

# COVID-19 Preparedness Plan Optional Template for DHS Licensed or Certified Residential Services Deemed Critical Businesses during Peacetime Emergency

All businesses in Minnesota have been required to have a COVID-19 Preparedness Plan that protects staff, residents and the community you serve. This template is designed to help you create a plan and recognizes the health and safety requirements already required of your program. This template is designed to assist you in meeting the unique needs of your staff and residents during this peacetime emergency.

According to Executive Order 20-48, critical businesses, including providers licensed or certified by the Department of Human Services to deliver residential services, are required to follow guidance from the [Minnesota Department of Health \(MDH\)](#) and the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. Because there is currently no vaccine for this virus, you will need to operate your program for many months with the possibility that COVID-19 could be confirmed in your program. The MDH/CDC guidance is designed to prevent, mitigate, or respond to the transmission of COVID-19.

[Executive Order 20-74](#), signed by Gov. Walz on June 5, 2020, requires all critical businesses to develop and implement a COVID-19 Preparedness Plan (“**Plan**”) that describes how your business will implement, at a minimum, the following components, in compliance with MDH and CDC guidelines:

Since the expiration of the Executive Order, businesses are required to provide Health and Safety plans to their employees. We have continued to use the template from DHS. The following areas are addressed.

1. hygiene and source control;
2. cleaning and disinfecting;
3. screening and policies for staff and volunteers exhibiting signs or symptoms of COVID-19;
4. screening and policies for residents exhibiting signs or symptoms of COVID-19;
5. social distancing;
6. food preparation and meals;
7. ventilation;
8. visitors;
9. transportation;
10. communication and training about the Plan.

You must develop your Plan by June 29, 2020. Providers need to evaluate, monitor, and update their plans if necessary, on a regular basis. The Plan needs to be posted at all of the business’s workplaces in readily accessible locations that will allow for the Plan to be readily reviewed by all workers.

In order to help comply with Executive Order 20-74 requirement to develop a COVID-19 Preparedness Plan, DHS is providing this “COVID-19 Preparedness Plan Optional Template for DHS Licensed Residential Programs” (“Plan”) as a resource for you to use in creating a plan, if you do not already have one. This template should be used with the [checklist guidelines for creating a COVID-19 Preparedness Plan for licensed nonresidential](#)

[services](#). The use of this particular form is optional. You may create a Plan using your own form but your Plan must address, at a minimum, the ten topics identified below.

You do not need to send the completed plan to DHS for review or approval. However, you will need to:

- notify service recipients about the plan and make it available to them upon request, and if appropriate to their parents, legal guardians, or case workers;
- train staff and volunteers on the plan and ensure they are capable of implementing it; and
- post the plan in a prominent place or make it accessible to staff and volunteers who need to review it.

## **NOTIFYING AND WORKING WITH MDH:**

We are expected to notify MDH when there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 in your program by calling 651-297-1304 or 1-800-657-3504 (Mon. – Fri., 8AM-5PM). All employees are expected to work with MDH and comply with their directives when given.

### **1. Hygiene and source controls**

- Reinforce handwashing routines, after having been in a public place, prior to and after eating, after using the toilet, or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- Residents, staff, and visitors should wash their hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- Ensure handwashing and/or hand-sanitizer facilities are readily available and appropriately stocked including by entrances.
- Provide paper towels and ensure a trash-receptacle is placed by the bathroom door so a paper towel can be readily disposed of when operating the door.
- Post handwashing and “cover your cough” signs.
- Plan for when and how facemasks will be used by residents, staff, and visitors.
- Provide staff with recommended protective supplies, such as facemasks, gloves, disinfectant, eye protection, shields, etc.
- Provide tissues for proper cough/sneeze etiquette and no-touch disposal containers.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Community drinking stations and water-fountains should not be available/used. Touchless water-filling stations may still be provided.
- Prepare for potential symptomatic or COVID-19 positive residents by having appropriate supplies.
- Sinks could be an infection source so residents should avoid placing toothbrushes directly on counter surfaces. Totes can be used for personal items so they do not touch the bathroom countertop.

