



# Contagious Disease Response Plan

Revised March 2020

COVID-19

# Contagious Disease Response Plan

The purpose of the Contagious Disease Response Plan is to ensure that in the event of a pandemic outbreak Des Moines Water Works is prepared and able to provide safe drinking water to all of its customers.

Contagious disease has the potential to impact Water Works' operations through reduction of staff, the interruption of material deliveries, loss of services, and various other avenues. This plan identifies steps to be taken in planning for a contagious disease outbreak and describes operating scenarios that will be used to conduct business at Des Moines Water Works in the event of an outbreak that impacts operations as described within each phase of the plan.

The impact that any given contagious disease will have on the population and thus on Des Moines Water Works depends on many factors including virulence of the disease-causing organism, ease of transmission and speed with which it spreads, severity of symptoms, recovery time, and mortality rate. In each case the most appropriate response will depend on a combination of these factors. The goals of this plan are to prevent the spread of disease within Water Works staff, to base the level of operational response on the direct impact to Des Moines Water Works, and to follow the lead provided by local, state, and national health department officials. As such, monitoring of recommendations provided by the public health community will be a key component of each phase of the plan.

The plan will consist of four phases. Each phase will be implemented once a trigger point is reached as described within that phase of the plan.

## **Awareness**

The first phase of the plan is "Awareness". Des Moines Water Works will enter the "Awareness" phase of the plan when one or more cases of a potentially incident-causing contagious disease are identified within the United States. During this phase staff will monitor reports from the Department of Public Health and the Health Alert Network. Postings will be placed in Water Works facilities to promote disease prevention, to describe the symptoms of the disease in question, and to provide direction on what employees should do if they become infected. Supplies recommended by public health officials as necessary to manage the outbreak will be acquired.

During the "Awareness" phase of the plan staff will also communicate with the Iowa and Polk County Departments of Public Health to help define what level of response is appropriate and when each phase of the plan will be implemented for the particular disease in question.

## **Limited Contact**

The second phase of the plan is “Limited Contact”. Des Moines Water Works will enter the “Limited Contact” phase of the plan when the Iowa Department of Public Health recommends that large group contact be limited in an attempt to reduce disease transmission. It is likely that this will not occur until cases of the disease are confirmed within the state of Iowa and human to human transmission is believed to exist. This phase assumes that Water Works staff has not been infected and the goal is to limit contact with the general public in an attempt to prevent infection. When this phase is implemented, the main office may be closed to walk in customers and tasks which require direct customer contact, such as meter changes, meter testing, and the stop box / leak letter process may be suspended. Department meetings, training, and other events that draw large groups of employees together may also be suspended. If possible, some business activities may be performed at offsite locations.

During this phase we will also start to stockpile repair parts, materials, food and other supplies thought to be necessary to get us through an outbreak. Quantities to be stockpiled will be determined by the anticipated duration of the outbreak as determined by public health officials. We will continue to distribute good hygiene reminders and gloves, masks, cleaners, etc. necessary to help staff avoid contracting the disease.

## **Isolation**

The third phase of the plan is “Isolation”. Des Moines Water Works will enter the “Isolation” phase of the plan when a portion of Water Works’ staff have contracted the contagious disease and/or health authorities are advising an equivalent level of response. The priorities under this phase are focused on production and distribution of water, compliance with drinking water regulations, and reducing the spread of the disease among employees. Critical staff teams may be asked to stay onsite for extended or multiday “shifts”. Returning staff will be evaluated prior to their return. All functions that can be moved to isolated offsite locations, such as working from home, may be moved and all functions which are not considered critical for business operation will be suspended. Customer service activities will be limited to mail processing, telephone contact, and emergency turnoffs. Collection cuts will be suspended. Distribution will complete emergency repairs, locates, and provide dispatch services. Water Production will operate treatment and pumping facilities, complete repairs, and perform operational and compliance sampling and monitoring.

At this point we will begin stockpiling fuel and chemicals in addition to what can be stored in permanent bins and tanks. Water conservation messages may be broadcast via major media. Food and other necessities required for staff to live comfortably onsite for extended periods of time will be obtained.

## **Worst Case**

The last phase of the plan is “Worst Case”. The “Worst Case” phase will be implemented when a significant number of Water Works’ staff has contracted contagious disease and/or health authorities are advising an equivalent level of response. The priority under this phase will be to produce and distribute water. It has been assumed that travel will be restricted – we will need to get by for up to 8 weeks on the chemicals and materials we have in stock or for the anticipated duration of the outbreak as determined by public health officials. Water conservation may be stressed. Only critical tasks will be completed. Staff will be scheduled based on availability and they may be asked to stay on site for whatever period of time they are able to do so. Customer service will be available only through offsite staff and dispatch.

The following appendices provide response details for critical components during each phase of the plan.

- Business activities and services offered under each phase - *Appendix A*
- Staffing requirements for each operating phase (critical staff) - *Appendix B*
- Quantities of fuel, chemicals, and material to be stockpiled - *Appendix C*
- Opportunities for, and feasibility of, working off site - *Appendix D*
- Cross training - *Appendix E*
- Guidance for hygiene practices, preventive medications and PPE - *Appendix F*
- Onsite living arrangements - *Appendix G*
- CDRP Leave and Pay Policies - *Appendix H*