



# Catholic Charities of Buffalo COVID-19 Response Guidelines

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## Introduction

Catholic Charities of Buffalo takes the health, safety and well-being of its employees and clients very seriously. Since the spread of the coronavirus or “COVID-19,” a respiratory disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus, necessitated a pause across Western New York, Catholic Charities has implemented many measures across the agency to maintain employee and client health and safety, and to mitigate risk of exposure. These Response Guidelines provide protocols developed for implementation for the gradual and safe return to in-person activities and operation of all programs and sites.

As a provider of basic human and health needs, Catholic Charities was designated “essential” and many of its services have safely operated under new restrictions and protocols since the start of the Declared National Emergency.

These guidelines are informed by related guidance that is continually made available by New York State, U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Office of Mental Health, Office of Addictive Services and Support, Department of Health, Office of Children and Family Services, NYS Department of Labor, NYS Education Department, and in accordance with the OSHA General Duties Clause. As guidelines from these governing and regulatory bodies change, this document is also subject to change. Catholic Charities may also amend these guidelines based on operational needs.

## I. Standard Work Environment Protective Measures

Catholic Charities of Buffalo has instituted the following protective measures at all sites:

- All employees/volunteers/clients/visitors are required to wear masks in all Catholic Charities facilities. Employees are allowed to remove their mask at their own workspace and when not in the vicinity of an employee/volunteer/client/visitor. It is strongly advised that masks be washed regularly and that new masks be obtained after 20 washes.
- Do not share personal protection equipment (PPE). Sanitize reusable PPE per manufacturer recommendations prior to each use and throw away disposable PPE.
- Any employee/volunteer/client/visitor showing symptoms of COVID-19 will be asked to leave the site and return home. (See Section IV COVID-19 Exposure Protocols – “Employee Exhibits COVID-19 Symptoms”)
- Employees must avoid physical contact with others and shall direct others (co-workers/contractors/clients/visitors) to increase personal space to at least six (6) feet, whenever and wherever possible. In reduced spaces such as elevators only 2 employees are permitted at one time and face coverings must be worn.
- Department Directors will work with employees to develop dedicated shifts to

reduce the number of individuals in a facility at one time. Employees will retain these schedules until advised otherwise. If there is a legitimate reason for an employee to change shifts, the Department Director will have sole discretion in making that change.

- All in-person meetings will be limited to the extent possible. Group size at any one time will be less than ten (10) people and social distancing practices must be adhered to. For example, to safely accommodate 10 people, meeting space would need to exceed 400 square feet. However, meetings are highly encouraged to be conducted by telephone or teleconference.
- Employees are encouraged to find alternative transportation for clients. However, when providing transportation is not realistic, employees and passengers must wear masks, passengers must sit in the back of the vehicle on the opposite side of the driver, travel with no more than two (2) passengers in a vehicle, and circulated air should be avoided. Vehicle surfaces, such as seats and door handles, should be sanitized.
- Prior to any home visit, employees are required to ask the COVID-19 screening questions (see Appendix A). The results will determine if a home visit will be conducted. It is highly encouraged that communications between clients be conducted through phone/text/email/mail.
- Employees working outside of a Catholic Charities facility, leased property or with a partner organization must adhere to rules set forth in the Catholic Charities COVID-19 Response Guidelines. Department Directors and Program Supervisors will work with landlords or partner agencies to develop a plan to ensure that all Catholic Charities employees/volunteers/clients/visitors are safe.
- Employees will be encouraged to stagger breaks and lunches, if practicable, to ensure the size of any group at any one time is fewer than ten (10) people. New arrangements to common areas to support social distancing guidelines will be required in all Catholic Charities' facilities.
- Catholic Charities understands that due to the nature of agency work, access to running water for handwashing may be impracticable. In these situations, alcohol-based hand sanitizers and/or wipes will be provided.

## **II. Facility Cleaning Measures**

Catholic Charities has instituted regular housekeeping practices, which include cleaning and disinfecting facilities, frequently used equipment and other elements of the work environment, where possible. Employees should regularly do the same in their assigned work areas.