#### **PLAN FOR HYGIENE AND SOURCE CONTROLS:**

Basic infection prevention measures are being implemented at our workplaces at all times. Employees are instructed to wash their hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water frequently throughout

the day, but especially at the beginning and end of their shift, prior to any mealtimes, after doing personal cares with the people served and after using the restroom. All visitors to the workplace are required to wash or sanitize their hands prior to or immediately upon entering the home. Hand-sanitizer dispensers (that use sanitizers of greater than 60% alcohol) are at entrances and locations in the workplace so they can be used for hand hygiene in place of soap and water, as long as hands are not visibly soiled.

Source controls are being implemented in our residential sites at all times. Meridian Services' employees are required to wear masks. All staff and people we support have been supplied with masks. If you need a mask, please request one before proceeding. We do have extra masks available upon request.

Residential staff are expected to always wear a mask while in the residential programs. You may be instructed to use more Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) by your supervisor on a case-by-case basis. As much as possible, staff should be especially careful to use PPE when they can't maintain 6 feet social distancing and while providing personal care to the people we support.

Throughout the pandemic we have also encouraged the people we support to wear masks when in the company of others. We know that some people have consistently worn masks when necessary, but others have found difficulty in accepting a mask, and others simply cannot wear a mask due to a medical condition or physical disability.

Fortunately, the mask mandate does allow for exemptions for the above stated types of reasons. The following two exemptions, taken from the MN Department of Health website apply to the people we are supporting:

Persons who have medical or other health conditions, disabilities, or mental health, developmental, or behavioral needs that make it difficult to tolerate wearing a face covering.

Any person who has trouble breathing, is unconscious, sleeping, incapacitated, or is otherwise unable to remove the face covering without assistance.

A full description of the mask mandate and exemptions can be found using this link:

<https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/facecover.html>

While we are grateful that the State of MN recognizes the need for exemptions, we do still want to encourage the people we support to wear a mask. It might take time for some people to build up a tolerance of a mask, we might need to try different types of masks with people, and we may need to use different tools such as social stories to help people become accustomed to wearing a face covering.

Staff should ensure that persons served' personal hygiene items including toothbrushes are cleaned and maintained. They should avoid leaving personal items on the sink or where they can be contaminated.

All Employees are instructed to cover their mouth and nose with their sleeve or a tissue when coughing or sneezing, and to avoid touching their face, particularly their mouth, nose and eyes, with their hands. Employees are expected to dispose of tissues in provided trash receptacles and wash or sanitize their hands immediately afterward. Respiratory etiquette will be demonstrated on signage and supported by making tissues and trash receptacles available to all employees and other persons entering the workplace.

**Although the mask mandate has been discontinued for the general public, Meridian Services has continued to require all staff and all visitors to the group homes to wear masks. We will also require in-home services workers to continue to wear masks when working with the people we serve and in the persons family home. This is consistent with recommendations from the Department of Health and is considered a work rule for all Meridian Services employees.**

### **HANDWASHING BEST PRACTICES**

One of the most important ways to prevent the spread of any illness, including the Coronavirus, is frequent handwashing. Hand sanitizer may be used as an alternative only if running water is not accessible. Basic infection prevention measures are being implemented at Meridian Services at all times, including:

- Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing; going to the restroom; and before eating or preparing food.
- Washing your hands before and after providing personal hygiene cares, administering medications, cleaning dirty surfaces and other instances where cross contamination may occur
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands
- Providing coaching and encouragement to the individuals we support by actively practicing proper handwashing techniques
- Hand sanitizer dispenser at the entrance of the facility for access prior to entering all buildings and all locations.
- Access to hand sanitizer dispensers (containing at least 60% alcohol) located in common areas.
- <https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/pdf/hand-sanitizer-factsheet.pdf>

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## 2. Cleaning and disinfecting

- Follow MDH and CDC guidance for frequent cleaning and disinfecting of your program space, especially shared spaces.
- Establish a documented sanitation schedule and checklist, identifying surfaces/equipment to be sanitized, the agent to be used, and the frequency at which sanitation occurs.
- Ensure high-touch surfaces such as doorknobs, light switches, stair rails, counters, tables and chairs, phones, keyboards, program equipment and other shared items are regularly cleaned and disinfected.
- Minimize the use of shared supplies (e.g. arts and crafts, office supplies) that cannot be sanitized and consider using designated bins for clean and used items.
- Use EPA-registered disinfectants recommended by the CDC: <https://www.epa.gov/coronavirus>.
- When washing towels, bedding, and other items, use the warmest appropriate water setting and dry items completely.

