

## **HRHA General Training Information for HRHA Employees: COVID-19 (novel coronavirus)**

**Please Note:** This protocol will be updated regularly as new information regarding the COVID-19 outbreak emerges and is not intended for use by businesses or organizations other than the Harrisonburg Redevelopment and Housing Authority.

### **Going to Work**

HRHA staff should not report to work and contact their supervisor if they:

- Are sick, especially if experiencing symptoms associated with COVID-19 as described below. Employees are advised to stay home if they are ill and advise their supervisor if they develop symptoms of COVID-19. In addition, staff should contact their doctor or a health care provider, as needed, for medical assistance;
- Have visited mainland China, Iran, northern Italy, the Republic of Korea or other COVID-19 level 2 or higher risk areas of concern identified by the CDC in the last 14 days. For more information, please contact the HR Department or the Virus Response Team. *For additional information regarding COVID-19 high-risk areas, please see the Center for Disease Control website at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) ;*
- Develop symptoms of COVID-19 within 14 days of being anywhere in a country or area of concern;
- Have been in close, personal, and unprotected contact with a confirmed case of coronavirus in the last 14 days;
- Have been asked to self-quarantine as a result of any of the above circumstances.

### **Staff Training**

HRHA will be implementing its preparedness response protocol as a result of the ongoing COVID-19 outbreak. This process includes training, guidance, and regular briefings to HRHA employees on relevant information and procedures to prevent the spread of coronavirus in the housing and office setting.

### **About COVID-19 (novel coronavirus)**

Coronaviruses can make us sick. Some coronaviruses can cause illness similar to the common cold or influenza, and others can cause more serious diseases, including severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) and Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS).

This virus, first seen in mainland China, is called 'novel' because it is new. It was not detected before this outbreak. Cases of COVID-19 are now being reported in Virginia and surrounding areas.

### **Symptoms of COVID-19**

Symptoms include (but are not limited to) fever, cough, and shortness of breath.

### **How the Virus Spreads**

The virus is most likely to spread from person to person through:

- Direct contact with a person while they are infectious
- Contact with droplets when a person with a confirmed infection coughs or sneezes
- Touching objects or surfaces that were contaminated by droplets (like those from a cough or sneeze) from a person with a confirmed infection and then touching your mouth, eyes or face.

The length of time that a person is infectious (can spread the infection to others) is not yet known. However, there is evidence of people with little or no symptoms transmitting the infection to others. It is therefore likely that a person can spread the infection before they first develop symptoms – and that they can continue to do so up until 48 hours after symptoms stop.

### **High-Risk Populations**

Some people who are infected may not get sick at all, some will get mild symptoms from which they will recover easily and others may become very ill, very quickly.

Currently the Public Health Department has identified the people at highest risk of serious infection include:

- People with compromised immune systems
- People over 60 years of age
- Pregnant women
- People with diagnosed heart and lung conditions or who have diabetes *or other underlying health conditions and their family members;*

### **Preventing the Spread of the Virus**

Practicing good hand hygiene and proper sneeze/cough technique is the best defense against most viruses. Employees are advised to:

- Wash hands frequently with soap and water and dry them well, especially before and after eating, before and after using the bathroom. In the work environment, proper hand washing should also be completed after cleaning and disinfecting common areas **and** after completing maintenance or other work inside a tenant's unit.
- Avoid close (less than 6 foot) contact with others and avoid touching, shaking hands, hugging and other intimate contact.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with clean tissues or your elbow and properly dispose of tissues.
- Wear gloves when working in tenant units, common areas, or community rooms. See additional information below regarding glove selection, removal and disposal.
- Use alcohol-based (at least 60% alcohol) hand sanitizer if you aren't able to wash and dry your hands.

### **Entering Tenant Units for Administrative Work**

HRHA has not yet made the determination to discontinue all administrative work normally completed within residential units, such as unit inspections, etc. However, to the extent possible, non-essential (and non-time sensitive) work that requires entering a tenant unit should be rescheduled until notice is given from management to resume normal operations.

When access to an occupied unit is necessary, staff is advised to implement the following protocol prior to unit entry:

*Upon being greeted at the door or contact with the resident by phone, staff should ask, "Is anybody in the unit ill with an active cough or fever or is anyone self-isolating (quarantined) due to possible exposure to COVID-19?"*

**If the answer is "Yes"** – DO NOT ENTER the unit. Advise the resident that the appointment will need to be rescheduled. Contact your Property Manager for assistance in determining other ways for completing the required work.