- Catholic Charities will ensure that filled hand sanitizer dispensers are placed at the entrance of every facility and throughout the facility. Frequently touched items (i.e. door handles and toilet seats) will be disinfected

throughout each day by employees and cleaning contractors.

- Facilities and shared space will be cleaned at least once per day. Employees performing cleaning will be issued proper PPE, such as masks, eye protection, latex or vinyl gloves, as recommended by the CDC.
- Any trash collected from the sites must be changed frequently by someone wearing nitrile, latex or vinyl gloves.
- Vehicles and equipment/tools should be cleaned at the minimum two (2) times per day: mid-day and prior to closing.
- Catholic Charities will ensure that any disinfection shall be conducted using Common EPA-registered disinfectants.
- All Catholic Charities facilities will post CDC signage that encourages staying at home when sick, and includes cough and sneeze etiquette, and hand hygiene, where applicable.

### **III. Employee Responsibilities**

Catholic Charities is asking all employees to help with prevention efforts while at work to minimize the spread of COVID-19 at our worksites. To that end, Catholic Charities has instituted these wellness, housekeeping, social distancing and other best practices at our facilities.

- First and foremost, employees are expected to report to their Directors or Supervisors if they are experiencing signs or symptoms of COVID-19, as described below.
- It is critical that employees NOT report to work while they are experiencing illness symptoms such as fever or respiratory illness, including cough or shortness of breath. Employees should seek medical attention through their health care provider if they develop symptoms, and call their supervisor, right away.
- Employees developing emergency warning signs for COVID-19 should get medical attention immediately. Emergency warning signs include\*: Trouble breathing, persistent pain or pressure in the chest, new confusion or inability to arouse, bluish lips or face.  
\*This list is not all inclusive. Please consult your medical provider for any other symptoms that are severe or concerning.
- Likewise, if employees come into close contact with someone showing these symptoms, they need to call their supervisor and health care provider right away.

OSHA and the CDC have provided the following control and preventative guidance for all workers, regardless of exposure risk:

- Remind and encourage frequent handwashing (or use of hand sanitizer when soap and water are not available) and good hygiene practices.
- Face coverings will be required when interacting with other employees or individuals in close proximity (6 feet or less).
- Employees can use their own face coverings (i.e. bandanas, cloth masks). Catholic Charities will provide masks for employees/volunteers/clients/visitors at all Catholic Charities facilities.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth.
- Clean surfaces after use such as equipment, copiers, phones, computers and tablets. Limit sharing desks, computers, phones and other equipment.
- It is important for employees who are at higher risk for serious illness from COVID-19 because of age or because of a serious long-term health problem, to take actions to reduce the risk of contracting the disease per CDC guidelines. These include stay home if possible, wash your hands often, take everyday precautions to keep space between yourself and others (stay 6 feet away, which is about two arm lengths), keep away from people who are sick, stock up on supplies, clean and disinfect frequently touched services, avoid all cruise travel and non-essential air travel, call your health care professional if you have concerns about COVID-19 and your underlying condition or if you are sick.

For specific questions about the Catholic Charities COVID-19 Response Guidelines or COVID-19, please ask your Director or Supervisor.

## **IV. COVID-19 Exposure Protocols**

### **A. Employee Exhibits COVID-19 Symptoms**

If an employee exhibits COVID-19 symptoms, the employee is required to obtain medical clearance from a medical professional prior to returning to work. Staff must refrain from in-person activities and are prohibited from entering Catholic Charities facilities until medical clearance is obtained.

### **B. Employee Tests Positive for COVID-19**

An employee who tests positive for COVID-19 will be directed to isolate by the County Health Department or medical professional. Employees who test positive must refrain from in-person activities for 14 days or otherwise directed by the County Health Department or medical professional. The County Health Department is

responsible for contact tracing efforts and will contact any employee that has come in contact with the individual that tested positive. An employee who tests positive is encouraged to communicate with those with whom they have been in contact within 72 hours.