### PLAN FOR CLEANING AND DISINFECTING

In the residential homes, cleaning protocols have been developed for shared areas. A sign off sheet is used to ensure compliance by all staff. Cleaning products will be supplied at residential sites that include at least 60 % alcohol so that areas are properly disinfected.

If a staff person becomes symptomatic while at the residential site, they will be immediately isolated if they cannot leave and go home immediately. Any area of the home where they have been will be thoroughly cleaned thereafter.

Appropriate and effective cleaning and disinfecting supplies have been purchased and are available for use in the residential homes in accordance with product labels, safety data sheets and manufacturer specifications, and are being used with required personal protective equipment for the product.

If a person served is diagnosed positive for COVID-19, the residential home will be staffed with the minimum number of staff needed to safely and securely operate the residential site. Additional personal protective equipment including gowns, masks, face shields will be provided to the staff working with the sick person. Other exposed persons will be informed and tested and quarantined as indicated. A report will be made to the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH). Staff will follow the recommendations of MDH and their personal physicians.

**All staff, including fully vaccinated staff members, should wear full Personal Protective Equipment when providing personal care to persons who have COVID-19. This includes surgical or N95 masks, eye goggles, gowns and gloves.**

Meridian Services' regular practices of cleaning and disinfecting have been implemented, including a schedule for routine cleaning and disinfecting of high-touch areas within the home. All Meridian Services management and direct support professionals will utilize the [COVID-19 Sanitation Chart](#) to track their ongoing efforts to implement and maintain workplace cleanliness.

Appropriate and effective cleaning and disinfecting supplies have been purchased and are available for use in accordance with product labels, safety data sheets and manufacturer specifications, and are being used with required personal protective equipment for the product. All direct support professionals have been trained to utilize a bleach solution consisting of a 1:10 bleach/water ratio every 1 to 3 hours, or as needed, throughout their scheduled shift. In addition, Meridian Services direct support professionals have been trained on the [Supplies and Sanitation Practices](#) and can reference this chart at any time.

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### 3. Screening and policies for staff exhibiting signs or symptoms of COVID-19

- Monitor staff and volunteers for signs of illness, including using health screening questions before beginning a work shift, and require sick staff to stay home or return home if they are experiencing symptoms. You may also opt to conduct temperature screening if it can be done with proper social distancing, protection, and hygiene protocols. However, temperature screening is not required. <https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/facilityhlthscreen.pdf>
- Ensure sick policies are clearly communicated and supportive of staff and volunteers staying home when sick.
- Ensure staff and volunteers know the signs and symptoms of the COVID-19 illness.
- Establish protocols based on MDH guidance for when a staff member or volunteer exhibits symptoms of COVID-19 or tests positive for COVID-19.
- Ensure that emergency contact information for staff and volunteers is up-to-date.
- Establish communication protocols for a positive COVID-19 case or potential exposure and ensure that an individual's identity is not disclosed, other than to a person authorized to receive the information.
- Notify MDH and follow their direction if a staff member or volunteer is diagnosed with COVID-19.
- Have a plan for back-up staffing in case a staff member or volunteer becomes ill.

#### **PLAN FOR SCREENING AND POLICIES FOR STAFF:**

Employees have been informed of and encouraged to self-monitor for signs and symptoms of COVID-19. The following policies and procedures are being implemented to assess employees' health status prior to entering the workplace and for employees to report when they are sick or experiencing symptoms. Orion Associates and Meridian Services serve people who are vulnerable adults and children. Meridian Services residential sites are congregate long-term care facilities and as such are considered especially vulnerable to the spread of the coronavirus. Many of the people we serve through Meridian Services also have underlying medical conditions. We are required to report all persons served' illnesses and staff illnesses to the Department of Health for monitoring.

