



Memo

To: All Employees
From: Scott Morelli, City Manager
Date: March 11, 2020
Re: Update on COVID-19

Fellow employees –

As you are by now aware, the spread of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) has reached a number of American states. Although no one in Maine has yet to test positive, it's possible the virus is already here and if it isn't, many officials believe it will only be a matter of time. Steps are being taken at all levels of government to help contain the spread. I am writing to alert you of steps the City is taking in preparation for COVID-19:

1. **Supervisors have been directed to send home employees who are exhibiting signs of sickness.** The personnel policy allows supervisors to send home employees who are sick so as to prevent the spread of any type of illness to other staff and the general public. Even if COVID-19 were not an issue, this action makes sense to help prevent the spread of the common cold and the flu. The City offers a very generous sick time benefit to employees so if you are sick, please use your sick time proactively.
2. **If you believe you have come in to contact with anyone infected with COVID-19, please immediately contact a health care provider and do not come to work.** Notify your supervisor so the City can take precautionary measures.
3. The City is **suspending all work-related travel out of state through at least April 15.** If you have an event out-of-state during this time, please cancel and attempt to get whatever refund you can. If you are booking travel to a conference at any point this year, please hold off for now if you are able. If you must book, check with your supervisor first, and at a minimum purchase trip insurance or book airfare/lodging that allows free cancellation. If you have already booked, be prepared to cancel, even if you are unable to get a full or partial refund.
4. **Additional hand sanitizer bottles, disinfecting wipes, and tissues** have been or will be placed at offices around the City. In addition to thoroughly washing your hands with soap and hot water, use of these hand sanitizers, disinfecting wipes, and tissues are encouraged.
5. **Cancellation of large gatherings are being considered.** This includes recreational programming, certain types of public meetings, etc. No cancellations are in place yet but please be prepared for such an outcome.

6. **There may be a time where we need to close all non-essential City services to the public or shutter such services all together and keep all non-essential employees home.** If we were to close non-essential services – which would include City Hall, Assessing, Planning/Codes/Econ Dev, Library, Parks & Rec, and certain staff in other departments – staff would still be paid and not asked to use any accrued time (vacation, sick, comp, etc.) There may be a requirement that work be done from home, such as payroll processing and accounts payable; assisting residents via email, chat, or phone; reviewing various license and permit applications; scheduling meeting agendas (if meetings still occur); etc. Departments are currently working up Continuity of Operations Plans (COOPs) in the unlikely event this needs to be implemented. More information about your department’s specific plans will be forthcoming in the next week or so from your supervisor.
7. We are **reviewing our policies on protecting first responders such as Police and Fire personnel** from exposure to COVID-19. We do not want our employees getting sick from their duties. We also do not want to strain our services by having mass absences due to illness and thereby requiring more forced overtime or reliance on other communities, who may also be experiencing their own outbreaks that they need to respond to.
8. Employees may wish to access [LiveHealth Online](#), which is a convenient resource offered by MMEHT/Anthem that gives you the ability to have a **private video visit with a board-certified doctor from home or anywhere you have an internet connection**. Sign up at www.livehealthonline.com using your existing Anthem ID number. Doctors are available 24/7 without an appointment and the service can be accessed through a smartphone, tablet, or computer. Employees just pay the applicable copay that is consistent with the Anthem plan in which you are enrolled. LiveHealth Online doctors can provide advice, treatment options, and even send prescriptions to local pharmacies if needed.
9. The City will **communicate directly to you via email** during this time period. We will also communicate to the general public via the following methods:
 - a. The [COVID-19 page](#) on our website;
 - b. Follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#);
 - c. [Sign up](#) for phone, text, and/or email alerts via the City’s CodeRED service (aka Reverse 9-1-1). You can also download the CodeRED mobile app for your phone; and
 - d. Stay tuned to local TV and print media for local, state, and national news regarding COVID-19.

These actions are being taken in an abundance of caution to help prevent the further spread of the virus, which officials believe currently to be 30 – 40 times more deadly than the flu and hit the elderly and those with certain underlying health conditions particularly hard. These actions are as much to protect you as they are to protect fellow employees and the public we serve. Please check in with your supervisor if you have concerns.

We will continue to work with local and state officials to ensure we are taking appropriate steps related to COVID-19. During situations like this, the public relies on government to continue to provide essential services and maintain order. We all have a part to play in this regard. While we do not want to cause panic amongst the public, it also does no good to downplay the real threat COVID-19 poses to many Americans. We should be hoping for the best and preparing for the worst.

Thank you for your assistance. Your safety and that of our public is our top concern.

Scott