

COVID-19 Preparedness Plan for the Brainerd Housing & Redevelopment Authority (HRA)

The Brainerd HRA is committed to providing a safe and healthy workplace for all of our staff. To ensure a safe workplace, we have developed the following Preparedness Plan in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Our goal is to mitigate the potential for transmission of COVID-19 in our workplaces. This requires full cooperation among staff and management. Only through this cooperative effort can we establish and maintain the safety and health of our staff and workplaces.

Management and staff are responsible for implementing and complying with all aspects of this Preparedness Plan. The Brainerd HRA Board fully supports the managers and staff in enforcing the provisions of this plan.

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

- Prompt identification and isolation of sick staff and staff exposed to sickness
- Reducing the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace
- Additional information
- Communication and training

Stay Home if You Feel Sick

Many times, with the best of intentions, employees report to or stay at work even though they feel sick, but employees should not stay at nor report to work if they feel sick due to the current circumstances. If you feel sick, please inform your supervisor immediately, leave immediately if you are at work, and do not return to work unless and/or until you are no longer sick, or a pandemic virus is unlikely. Employees who report to work sick will be sent home in accordance with these health guidelines. We may request appropriate information related to sicknesses from any employee before reporting to work and documentation from a sick employee before such employee may return to work.

Stay Home if You Have COVID-19 Symptoms or Positive Test

If employees have any of the symptoms described below and/or have tested positive for COVID-19, you must inform your supervisor immediately, leave immediately if you are at work, and do not return to work unless and until the guidelines below are met. Employees who are at or report to work under these circumstances will be sent home in accordance with these health guidelines. We may request appropriate information related to these items from any employee before reporting to work and documentation from a sick employee before such employee may return to work.

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It is critical that employees **check for, leave work, and do not report to work** while they are experiencing **any** symptoms such as the following:

- Fever (100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or higher)
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Chills
- Repeated shaking with chills
- Muscle pain
- Headache
- Sore throat
- New loss of taste or smell

If you have COVID-19 symptoms described above but have not been tested, do not come to work until:

- You have had no fever for at least 72 hours (that is three full days of no fever without the use of medicine that reduces fevers); and
- Other symptoms have improved (for example, your cough or shortness of breath have improved); and
- At least seven days have passed since your symptoms first appeared; and
- You have followed the guidance of your healthcare provider and local health department.

If you have had COVID-19 symptoms described above and have tested positive for COVID-19, do not come to work until:

- You no longer have a fever (without the use medicine that reduces fevers); and
- Other symptoms have improved (for example, when your cough or shortness of breath have improved); and
- You received two negative tests in a row, 24 hours apart. Your doctor will follow CDC guidelines; and
- You have followed the guidance of your healthcare provider and local health department.

If you have not had COVID-19 symptoms described above but tested positive for COVID-19, do not come to work until:

- At least seven days have passed since the date of your first positive COVID-19 diagnostic test; and
- You have had no subsequent illness; and
- You have remained asymptomatic; and

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- More than three days have passed since your discontinuation of isolation; and
- You have followed the guidance of your healthcare provider and local health department.

If you develop any of the following **emergency warning signs**, as specified by the CDC, get **medical attention immediately**:

- Trouble breathing
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- New confusion or inability to arouse
- Bluish lips or face

If you are sick with COVID-19 or suspect you are infected with the virus that causes COVID-19, you should contact your health care provider immediately and take the necessary steps to help prevent the disease from spreading to people in your home, place of employment, and community, which includes staying at home.

Stay Home if You Have Been Exposed to COVID-19

Close Contact

If a household member or guest, an intimate partner, or someone you are providing care for has COVID-19 symptoms, or if you have been in close contact (less than six feet) for a prolonged period of time with a person with COVID-19 symptoms, you should:

- Inform your supervisor immediately
- Leave work immediately if you are at work
- Stay home until 14 days after last exposure and maintain social distance (at least six feet) from others at all times (unless person with symptoms tests negative for COVID-19 and you have no symptoms)
- Self-monitor for symptoms
- Check temperature twice a day
- Watch for fever, cough, or shortness of breath
- Avoid contact with people at higher risk for severe illness (unless they live in the same home and had same exposure)
- Follow CDC guidance if symptoms develop

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Travel

If you traveled to a country with widespread sustained (ongoing) transmission of COVID-19 as established by the CDC, or traveled on a cruise ship or river boat:

- Inform your supervisor or designee immediately
- Leave work immediately if you are at work
- Stay home until 14 days after your last exposure and maintain social distance (at least six feet) from others at all times
- Self-monitor for symptoms
- Check temperature twice a day
- Watch for fever, cough, or shortness of breath
- Avoid contact with people at higher risk for severe illness (unless they live in the same home and had same exposure)
- Follow CDC guidance if symptoms develop

If you traveled from any other country:

- Inform your supervisor for a determination of whether you should stay home, or leave work if you are at work
- Practice social distancing
 - Maintain a distance of at least six feet from others
 - Stay out of crowded places
- Be alert for symptoms
 - Watch for fever, cough, shortness of breath
 - Take temperature if symptoms develop
- Follow CDC guidance if symptoms develop

If you are planning on traveling:

- Carefully consider whether travel is necessary
- Inform your supervisor of any out of state or out of country travel
- Check the CDC's Traveler's Health Notices for the latest guidance and recommendations for travel out of the country
 - Self-monitor for symptoms before starting travel
 - Check temperature twice a day
 - Watch for fever, cough, or shortness of breath
- If you become sick after starting travel, promptly call a healthcare provider for advice as needed, and inform your supervisor.

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Inability to be at Work

We provide paid sick time and other benefits to compensate eligible employees who are unable to work under certain circumstances. You should refer to applicable personnel policies and notices related to such benefits.

The Brainerd HRA may consider allowing certain employees in certain positions to work from home. For more information about such arrangements, please contact your supervisor and refer to applicable personnel policies and notices.

Reduce the Spread of COVID-19

Basic Hygiene

Wash your hands frequently with warm, soapy water for at least 20 seconds, but especially at the beginning and end shifts, prior to any mealtimes and after using the toilet. Use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.

- Alcohol-based hand sanitizers will be provided throughout the workplace and in common areas.

Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze or use the inside of your elbow. Throw used tissues in the trash and immediately wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol.

Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

Clean and Disinfect

Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces such as workstations, keyboards, telephones, handrails, and doorknobs. Dirty surfaces should be cleaned with soap and water prior to disinfection.

- Cleaning sprays and wipes will also be provided to clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces such as telephones and keyboards. You should clean these office surfaces daily.

Social Distancing

- A protective barrier has been installed at the reception desk and staff are asked to stay behind the barrier during all in-person interactions.
- Maintain a distance of at least six feet from other employees, tenants, customers, etc.
- Avoid using other employees' phones, desks, offices, or other work tools and equipment, when possible. If necessary, clean and disinfect them before and after use.

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- Use telephone and video conferencing instead of face-to-face meetings as much as possible during this outbreak.
- Avoid people who are sick with the above-symptoms or known to have traveled internationally or in a community in which COVID-19 is widespread.
- A video-intercom system has been installed to help regulate the number of individuals that can safely be accommodated in the lobby area. Program staff from both Public Housing and Housing Choice Voucher Program have the software installed on their computers so that they are able to respond to their own visitors, as needed.

Face Masks

In accordance with Executive Order 20-81, all employees, guests, vendors, and tenants are advised they must wear face coverings when in public spaces, even when social distancing is possible, unless there is a valid medical reason that they are not able to comply. When outside, if social distancing is possible, face coverings are recommended but not required.

- Homemade mask or procedural masks are the recommended style.
- Continue to keep at least 6 feet away from others.

Further guidance on facemasks is available from the CDC here:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>

Personal Protective Equipment

Guidance related to any PPE that should be worn by employees to minimize exposure to hazards that cause serious workplace injuries and illnesses will be communicated to specific positions by supervisors.

Other Measures

Different areas of the organization will be taking specific measures to reduce the spread related to the above items. Brainerd HRA management will communicate to you such measures.

Employee Group-Specific Measures

More specific measures may be taken for specific employee groups based on their work, sites, and risk of exposure to illness. We will be continually monitoring how to handle related workplace issues and will update you accordingly. In addition, Brainerd HRA management will communicate to you any impacted operational issues related to your position.

Additional Protections and Protocols

To prevent exposure and limit the potential spread of the virus, the manner in which the HRA delivers service and interacts with residents, community service providers, guests and vendors has been adjusted.

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Office Closure

There is currently limited public access, with an emphasis on remote interactions as the safest option for communication. Staff are able to serve the public through telephone, e-mail, U.S. Mail, some online resources, and a system of document exchange using door postings and drop box. A video intercom system has been installed to help limit exposure while still allowing for interaction. When no other option is available, staff will work with the public while maintaining social distancing, using face coverings and other recommended personal protective equipment, and conducting additional cleaning/sanitizing before and after each interaction.