Everyone that enters a Meridian Services home must complete a self-assessment of their health. Do NOT proceed and contact your supervisor if you are experiencing the following symptoms.

## Symptoms

- Fever
- Cough
  - Runny nose and congestion
- Shortness of Breath
- Severe Difficulty Breathing
- Persistent Chest Pain or Pressure
- New confusion or inability to rouse
- Chills
- Headache
- Muscle Pain
- Sore throat
- New loss of taste and smell
- Gastrointestinal symptoms such as nausea, vomiting, diarrhea
  - Unusual or abnormal symptoms

If you have had contact with someone who tested positive for COVID-19 or someone who has been told to self- quarantine by a medical professional or if you are showing these symptoms, you must notify your supervisor immediately.

All Meridian Services' program management and direct support professionals should follow the chain of command and the weekend on-call and attendance line contacts as posted, available and required for all staff.

Meridian Services have implemented leave policies that promote employees staying at home when they are sick, when household members are sick, or when required by a health care provider to isolate or quarantine themselves or a member of their household. Meridian Services has modified their attendance policy and has informed all Meridian Services' employees to stay at home if they are sick with any COVID-19 like symptoms.

The following temporary modification was made to the Meridian Services' occurrence policy for the residential facilities during the COVID-19 pandemic. This modification was effective Monday June 15, 2020 until further notice.

Both vaccinated and unvaccinated employees should continue to self- monitor for the symptoms of COVID-19. If an employee has symptoms of COVID-19, the employee should stay home and call the attendance line to report the absence at least 4 hours prior to your shift, if possible. The employee will not need to use an occurrence. If an employee becomes sick at work, they should notify their supervisor immediately so that a replacement can be found.

All employees are expected to seek COVID-19 testing when exhibiting these symptoms.

If staff live with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, they should immediately be excluded from work until they are tested or until they quarantine.

If you are exposed to a person who tests positive for COVID-19, the organization's designee for contact tracing will ask you to indicate your vaccination status and if potentially exempt from quarantine, to show your vaccination card. This information will be kept confidential and separate from other documentation in your personnel file.

Health care workers are fully vaccinated 2 weeks following their final COVID-19 vaccine dose. Health care workers should self-monitor for COVID-19 through day 14 following an exposure.

Accommodations for employees with underlying medical conditions or who have household members with underlying health conditions have been implemented. Employees who have underlying health conditions or household members with underlying medical conditions are asked to contact Human Resources. They are accommodated as needed on a case-by-case basis depending on the circumstances and their medical documentation.

## **Exposures**

Risk assessment is determined to begin 48 hours before the person who tested positive experienced symptom on-set or if asymptomatic, 48 hours before the testing date.

Staff exposed to COVID-19 at their work site will be asked the following questions:

- 1) Were you wearing a mask at all times? If not, when did you remove your mask?
- 2) Were you within 6 feet of the person testing positive and for how long?

Low risk with a coworker is defined as present in the same indoor environment but staff did not have prolonged close contact, and everyone was wearing a mask.

Prolonged close contact is defined as closer than 6 feet for greater than 15 minutes total during their shift or in a 24-hour period.

### **Low Risk Exposure**

This will be determined by the individuals responsible for contract testing and will be communicated to your program management. Staff persons assessed as low risk will be allowed to continue to work, monitoring for symptoms for 14 days.

### **High Risk Exposure**

#### **Vaccinated**

Staff person is required to get an initial COVID-19 test immediately but not less than 2 days after exposure.

If the test is negative and the person remains asymptomatic, the person may work but should be re-tested at days 3-5. Staff person must wear an N95 mask indoors for 14 days. If signs or symptoms develop at any time within the 14 days, staff should seek testing and isolate at home.

#### **Un-vaccinated**

If the staff person has received a positive result in the past 90 days, they do not have to quarantine. They must wear a N-95 mask indoors for 14 days.