Catholic Charities will require all employees who test positive for COVID-19 to provide documentation clearing his or her return to in-person activities.

Facilities and work areas that have hosted an employee or client, who has tested positive for COVID-19, will be cleaned in accordance to CDC guidelines.

### C. Employee Has Close Contact with an Individual Who Has Tested Positive for COVID-19

Employees who have come into close contact with an individual who has tested positive for COVID-19 (co-worker or otherwise) are advised to contact the County Health Department COVID Hotline or seek medical advice. All employees are asked to contact their Supervisor once advice is provided. Supervisors will consult with the Department Director and Chief People Officer to determine plan of action.

### D. Employee Personal Time Off Policy

Catholic Charities follows the COVID-19 Paid Sick Leave Law, which requires employees to file an Order for Mandatory or Precautionary Quarantine (Appendix C). The law provides guaranteed job protection and paid leave for New York employees who are unable to work while subject to a COVID-19 precautionary or mandatory order of quarantine.

Employees will be required to use Paid Time Off (PTO) for any time off outside of the COVID- 19 Paid Sick Leave Law.

### E. Employee Travel Policy

Catholic Charities employees who travel out of state are asked to quarantine for 14 days upon return, until further notice. Employees should contact their Supervisor to discuss return to work options.

## V. **Confidentiality/Privacy**

Except for circumstances in which Catholic Charities is legally required to report workplace occurrences of communicable disease, the confidentiality of all medical conditions will be maintained in accordance with applicable law and to the extent practical under the circumstances. When it is required, the number of persons who will be informed that an unnamed employee has tested positive will be kept to the minimum needed to comply with reporting requirements and to limit the potential for transmission to others. Catholic Charities reserves the right to inform other employees that an unnamed co-worker has been diagnosed with COVID-19 if the other employees might have been exposed to the disease so the employees may take measures to protect their

own health. Catholic Charities also reserves the right to inform subcontractors, vendors/suppliers or visitors that an unnamed employee has been diagnosed with COVID-19 if they might have been exposed to the disease so those individuals may take measures to protect their own health.

## **VI. Specific Employee Safety and Hygiene, and Facility Cleaning Best Practices**

### **A. Wearing Masks**

- All employees must secure a mask to wear in Catholic Charities facilities. Surgical masks are for health care professionals and should not be worn in the work environment. Catholic Charities will provide PPE for employees/volunteers/clients/ visitors that do not have access to PPE. Employees may choose to provide their own covering (mask, bandana, gaiter/butt, etc.) When wearing masks, they must:
  - Fit snugly but comfortably against the side of the face and along jaw/chin.
  - Be secured with ties and ear loops.
  - Include multiple layers of fabric.
  - Allow for breathing without restriction.
  - Be able to be laundered and machine dried without damage or change to shape.

### **B. Hygiene and Cleaning Best Practices**

- Cover the mouth and nose with a tissue or the elbow when coughing or sneezing. This may prevent those nearby from getting sick.
- Avoid touching the face with unwashed hands. COVID-19 can be spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with the virus and then touches their eyes, nose, or mouth.
- Upon arrival at the worksite and before departing, employees should clean their hands as recommended.
- All employees need to clean their hands often with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60-95% alcohol or wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. It is recommended to use soap and water when hands are visibly dirty.
- Do not congregate in common areas or in groups of more than ten (10) people and continue to maintain ideally six (6) feet of social distancing.
- Use proper disinfecting methods between staff if work/office tools are shared.
- Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) guidelines:
  - Do not share personal protection equipment (PPE).
  - Sanitize reusable PPE per manufacturer's recommendation prior to each use.
  - Throw away disposable PPE.
- Disinfect reusable supplies and equipment.
- Provide routine cleaning on frequently touched surfaces (doorknobs, keyboards, counters, first aid kits, interior cab of vehicles/equipment, door handles and other surfaces).
- Identify specific locations and practices for daily trash, such as paper, hand towels, food containers, hand rubs, etc. Instruct workers responsible for

trash removal in proper PPE/hand washing practices.