**If the answer is "No"** - staff may enter the unit to perform the required work using the following guidelines:

- Disposable gloves should be worn while in the unit - then properly remove and dispose of the gloves in the nearest receptacle upon exit;
- To the extent possible, maintain proper social distancing of 6 feet or more from tenants and their guests;
- Keep interactions as brief as possible – avoid handshaking, touching or other contact with tenants and guests.
- Wash hands thoroughly after leaving the unit. Use a hand sanitizer (containing at least 60% alcohol) if hand washing facilities are not available.

Please note: If staff observes a resident they think may be ill, they have the right to not enter the unit and must report the situation to the Property Manager. If the work is an emergency, proceed with protocol below for Tenants and COVID-19. In addition, if a resident does not want their unit entered due to illness, requests a reschedule, or indicates they have self-quarantined and completion of the work is not urgent, do not enter the unit and report the situation to the property manager.

Additional questions regarding whether or not to enter a unit should be directed to supervisors and/or the HRHA Virus Response Team.

### **Entering Tenant Units for Maintenance Work**

HRHA has not yet made the determination to delay or discontinue maintenance work within its residential units. However, the determination has been made to prioritize work to ensure that (1) time is available for staff to assist with any necessary cleaning and disinfecting of common areas within our residential sites, including office buildings; and (2) emergency work orders continue to be addressed according to HRHA's established standard. As a result, during this time, residents

may experience some delay in the time needed to respond to work order requests. In addition, to the extent possible, non-essential preventative maintenance that requires entering a tenant unit should be rescheduled until notice is given from management to resume normal operations.

When access to an occupied unit is necessary, staff is advised to implement the following protocol prior to unit entry:

*Upon being greeted at the door or contact with the resident by phone, staff should ask, "Is anybody in the unit ill with an active cough or fever or is anyone self-isolating (quarantined) due to possible exposure to COVID-19?"*

**If the answer is "Yes"** – DO NOT ENTER the unit. Advise the resident that the appointment will need to be rescheduled. This work MUST be completed by staff qualified to enter a potentially contaminated unit. Non-emergency work will be delayed for these units until further notice. Staff is advised to contact their Property Manager for assistance in rescheduling the work order for a later date. If the work is an EMERGENCY, refer to the section below regarding Tenants with COVID-19.

**If the answer is "No"** - staff may enter the unit to perform the required work using the following guidelines:

- Disposable gloves should be worn while in the unit – these may be worn under leather or nylon gloves (used for puncture or abrasion resistance). Properly remove and dispose of the disposable gloves in the nearest receptacle upon exit;
- To the extent possible, maintain proper social distancing of 6 feet or more from tenants and their guests;
- Keep interactions as brief as possible – avoid handshaking, touching or other contact with tenants and guests.
- Wash hands thoroughly after leaving the unit. Use a hand sanitizer (containing at least 60% alcohol) if hand washing facilities are not available.

**Please note:** If maintenance staff observes a resident they think may be ill, they have the right to not enter the unit and must report the situation to the property manager. If the work is an emergency, proceed with protocol below for Tenants and COVID-19. In addition, if a resident does not want their unit entered due to illness, requests a reschedule or indicates that they have self-quarantined and the work is not urgent/emergency work, do not enter the unit and report the situation to the property manager.

Additional questions regarding whether or not to enter a unit should be directed to supervisors and/or the HRHA Executive Director.

### **Tenants and COVID-19**

While the risk of transmission between staff and our tenants and guests is currently low, HRHA is providing our tenants with information about COVID-19 and has implemented protocols designed to further prevent spread of the virus.

If a tenant has a known COVID-19 infection or is in self-isolation in a housing unit, it is important that staff take precautions. Until further notice, HRHA has determined that administrative and non-emergency work in such units will be delayed to a future date. To address Emergency and Urgent work orders, HRHA is currently training a limited number of maintenance staff qualified to respond to emergency work orders under such circumstances. This includes the use and proper disposal of Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) necessary to reduce exposure. If there is a need to enter a unit with known COVID-19 infection or self-isolation due to exposure, those tasks MUST only be performed by trained and qualified staff or contractors. Information regarding how to contact HRHA's Emergency Response Team in order to address emergency work order needs will be provided in the near future. In the meantime, please contact your supervisor.

### **General Building Cleaning Guidelines**

Cleaning staff should avoid contact with tenants or guests with known COVID-19 infection or those who have self-isolated. However, staff can clean or perform work in unoccupied units, community rooms, and common areas if gloves are worn while cleaning and you wash your hands or use a sanitizing hand rub (made from at least 60% alcohol) before and after donning the gloves.