Work Orders/Maintenance Requests

Work orders and maintenance requests should be reported by calling the Dispatch number at 218-839-0055. This number rolls over to office staff during business days/hours and is answered by the on call Caretaker after hours, on weekends, and on holidays. Maintenance staff will assess work orders on a case-by-case basis. Non-emergency work orders may potentially need to be rescheduled. Prior to dispatching maintenance staff, residents will be asked if they or anyone in the household has flu-like symptoms or has had exposure to the COVID-19 virus. Staff will be wearing face coverings or other recommended personal protective equipment while conducting their work. In the event of an emergency work order or other priority work necessary inside a unit that may have had exposure, staff will ask that household members confine themselves to an area away from the main work space and wear masks while staff are in the unit. Additional cleaning and sanitizing will be done before, during, and after the work activity.

Outside Vendors

Outside vendors working on extended projects will be asked to provide their company's own work plan on how they will be monitoring employees for exposure and working to limit the spread of the virus. These plans will be shared with relevant staff prior to the start of the project. All vendors will be required to wear face coverings when working inside the building, even if social distancing is possible.

Closure of Common Areas

The following common areas are being closed: mail waiting area, community dining room, ground floor sitting areas, all lounge/TV areas, pool table area, game/puzzle areas, and the small lounge/sitting areas by the elevators on each floor. The laundry room and the smoking area have not been closed, however residents are reminded to practice social distancing while in these two excluded areas.

Activities & Building Events

All events and activities in the building have been canceled until further notice. This includes bread distribution, Resident Council and Committee meetings, BINGO, coffee time, movie night, and all other hosted activities.

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Cleaning & Sanitizing

Maintenance staff will be doing extra cleaning and sanitizing of high-traffic areas repeatedly each day. If exposure is suspected, an outside deep-cleaning and sanitizing service will be engaged. Residents are asked to do their part by practicing frequent handwashing, covering coughs and sneezes, limiting time out of their apartments if they are sick, and maintaining safe social distancing when around others.

Office Appointments

In-office access should be limited to only what is unachievable through other means of remote interaction (i.e. mail, document posting, email, drop box, etc.) When required, appointments should be kept brief, social distancing enforcing, face coverings worn, and additional cleaning/sanitizing done before and after each interaction. Residents will complete paperwork provided to them via mail or door posting and then return the documents, along with supporting verification documents, via mail, drop box, or email scan.

Guests & Visitors

Residents are asked to refrain from having unnecessary guests at this time. This does not include PCA's, social workers, mental health workers, and other essential service providers. Any visitors with fever, cough, sore throat or other flu-like symptoms are not permitted to visit. As all common areas are closed, service providers and critical visitors should proceed directly to the apartment of the resident they are visiting. Essential visitors are asked to practice social distancing while on property and are required to wear face coverings in public spaces.

Rent Payments

Rent payments are still due timely and may be placed in the drop boxes or mailed in. Residents wishing to enroll in automatic payment are encouraged to contact the office. No late fees will be charged and no terminations related to non-payment will be giving until the relevant State and Federal moratoriums and guidance prohibiting them expires. Reminders will still be sent to non-paying tenants.

Additional Information

Additional general guidance on COVID-19 is available here:

- CDC Fact Sheet: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/2019-ncov-factsheet.pdf>
- MDH Guidance: <https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/index.html>

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Communications and Training

This Preparedness Plan will be communicated and training will be provided as necessary. Management is to monitor how effective the program has been implemented.

This Preparedness Plan will be approved by the Brainerd HRA Board and will be updated as necessary.

Nothing in this communication establishes any precedent or practice. The Brainerd HRA may change or eliminate these items, or portions thereof, at any time and without notice.

This plan supplements existing employment policies, rules, procedures, and regulations. All current employment policies, rules, procedures, and regulations remain in full effect, except for instances where this plan directly contradicts another current policy, rule, procedure, or regulation in which case this plan supersedes existing policy, rule, procedure, or regulation. Therefore, employees are encouraged to review all other such policies, rules, procedures, and regulations in conjunction with this plan.

Please Brainerd HRA Executive Director Eric Charpentier at Eric@brainerdhra.org or telephone at 218-824-3425 with any questions or concerns.