If the staff person is unvaccinated with no previous COVID-19, they must test immediately but no less than 2 days after exposure and again at 5-7 days after exposure. They may return to work after 7 days of quarantine if they have no symptoms.

If the staff person is unvaccinated and refuses to be tested, they must quarantine and stay home from work for 10 days.

If the staff person chooses to be excluded from work for the full 14 days following a high-risk exposure, they are protected by Minnesota Statutes, section 144.4196

### **Symptoms of Illness**

It is cold and flu season. Many of the symptoms of COVID-19 are similar to a cold or the flu. Meridian Services, Orion Associates and Zenith Services anticipate an increase in testing due to these similar symptoms of illness. Our goal is to protect those who become ill with COVID-19 and to assist those who have other symptoms of illness to return to work when they are ready.

## **Vaccinated**

If you have symptoms as described above, it is expected you will notify your supervisor right away and get tested immediately. If your test is negative, you will be expected to get tested again at 3-5 days. If your test is negative, you may return to work.

## **Unvaccinated**

If you have symptoms as described above, you should remain home from work or leave work immediately. You should seek a test for COVID-19 immediately. If your test is negative, you should stay out of work until a second test is taken at day 5-7 after symptom on-set.

## **Positive COVID-19 Test Result**

### **Vaccinated and Unvaccinated**

Employees who have tested positive for COVID-19 must quarantine for at least 10 days from the on-set of their symptoms, must have experienced a reduction in symptoms and be fever free without use of the medication.

In all instances when an employee receives a positive COVID-19 test result, contact tracing will be done.

Meridian Services will also inform employees if they have been exposed to a person with COVID-19 at their worksite. We recommend those exposed to follow MDH guidelines to quarantine for the required amount of time. We also report all positive cases and people exposed to the Minnesota Department of Health. If you are exposed to a person who tests positive for COVID-19, the organization's designee for contact tracing will ask you to indicate your vaccination status and if potentially exempt from quarantine to verify with your vaccination card. This information will be kept confidential and separate from other documents in your personnel file.

## **Determining date that quarantine ends**

To determine when the quarantine period will end, identify the last date of exposure to someone with COVID-19. This is considered day zero. The next day is the first full day of quarantine, or day one. People are able to resume normal activities the day after their quarantine period is completed.

A 14-day quarantine means the person can resume activities on day 15.

A 10-day quarantine means the person can resume activities on day 11.

A 7-day quarantine means the person can resume activities on day eight.

**All employees are expected to seek COVID-19 testing when exhibiting these symptoms. Our requirement that employees seek testing for symptoms that may reflect symptoms of the flu, or the**

common cold are indicated by the highly transmissible Delta Variant and our desire to keep our workplace as safe as possible.

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#### 4. Screening and policies for residents exhibiting signs or symptoms of COVID-19

- Monitor residents for signs of illness, including using a health screening tool such as this: <https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/facilityhlthscreen.pdf>.
- Ensure residents know the signs and symptoms of the COVID-19 illness.
- Establish protocols based on MDH guidance for when a resident exhibits symptoms of COVID-19 or tests positive for COVID-19 to limit exposure.
- Ensure that emergency contact information for residents is up-to-date.
- Establish communication protocols for positive COVID-19 cases or potential exposure and ensure that an individual’s identity is not disclosed, other than to a person authorized to receive the information.
- Notify MDH and follow their direction if a resident is diagnosed with COVID-19.

##### **PLAN FOR SCREENING AND POLICIES FOR RESIDENTS:**

Ongoing education about the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 will occur with all persons served. Direct Support Professionals and Management will review the signs and symptoms during all health screenings, and remind persons served to ask for help or call 911 if necessary.

A health screening will be conducted with all persons served once each day, once in the morning and once in the evening. The persons temperature and oxygen levels will be taken, and the following will be assessed during the screening:

- Is the person experiencing chills?
- Does the person have a new cough?
- Has the person experienced shortness of breath?
- Does the person have a new sore throat?
- Is the person experiencing new muscle aches?
- Does the person have a new headache?
- Is the person experiencing new loss of smell or taste?

