



Public Services

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LISA H. FREUND – Director

MEMORANDUM

TO: Public Services, County Road, and Facilities Employees
FROM: Brian Griff, Facilities Director
Matt Pietrusiewicz, P.E., County Engineer
Lisa Freund, Public Services Director
DATE: May 1, 2020
RE: COVID-19 Protection Plan

The arrival of COVID-19 has brought about a new challenge. We want to do our part to combat the virus while keeping our employees, partners, customers, and families as safe as possible. We want to make sure our workplace is safe. Yakima County safety plans and protocol continue to evolve with new information and guidance received.

On March 23, 2020, Governor Inslee provided some initial guidance when he issued a [“Stay Home-Stay Healthy” Proclamation](#) directing all residents immediately to heed current State public health directives to stay home, except as needed to maintain continuity of operations of essential critical infrastructure sectors and additional sectors as the State Public Health Officer may designate as critical to protect health and well-being of all Washingtonians.

In accordance with this Proclamation, the Governor also designated a [list of “Essential Critical Infrastructure Workers”](#) to help state, local, tribal, and industry partners as they work to protect communities, while ensuring continuity of functions critical to public health and safety, as well as economic and national security. Identified essential critical infrastructure workers include workers associated with Public Services and County Roads.

On March 30, 2020 the Governor [provided further clarification](#) on construction activities, particularly about the exception “to further a public purpose related to a public entity or governmental function or facility.”

The expectation provided was that all capital projects will be immediately suspended with the following exceptions:

1. Activities to address an emergent issue that will impact health and safety or prevent damage to property, including emergency contracts.
2. Activities necessary to address an immediate threat to the continued operation and performance of essential functions of a facility.
3. Activities directly related to the COVID-19 response, to include but not limited to, health care, shelter capacity, and essential services.

4. Activities required to meet a court order (for example, construction related to the Trueblood settlement).
5. Activities necessary to secure a construction site for the duration of the proclamation.
6. Activities at a project phase where work can continue remotely or with appropriate social distancing measures in place.

Further [clarification on the suspension of State agency capital projects](#) was provided on April 7, 2020. The clarification provided that:

1. If a project supports an end function that is essential, it is allowed to proceed.
2. For other projects with construction contracts managed directly by state agencies, agencies should apply the six criteria from the OFM memo dated March 30, 2020 to determine if the project can proceed.
3. State agencies can continue to provide pass-through or grant funding to non-state project sponsors as provided in the capital budget, and grant recipients should make their own determination as to whether their work is essential based on the governor's memo dated March 25, 2020.

Each of the County Public Services Department, County Roads, County Flood Control Zone District, and County Facilities capital projects are designated as essential capital improvement projects that fall within one of more of the stated exceptions by the Governor to continue work.

All County active project are directed to follow the Yakima County COVID-19 protection plan, which is included with this memo.

As you are aware the County has taken measures to ensure a clean workplace, including the regular cleaning of objects and areas that are frequently used, such as bathrooms, break rooms, conference rooms, door handles and railings.

We appreciate the effective steps taken by staff, such as: frequent hand washing with warm, soapy water; covering mouth from sneeze or cough; and discarding used tissues in wastebaskets.

General safety that staff have been directed to do and should continue to be maintained include:

- Social distancing guidelines be followed. See the [CDC website](#) for up to date guidance.
- Employees are encouraged to stay home to the extent possible and avoid crowds.
- All employees will stay home when ill. Relevant symptoms include: fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue.

- Employees who have tested positive for COVID-19 or live with someone who has tested positive, will not be permitted to work and must stay home. Exposures and relevant tests should be reported to Human Resources.

We continue to try to evolve and improve. We want to hear your comments and ideas on improving our response to the challenge. Please reach out to your supervisor with any suggestions. As further guidance is issued in regards to COVID-19 alterations to the response plan will be made.

Yakima County ensures full compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 by prohibiting discrimination against any person on the basis of race, color, national origin, or sex in the provision of benefits and services resulting from its federally assisted programs and activities. For questions regarding Yakima County's Title VI Program, you may contact the Title VI Coordinator at 509-574-2300.

If this letter pertains to a meeting and you need special accommodations, please call us at 509-574-2300 by 10:00 a.m. three days prior to the meeting. For TDD users, please use the State's toll free relay service 1-800-833-6388 and ask the operator to dial 509-574-2300.