posted in all entrance areas of buildings. Instructions will be sent out to all employees using school email.
- Employees are encouraged to bring their own cloth masks for use during the work day. MSA will provide masks for those who do not have any. Masks may not be worn if the mask is deemed to cause a safety hazard to the employee (i.e. limiting vision while using a power tool; affecting breathing issues; or complicating pre-existing medical conditions.) Different mask designs will be explored to support communication and safety for all employees. If employees have concerns about use of masks, they should consult with their supervisor, human resources, or health services.
- MSA general maintenance workers will clean buildings/spaces that are used by employees on a daily basis, taking extra care to disinfect surfaces that may transmit the COVID-19 virus (i.e. table/desk surfaces, door handles, sinks and toilets)
- Employees are prohibited from gathering in lounges, workrooms, and/or break rooms. Refrigerators and microwaves are also off limits. Employees must bring their own coolers or keep their food/drinks in a separate location. Employees are encouraged to take their breaks outside or within their assigned work locations rather than going to a shared break location.
- Employees and visitors are prohibited from gathering in groups and confined areas, including elevators, and from using other employees' personal protective equipment, phones, computer equipment, desks, cubicles, workstations, offices or other personal work tools and equipment.
- Employees and visitors are encouraged to refrain from touching each other - if this is unavoidable, hand washing immediately after the contact is encouraged.

## Housekeeping

Regular housekeeping practices are being implemented, including routine cleaning and disinfecting of work surfaces, equipment, tools and machinery, and areas in the work environment, including restrooms, break rooms, lunch rooms and meeting rooms. Frequent cleaning and disinfecting will be conducted in high-touch areas, such as phones, keyboards, touch screens, controls, door handles, elevator panels, railings, copy machines, etc. MSA's physical plant department will conduct this cleaning on a daily basis, using acceptable cleaning methods as approved by the CDC and OSHA. Cleaning practices for outdoor spaces will continue, following appropriate schedules and standard practices. (Corona viruses naturally die in hours to days in typical indoor and outdoor environments. Viruses are killed more quickly by warmer temperatures and sunlight). If there are instances of COVID-19 diagnosis for someone who has been working on campus, all spaces that the diagnosed individual worked in will be closed off for a waiting period of seven(7) days and our physical plant department will clean the

spaces after the waiting period to ensure sanitization before allowing other employees/individuals in that space. If spaces cannot be feasibly closed off, the cleaning will happen as soon as it is safe to do so. (After 24 hours or waiting as long as possible).

## **Communications and training**

This Preparedness Plan was communicated via email and video message to all employees on May 4, 2020 and necessary training was provided. Additional communication and training will be ongoing through supervisors and/or messages from the superintendent/human resources department and provided to all employees who did not receive the initial training. Directors and supervisors are to monitor how effective the program has been implemented by gathering feedback and communicating with the superintendent and/or human resources staff. Management and employees are to work through this new program together and update the training as necessary. This Preparedness Plan has been certified by **MSA** management and was posted on the MSA website on May 7th, 2020. It will be updated as necessary.

Certified by:

**Terrence Wilding**  
**Superintendent - Minnesota State Academies**