If the person has a fever, if their oxygen levels are less than or equal to 90%, or if they are experiencing any of the above listed symptoms, the chain of command and the nursing department will be notified immediately. Guardians will also be notified. We will contact the physician for the person with a fever or other symptoms of COVID-19. The person served will be taken to a local testing site if that option is available to them.

If a person served tests positive for COVID-19, the Minnesota Department of Health will be notified as well as the staff persons who may have been exposed. The person will be quarantined in their home per MDH guidelines.

The outcomes of all health screenings will be recorded on the “Routine Vital Signs Monitoring” form in each person’s Medication Administration book.

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## 5. Social distancing

- Gatherings of residents and staff in the facility should be carefully considered and redesigned, as necessary, to reduce prolonged close contact among staff, residents, and families.
- Common areas and other areas of congestion should be marked to provide for social distancing of at least 6-feet.
- Consider using visual aids (e.g., painter’s tape, stickers, signs) to illustrate traffic flow and floor markers for where to stand for appropriate spacing to support social distancing.
- Rearrange seating spaces to maximize the space (at least 6 feet) between people. Turn chairs to face in the same direction (rather than facing each other) to reduce transmission caused from virus-containing droplets (e.g., from talking, coughing, sneezing).
- For larger programs, whenever possible, refrain from intermixing groups. If intermixing of groups is necessary, limit the number of groups that intermix and keep records of staff and residents that intermix.
- Stagger breaks to maximize social distancing.
- Hold meetings remotely, if possible.
- Staff and volunteers should also maintain social distance when interacting with each other.
- Staff should limit entering residents’ rooms as much as possible to reduce potential for cross-contamination, unless required for supervision.
- Ensure that beds are spaced out as much as possible. Consider placing residents’ beds head to toe in order to further reduce the potential for viral spread.
- Provide for physical distancing in restrooms or limit restroom capacity. Mark off areas for where to wait to use the restroom.

### **PLAN FOR SOCIAL DISTANCING:**

Social distancing of at least six feet will be implemented and maintained between employees, people served when possible and visitors in the home through the following engineering and administrative controls:

Because our services are essential services, our residential program management are working in the residential homes as well as at the 9400 Golden Valley office.

Prior to entering the residential sites, pre-screening and self-assessment taking will be completed.

Common areas and social distancing will be managed by limiting the number of people in the area, for example in the kitchen, stairway and living room areas. Persons served and employees will be cued as reminders to social distance.

Face-coverings have been required of all residential staff at all sites throughout the pandemic. Managers, Directors and Administrators are monitoring for compliance and are providing re-training to staff who are not wearing masks.

Effective 7/25/2020, consistent with Executive Order 20-81, face-covering masks are required in all Meridian Services residential sites. Employees may temporarily remove their masks while alone in private offices in accordance with the Governor’s order.

Common Areas will be wiped down every 1-3 hours during the DSP’s shifts.

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## 6. Food preparation and meals

- Prohibit food (including condiments) and beverage sharing between residents.
- Stagger meal times to maximize social distancing.
- Maintain consistent groups during meal times.
- If meals are served family-style, plate each meal to serve it so that multiple people are not using the same serving utensils.

### PLAN FOR FOOD PREPARATION AND MEALS:

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Meridian Services will take care to use best practices in food preparation in order to keep the household safe and healthy for staff and persons served. Food and beverage sharing between persons served and between employees will be prohibited. Mealtimes will be staggered, or persons served may eat in their bedrooms if they choose. Staff will eat in separate rooms of the home to avoid group meals and to maintain social distancing. Food will be prepared and dished up by one staff person who is wearing gloves instead of passed around family style. This is to avoid multiple people using the same utensils and handling the same dishes.

## 7. Ventilation

- Work to maximize the amount of fresh air being brought in, limit air recirculation and ensure ventilation systems are properly used and maintained.
- Take steps to minimize air flow blowing across people.

### **PLAN FOR VENTILATION:**

Operations of the Orion Associates and Meridian Services' office and residential buildings include necessary sanitation, assessment and maintenance of building systems, including water, plumbing, electrical, and heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems.