- Utilize disposable hand towels and no-touch trash receptacles.
- Employees should be advised to limit stops when traveling between their home and their worksite.

**c. Workspace Cleaning**

- Clean and disinfect shared workspaces and surfaces. Routinely clean all frequently touched surfaces in the workplace, such as tools, workstations, countertops, doors and doorknobs.
- Below are some common cleaners that the EPA has determined are strong enough to ward off COVID-19. Reference SDS sheets and utilize appropriate PPE when mixing chemicals:
  - Clorox Multi Surface Cleaner + Bleach
  - Clorox Disinfecting Wipes
  - Clorox Commercial Solutions Disinfecting Spray
  - Lysol Brand Heavy-Duty Cleaner Disinfectant Concentrate
  - Lysol Disinfectant Max Cover Mist
  - Lysol Brand Clean & Fresh Multi-Surface Cleaner
  - Purell Professional Surface Disinfectant Wipes
  - Sani-Prime Germicidal Spray

**d. Disinfecting Procedures for Common Items**

<b>Surface Object</b>	<b>Procedure</b>	<b>Special Considerations</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Cleaner Type</b>
Horizontal Surfaces	Clean surfaces touched by hands at least daily.  Clean when soiled.	Use soap and water or a detergent/disinfectant depending on the nature of the surface and the type and degree of contamination	At least twice a day and when known to be contaminated.	Surface disinfectant spray or hard surface wipes
Walls, Blinds, Curtains	Should be cleaned regularly with a detergent especially when visibly soiled.		Clean when visibly soiled	Surface disinfectant spray
Floors	Thorough regular cleaning.  Clean when soiled.	Use double bucket moping method (e.g. one bucket clean and one to rinse)	Clean daily	Hot water with 50:1 bleach mixture
<b>Surface Object</b>	<b>Procedure</b>	<b>Special Considerations</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Cleaner Type</b>

Carpets, Upholstery	Should be vacuumed regularly and shampooed as necessary.		Vacuum daily	Regular filtered vacuum sweeper
Tools	Should be regularly cleaned, disinfected with low level disinfectant, thoroughly rinsed and dried	Consider implementation of limited tool sharing.	Clean after every use.	Surface disinfectant spray or hard surface wipes
Toilets	Thorough regular cleaning.  Clean when soiled.	Special cleaning procedures are not necessary.	Clean daily	Surface disinfectant spray
Vehicles, Equipment	Clean after each use of a vehicle. Concentrate on steering wheel, hand brake, gear shift lever, door handles etc.	Air conditioner/ heater should be turned off during cleaning.	Clean daily or each time someone new uses vehicle	Surface disinfectant spray or hard surface wipes
Electronic Devices	Thoroughly wipe all surfaces paying particular attention to knobs, buttons, microphones and surfaces that are touched frequently.	Consider implementation procedure to limit sharing of radios and other electronic devices.	Clean after each use or between use if passed between employees	Hard surface wipes

E. Workplace/Office Practices

- Install “COVID-19 Response Guidelines in effect” sign at building entrance and reasonable site locations.
- The use of a thermometer is optional and at the discretion of the Department Director.
- Communicate key CDC recommendations (and post signage where appropriate) to your staff as potential safety talks:
  - How to protect yourself if you are sick
  - COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions
- Place agency-provided posters that encourage staying home when sick, cough and sneeze etiquette, and hand hygiene at the entrance to your workplace, lobbies, restrooms and in other workplace areas where employees and the public will likely view.

#### F. Material Deliveries and Anyone Entering the Worksite

- Anyone entering the workplace, including all outside vendors and truck drivers, are to practice social distancing and are required to wear a mask.
- Staff receiving deliveries will collect daily delivery tickets in a sealable container or plastic bag and quarantine it for a minimum of 24 hours before providing to staff.
- All delivery boxes must be wiped down with disinfectant wipes prior to opening.

