



Administrative Policy # 2021-02

Covid-19 Response Policy

1. Purpose:

The purpose of this Policy is to establish guidelines to employees for a Covid-19 response.

2. Authority:

The Municipal Government Act, as it is amended.

3. Definitions:

3.1 **COVID-19** - refers to the outbreak of the novel coronavirus known as COVID-19.

3.2 **Crisis** - refers to a public health crisis or emergency as defined by public health and Government Authorities.

3.1 **Employee** – refers to all staff, and contractors employed and or under contract by the Town and includes members of Council and its Committees, Boards and Commissions.

4. Scope:

This policy governs the COVID-19 procedure for all employees of the Town of Digby (“the Town”).

5. Community Response & Policy Compliance:

5.1 Provincial and federal health authorities have stressed that we all have a role in containing the outbreak of COVID-19.

5.2 As an employer, the Town considers the following legal obligations in making decisions regarding COVID-19:

- a. The obligation to provide a safe work environment for all employees and others in the workplace;
- b. The obligation not to discriminate based on any protected grounds under human rights legislation and to address discrimination by others in the workplace; and
- c. Other legal and contractual obligations, such as those obligations pursuant to applicable employment contracts.
- d. Employees are expected to review and comply with this Policy.

6. Risk Management Measures:

6.1 Hygiene – In light of the recent COVID-19 outbreak, the Town is prioritizing a high level of hygiene to keep the chance of transmission to an absolute minimum. Based on recommendations from federal and provincial health authorities, we are asking employees, councillors and visitors at municipal worksites to please ensure that:

- a. You wash your hands frequently with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer (both of which will be provided by the Town);
- b. Cover your mouth and nose with your bent elbow or tissue when you cough or sneeze and throw the tissue away immediately;
- c. Avoid touching your eye, nose and mouth; and
- d. Keep at least two (2) metres (approximately six (6) feet) away from anyone coughing and sneezing where possible.

6.2 Travel – The Canadian government has issued travel advisories to countries that are particularly affected by COVID-19. In light of the evolving nature of these travel advisories, the Town strongly urges employees and councillors to reconsider all non-essential travel.

In addition, during the COVID-19 outbreak, employees may be asked to:

- a. Avoid certain travel destinations in accordance with recommendations and restrictions set by federal and provincial health authorities;
- b. Advise the Employer of their travel plans and itineraries; and
- c. If it is reasonable based on the travel and/or development of Covid-19 outbreak, employees may be asked not to attend work for a period of 14 days and / or to monitor for symptoms.

6.3 Ongoing Occupational Health & Safety Monitoring – The Town will continue to monitor the situation and may update these risk management procedures as needed.

The Town will endeavor to support employees who come into contact with or test positive for COVID-19 and encourages all employees to follow the advice of health care providers and public health authorities.

7. Absences & Impact On Pay:

7.1 Mandatory Absences – In the event that an employee is unable to attend work due to following COVID-19 containment procedures set out by public health authorities, including voluntary self-isolation in appropriate circumstances, employees should contact the Chief Administrative Officer or designate right away. An employee may also be required to not attend at work if the Town is concerned that they may have been exposed to the virus, even if not displaying symptoms. Where possible, the Town will arrange for the employee to work from home. If working from home is not possible, and subject to subsection 6.2, employees will be permitted to use sick leave. For employees without

sufficient banked sick leave, the Town will assist with applying for sick EI and any other applicable benefits announced by the federal government.

- 7.2 Precautionary Absences Due to Personal Travel** – The Town strongly encourages all employees to minimize non-essential travel during the COVID-19 outbreak. Employees who choose to travel for personal reasons in light of the evolving situation may not be permitted to return to the workplace for an isolation period. Employees travel at their own personal and financial risk. The Town will consider requests for leave pay on a case-by-case basis.

8. Standard Operating Procedures / Protocols:

8.1 During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Chief Administrative Officer shall ensure that adequate and appropriate Standard Operating Procedures (SOP's) are developed and implemented. The process for development of SOP's shall include:

- a. conducting hazard assessments at the workplace (in consultation with the with the Occupational Health and Safety Committee) to ensure appropriate physical distancing, hygiene and other needs are adequately met;
- b. discussing special needs with employees to assess challenges such as those with underlying conditions, childcare difficulties, family challenges to assess who best can return to work sites, and who may need to continue to work off-site for the time being;
- c. considering / supporting the ability for employees to work from home as practical to assist with physical distance planning;
- d. evaluating other considerations that provide a consistent and efficient level of service across departments while allowing for some site /department / service group specific needs; and
- e. any other necessary steps in compliance with the requirements set by the provincial Chief Medical Officer of Health and any other relevant federal or provincial government bodies and / or health authorities

8.2 During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Chief Administrative Officer shall ensure that adequate and appropriate guidelines and protocols are developed, communicated and adhered to in regard to access to municipal sites. Guidelines / protocols shall take into account:

- a. Working from home and return to work procedures;
- b. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE's) for employees and visitors that is appropriate and in accordance with Nova Scotia Public Health orders and directives;
- c. Spacing requirements for work stations, common areas, washrooms and meeting rooms to ensure sufficient space to meet physical distancing requirements for employees, councillors and the public;

- d. Visual and digital reminders for visitors, councillors and staff to follow social distancing guidelines and proper hand hygiene techniques;
- e. Routes of entry and exit which maximize distancing and minimize points of touch or contact with others (e.g., those entering and exiting do not pass or intersect);
- f. Maintenance of sanitation and hygiene supplies in sufficient quantities at all times at all worksites and in all vehicles;
- g. Precautions necessary for higher risk activities and which require special precautions or protective equipment such as sewage treatment and solid waste handling;
- h. Ensuring mandatory training requirements are met in a safe and adequate manner which is also in keeping with both Nova Scotia Public Health and Occupational Health and Safety guidelines;
- i. Cleaning of all work areas and vehicles in accordance with Nova Scotia Public Health orders and directives;
- j. Ventilation of all work areas and vehicles that is in accordance with recommendations Nova Scotia Public Health guidelines; and
- k. Any other necessary steps to maintain compliance with the requirements set by the provincial Chief Medical Officer of Health and any other relevant federal or provincial government bodies and / or health authorities

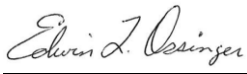
Clerk's Annotation for Official Policy Book

Date of Notice: February 16, 2021

Date of adoption: March 1, 2021

Policy effective date: June 20, 2020

I certify that this Administrative Policy # 2021-02 Covid-19 Response Policy was adopted by Council as indicated above.



Clerk

March 2, 2021

Date