The maximum amount of fresh air is being brought into the workplace, air recirculation is being limited, and ventilation systems are being properly used and maintained. Steps are also being taken to minimize air flow blowing across people.

Orion Associates and Meridian Services maintain inspections of all systems and are in compliance with all commercial requirements. The residential homes are also inspected at least annually and are maintained in compliance with requirements for foster care facilities.

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## **8. Visitors**

- Visitors should be screened for COVID-19 symptoms prior to entrance.  
<https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/facilityhlthscreen.pdf>
- Provide visitors with hand sanitizer or access to a handwashing area, and facemasks if available.
- Encourage social distancing between residents and their visitors.
- Whenever possible, visits should occur outdoors or in a visiting room close to the facility entrance. Visitors should limit interactions to those individuals that they are visiting.
- Clean and disinfect the visiting room after each visit.
- Encourage residents to wash their hands after interacting with a visitor.

### **PLAN FOR VISITORS:**

Although the spread of COVID-19 remains of great concern, MDH is now recommending that providers develop a process to recognize essential caregivers/family members where appropriate. MDH has noted, and we would agree, that while technology can help decrease loneliness for some people receiving services, technology is not a sustainable replacement for in-person contact. Accordingly, we will begin to allow a family member/essential caregiver of the person's choosing entry into the homes with adherence to the following criteria:

- 1) All visitors will wash their hands with soap and water or utilize hand sanitizer when entering the home.

- 2) All visitors will wear a mask for the duration of their visit, and practice social distancing of six feet with staff and other people living in the home. Visitors should confine their interaction to the person they are visiting.
- 3) The area in the home where the visit occurred will be cleaned and disinfected after the visit.

Although we are changing our policy so that essential caregivers may visit in the home, we hope that during the summer months, visitors will arrange to take the people we serve for a walk, a drive or other safe excursion outside of the group home. You are welcome to visit with the person outside of the home at the picnic table or in the yard. Our expectation is that everyone will practice social distancing during these visits.

**Meridian Services will continue to require visitors to wear masks when visiting the residential homes until further notice.**

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## 9. Transportation

- Plan for the use of facemasks when providing transportation.
- Take precautions when using public transportation, ride-sharing, or taxis.
- Limit the number of residents in the vehicle and ask them to spread out to maintain social distancing as much as possible.
- Do not have air recirculated while in a vehicle.
- Remind residents to wear a facemask or face covering, wash their hands, and follow social distancing guidelines while they are away.

### **PLAN FOR TRANSPORTATION:**

All staff will wear facemasks when providing transportation. All persons served will be asked to wear masks while in the vehicle. The number of people in the vehicle will be limited in an effort to maintain social distancing. Windows will be at least partially lowered to prevent recirculated air in the vehicle.

Appropriate and effective cleaning and disinfecting supplies have been purchased and are available for use in accordance with product labels, safety data sheets and manufacturer specifications, and are being used with required personal protective equipment for the product. All direct support professionals have been trained to utilize an alcohol solution consisting of at least 60% alcohol

### **Cleaning and Disinfecting Guidance for Non-emergency Vehicles**

- **Vehicles will be cleaned thoroughly as needed prior to each use with persons served and after use of the vehicle with each person served.**
- Employees will utilize an alcohol disinfectant spray bottle containing 60% alcohol

- Employees will disinfect all frequently touched surfaces including but not limited to:
  - Door handles, seat belts, seats, locks, steering wheel, radio controls, windows, lifts, lift straps
  - Employees will record completion on the vehicle cleaning chart available in each vehicle binder

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## 10. Communication and training about the plan

- Provide a copy of this plan to all of your staff, contracted service providers, and volunteers.
- Provide training to all staff and volunteers on how to follow the plan, ensure they are capable of implementing it, and update them on any changes to the plan.
- The plan must be available to the Commissioner and posted in a prominent place and readily accessible to staff who need to review it.
- Explain in plain language the parts of the plan relevant to the residents and, as appropriate, parents, guardians, legal representatives, and case managers. Provide them with resources to follow the plan.
- Staff with concerns about their employer’s COVID-19 Preparedness Plan or questions about their rights should contact MNOSHA Compliance at [osha.compliance@state.mn.us](mailto:osha.compliance@state.mn.us), 651-284-5050 or 877-470-6742.