#### G. Managing Sick Employees

- Employees who have symptoms of acute respiratory illness are recommended to stay home, seek medical assistance and not return to work until they are free of fever (100.4° F [38.0° C] or greater using a thermometer), signs of a fever, and any other symptoms for at least 72 hours, without the use of fever-reducing or other symptom- altering medicines (e.g. cough suppressants) and follow current CDC guidelines. Employees should notify their supervisor and stay home if they are sick.
- Communicate with Human Resources for managing sick time related to COVID-19.
- After notification from an employee who tests positive for COVID-19, Catholic Charities will take the following steps and follow current CDC guidelines:
  - Facility will initiate a safety stand-down for a minimum of 72 hours or until compliant with CDC guidelines for return to work.  
Communication of positive test to appropriate management.
  - Supervisor to investigate additional potential exposure while maintaining patient confidentiality (HIPAA).

## APPENDIX A - Order for Mandatory or Precautionary Quarantine



The law provides guaranteed job protection and paid leave for New York employees who are unable to work while subject to a COVID-19 precautionary or mandatory order of quarantine.

### What Employees Need to Do

To get an order of precautionary or mandatory order of quarantine or isolation due to COVID-19, you should contact your Local Health Department (LHD). You can search for your LHD on the New York State Department of Health website at [https://www.health.ny.gov/contact/contact\\_information/](https://www.health.ny.gov/contact/contact_information/). LHDs should provide written orders in a timely manner. If your LHD is unable to immediately provide you with an order: 1. Submit documentation from a licensed medical provider that has treated you, attesting (as described below under “DOCUMENTATION GUIDANCE”) that you qualify for the order; AND 2. Follow up with your LHD to obtain the order and submit it to your insurance carrier as soon as it is available. LHDs must provide requested orders within 30 days.

### DOCUMENTATION GUIDANCE

The documentation from your licensed medical provider must include:

- If you are subject to Mandatory Isolation, an attestation that you meet one or more of the following criteria: 1. You have tested positive for COVID-19; OR 2. Testing is currently unavailable to you, but you are symptomatic and have had contact with a known COVID-19 case.
- If you are subject to Mandatory Quarantine, an attestation that you meet one or more of the following criteria: 1. You have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 or is currently in mandatory isolation; OR 2. You are symptomatic and have returned within the past 14 days from a country designated with a level 2, 3, or 4 advisory for COVID-19.
- If you are subject to a Precautionary Quarantine, an attestation that you meet one or more of the following criteria: 1. You are asymptomatic and have returned within the past 14 days from a country designated with a level 2,3 or 4 advisory for COVID-19; OR 2. You have been determined to have had proximate exposure with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19.

## VERIFICATION

Your Paid Family Leave carrier may contact you to verify the information you provide as part of your claim.

## DENIALS OF CLAIMS

If you do not follow the steps described above, your carrier may deny your claim for Paid Family Leave. For more information on the new legislation, visit <https://www.governor.ny.gov/programs/paid-sick-leave-covid-19-impacted-new-yorkers>

### What Employers Need to Know

If you send employees home on a precautionary quarantine, they are entitled to job protection, COVID-19 sick leave and/or paid benefits through your Paid Family Leave, and disability benefits insurance provider for the duration of their quarantine, provided they follow the process noted above.

For additional information about COVID-19, please visit the New York State Department of Health's coronavirus website at <https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/home>.

## APPENDIX B - Additional General Resources

- NYS COVID-19 Hotline: 1-888-364-3065
- Erie County COVID-19 Hotline 716-858-2929
- New York Forward  
<https://forward.ny.gov/>
- CDC Guidance Documents  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/communication/guidance-list.html?Sort=Date%3A%3Adesc>
- Handwashing:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d914EnpU4Fo&feature=youtu.be>
- CDC Handout: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/stop-the-spread-of-germs.pdf>
- If sick: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/sick-with-2019-nCoV-fact-sheet.pdf>
- Full List of EPA Disinfectants: <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2>
- CDC: Cleaning and Disinfecting Surfaces:  
[https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cleaning-disinfection.html?CDC\\_AA\\_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fprepare%2Fcleaning-disinfection.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cleaning-disinfection.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fprepare%2Fcleaning-disinfection.html)