Based on what is currently known about COVID-19, spread from person-to-person occurs most frequently among close contacts (within about 6 feet) from respiratory droplets. However, current evidence suggests that COVID-19 may remain viable for hours to days on surfaces made from a variety of materials. The CDC recommends cleaning visibly dirty surfaces followed by disinfection as one of the best practice measures for prevention of COVID-19 and other viral respiratory illnesses.

HRHA has implemented enhanced cleaning measures of all common areas circulated by memo from the Facilities and Construction Manager.

For information regarding the cleaning and disinfection frequency and locations refer to the cleaning guidelines for your building produced by HRHA's Facilities and Construction Manager.

### **Cleaning a Room Vacated by a Person Under Quarantine with COVID-19 (Enhanced Cleaning)**

Rooms that housed a person under quarantine or with COVID-19 should remain closed to further use until cleaned and disinfected by appropriately trained and qualified cleaning staff or cleaning contractors. No staff other than the qualified cleaning staff should enter the unit until the unit has been cleared for entry following proper cleaning/disinfecting.

- Cleaning or maintenance staff must wear disposable gloves, eye protection, and coveralls for all tasks until the cleaning process is complete.

- Additional PPE might be required based on the cleaning/disinfectant products being used (refer to the product MSDS).
- PPE should be removed and disposed of properly to avoid contamination of the wearer and the surrounding area.
- Clean and disinfect all frequently touched surfaces in quarantine locations (e.g., areas such as doorknobs, light switches, handles, desks, toilets, faucets, and sinks) according to instructions described for the cleaning and disinfecting products.
- For soft (porous) surfaces such as carpeted floor, rugs, and drapes, remove visible contamination if present. Launder or shampoo items as appropriate in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
- When cleaning is completed, collect soiled material and PPE in a sturdy, leak-proof (e.g. plastic) bag that is tied shut and not reopened. This waste can go into the regular solid waste stream (e.g., municipal trash) as it is not biohazardous or regulated medical waste.
- Replace all HVAC filters.

### **Cleaning a Room Vacated by Persons Who are Not Ill or Have COVID-19 Symptoms**

If the tenant vacating the unit has no known COVID-19 symptoms and the unit has been vacant for at least 24 hours, employees need only to wipe down frequently touched areas such as doorknobs, light switches, handles, desks, toilets, faucets, sinks with a disinfectant before performing standard unit turn activities.

The only required PPE are gloves, except for additional PPE that is appropriate for the cleaning and disinfecting chemicals, or that is appropriate for regular unit turn tasks to be performed.

### **Glove Selection**

To the extent possible, all work within tenant units should be conducted wearing disposable gloves. Latex, nitrile, or vinyl type gloves are all acceptable for the cleaning tasks. However, it's important to note that some people suffer from latex allergies. If that's the case, remember to choose the nitrile or vinyl type surgical gloves rather than latex surgical gloves. Furthermore, nitrile gloves are strongly recommended for most maintenance tasks in a potentially infectious unit because nitrile has high levels of chemical and puncture resistance. If leather or nylon gloves are necessary for puncture or abrasion resistance, wear those gloves over surgical gloves and wash them (per the manufacturers recommendations) after each use. If they cannot be washed, then dispose of them in the nearest waste receptacle.

Appropriately dispose of gloves in the nearest waste receptacle after completing the work in unit.

### **Proper Removal of Disposable Gloves**

Remove and properly dispose of gloves immediately following cleaning or disinfecting tasks.

To remove your gloves, pinch the glove cuff and peel the first glove away from your body, pulling it inside out. Without touching either glove with your bare hand, hold the glove that you just removed in your gloved hand. Peel off the second glove by putting your fingers inside the glove at the top of your wrist. Turn the second glove inside out while pulling it away from your body, leaving the first glove inside the second. Dispose of the gloves in the nearest waste receptacle.

### **Summary of Preventive Measures for HRHA Employees**

- Stay at home if you have a fever, respiratory symptoms, or believe you are sick or may become sick.
- Practice routine cleaning and disinfection of frequently touched surfaces, including tables, doorknobs, light switches, handles, desks, toilets, faucets, sinks, etc.
- Wear gloves when cleaning or performing maintenance in all building locations, including tenant units, common areas, or community rooms. Properly remove and dispose of gloves upon leaving the unit.
- Practice hand hygiene frequently: wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid close or personal contact (less than 6 feet) with other people.

### **CDC References**

- [Preventing COVID-19 Spread in Communities](#)
- [Handwashing: Clean Hands Save Lives](#)
- [OSHA COVID-19 Website](#)