### **PLAN FOR COMMUNICATION AND TRAINING ABOUT THE PLAN:**

This COVID-19 Preparedness Plans are being communicated to the appropriate employees and necessary training provided. The plan will be posted at the sites and sent to the employees individually and posted on our website. Additional communication and training will be ongoing and will be conducted for new employees by the Human Resources Department and by program management. Training will be provided to all employees who did not receive the initial training and prior to initial assignment or reassignment. All employees are encouraged to ask questions of their managers or to the chief administrative officer using the jot form provided.

Instructions will be communicated to all employees, temporary employees, subcontractors, vendors and outside technicians about protections and protocols, including: 1) social distancing protocols and practices; 2) drop-off, pick-up, delivery practices; 3) practices for hygiene and respiratory etiquette; 4) recommendations or requirements regarding the use of masks, face-coverings and/or face-shields by employees. All employees and visitors will also be advised not to enter the worksite if they are experiencing symptoms or have contracted COVID-19. All employees, visitors, vendors, subcontractors will need to self- assess their health, take their temperature and wash their hands upon entry to all offices and residential sites.

Managers and supervisors are expected to monitor how effectively the program has been implemented. All management and employees are to take an active role and collaborate in carrying

out the various aspects of this plan, and update the protections, protocols, work-practices and training as necessary. This COVID-19 Preparedness Plan has been certified by Orion Associates and Meridian Services' officers and is posted throughout the workplace and made readily available to employees. It will be updated as necessary by Stephen Hage, designated plan administrator. The plan will also be posted on our website for case managers, guardians and the general public.

Please use the following link to address questions you may have of the organization.

<https://form.jotform.com/200723689415054>

ck or tap here to enter text.

# COVID-19 Vaccination Quarantine Decision Tree

**High-risk Exposure to COVID-19**  
Has had close contact (within 6 feet for a total of 15 minutes or more)

**Vaccinated**

**Yes**

Required to test immediately but not less than 2 days after exposure. Employee must test again at a minimum of 5-7 days after exposure

Not required to quarantine after exposure. Must wear a mask in indoor public settings for 14 days

**No**

Has received a positive COVID-19 test result in the past 90 days?

**Yes**

Not required to quarantine after exposure. Must wear a mask in indoor public settings for 14 days and should monitor for symptoms. Must test immediately if symptoms develop

**No**

Required to test immediately but not less than 2 days after exposure. Employee must test again at a minimum of 5-7 days after exposure

If employee does not test, employee must quarantine for 14 days

**Symptoms of Illness**

Fever, cough, shortness of breath, severe difficulty breathing, persistent chest pain or pressure, new confusion or inability to rouse, chills, headache, muscle pain, sore throat, new loss of taste or smell, gastrointestinal symptoms such as nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, unusual or abnormal symptoms

**Vaccinated**

**Yes**

Required to test immediately but not less than 2 days after symptom onset. Employee must test again at a minimum of 5-7 days after symptom onset

**No**

Employee should test immediately. May return to work after negative test taken day 5-7 after symptom onset

**Positive COVID-19 Test Result**

Employee may return after 10 days following the onset of symptoms and must have a reduction in symptoms and fever free for 24 hours without the use of medication

In all instances where an employee receives a positive COVID-19 test result, contact tracing will be conducted and MDH notification is done

**Quarantine Counting Methodology**

**Exposure**

Last date of known exposure is "Day Zero". The next day is the first full day of quarantine. I.E. Last day of exposure was Monday. If required to test 5-7 days, first available test date is Saturday

**Symptoms**

The date that symptoms begin is "Day Zero". The next day (the first full 24 hours with symptoms) is the first full day of quarantine. I.E. Last day of exposure was Monday. If required to test 5-7 days, first available test date is Saturday