



ACEDC POLICY HEALTH EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Purpose

All organizations need to consider how best to decrease the spread of illness in order to lower the impact of epidemics and pandemics, or similar health care emergencies and reduce the strain on health care facilities. The health, well-being and safety of our community and our employees is a top priority for ACEDC. We will monitor public health recommendations and coordinate appropriate responses with regional, state, and federal partners.

ACEDC has identified the following objectives for this policy:

- (a) reducing transmission among staff, visitors, members, and the general public and protecting people who are at higher risk for adverse health complications;
- (b) minimizing adverse effects on ACEDC, our partners, clients, and the community; and
- (c) maintaining ACEDC operations.

Appropriate Guidance for individuals, businesses, and the community:

All communications with staff, members, businesses, and the community will be based on and include reference to official information provided by the Vermont Department of Health, the Agency of Commerce, and the U.S. CDC. The Vermont Department of Health (VTDoH) website has the most current information for Vermonters and is updated frequently: <https://www.healthvermont.gov/response/infectious-disease/2019-novel-coronavirus>

ACEDC Operations:

During an epidemic or pandemic, or similar health emergency, ACEDC will:

- Post an appropriate health-related warning on the entrance to the building and suite requesting that anyone meeting VTDoH-defined negative conditions not enter the offices and call their doctor.
- Provide hand sanitizer dispensers at each occupied desk and ensure that the landlord maintains hand-washing sinks and soap dispensers in the bathrooms. ACEDC will post informational posters reminding staff and visitors to wash their hands frequently and meet other best practices as recommended by the CDC and Vermont Department of Health.
- Purchase and utilize disinfecting supplies (sanitizer, handwipes, disinfecting sprays, tissues, etc.) to keep the office clean. ACEDC will provide tissues and disposal receptacles for use by employees and visitors. ACEDC will conduct an initial sanitizing of the entire office suite and repeat sanitizing measures after multi-person meetings occur or if a person exhibiting symptoms of sickness comes into the office suite.
- As required, all persons working in and visiting the ACEDC office will be asked to practice “**Social Distancing**,” or increasing the physical distance between people and avoid shaking hands. The goal is for there to be at least six feet of distance between people at all times. Measures may include spaced seating at meetings, limiting interactions, and not entering occupied offices.

- Purchase and utilize remote meeting technology and encourage the use of this technology to replace face-to-face meetings whenever feasible. We will train staff in such technology to maximize its use and benefit.

ACEDC Events, Workshops:

ACEDC staff will review each ACEDC sponsored or co-sponsored meeting, event, workshop, or gathering on a case-by case basis and, after consultation with the Executive Committee, Board, and/or co-sponsoring organizations, decide if the event should be altered, offered by remote technology, or cancelled. When possible, events will be held using remote meeting technology. If the Vermont Department of Health determines that all multiple person events should be cancelled, all ACEDC sponsored or co-sponsored events will be cancelled.

ACEDC Staff

Employees should follow the following strategies recommended by the CDC, as updated:

(<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/guidance-business-response.html>):

- Sick employees (Fever, Persistent Cough, Difficulty Breathing) should stay home
- Employees with symptoms emerging during work hours should separate themselves from others and leave the office as soon as possible
- Practice respiratory etiquette and hand hygiene
- Perform routine environmental cleaning
- Take precautionary steps before traveling
- Take additional measures including notification of exposure

ACEDC encourages remote work and attending meetings by phone or remote meeting platforms, when feasible.

Staff should attend multi-person gatherings only after discussing with Executive Director and should endeavor to attend meetings remotely when possible, following all recommendations of the Vermont Department of Health.

If a staff member gets sick (including subjective or measured fever, cough, or difficulty breathing) while at work, the staff member should notify the Executive Director, separate themselves and call their health care provider immediately. The Executive Director will take steps to have the office sanitized. The staff member should adhere to CDC guidelines: stay home and work remotely.

Employees should cover their mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing, wash their hands and clean any surfaces they touch in office areas.

If dependent family members are sick, or if childcare for dependent family members is dismissed or cancelled due to an outbreak, employees should stay home to care for children or other family members. If children are sick or show symptoms, they should not be brought to the office.

Office Closure

The ACEDC office will be closed if the State of Vermont Department of Health recommends that workplaces be closed. In the case of recommended office closure, staff will coordinate a schedule to provide a single person available at the 1590 Route 7 office for as much time during normal (9am-5pm) hours as possible. Other staff will work remotely as much as feasible and charge time as they normally would.

Staff will review methods for accessing computers and files remotely, including log-in to remote desktop, Dropbox, etc. Staff will provide log-in and password for individual computers in case the person at the office needs to access and send or print files.

ACEDC Visitors

The ACEDC office is often visited by community members, some of whom have scheduled meetings or appointments, and others who do not.

Meeting announcements, invitations, and reminders should include precautions, including frequent and thorough handwashing, and ask that those with symptoms (fever, cough, or difficulty breathing) not attend in-person. Visitors will be asked to wipe down any spaces or equipment used with disinfectant.

Visitors with symptoms (fever, cough, or difficulty breathing) will be asked not to enter the building and to call the office phone to discuss their options.

Informational posters reminding staff and visitors to wash their hands frequently and meet other best practices as recommended by the CDC and Vermont Department of Health will be posted at the front doors and in each bathroom.

ACEDC staff will work with organizations using the office for meetings to provide a Call-in or video-meeting option if possible. The office will be closed to outside meetings if the State of Vermont Department of Health recommends that workplaces be closed.

ACEDC Board

ACEDC meets as a full Board and Executive Committee each month and committee meetings are held periodically.

The ACEDC office will be closed if the State of Vermont Department of Health recommends that workplaces be closed, and Board and committee meetings will not be held. Otherwise, Board and committee meetings will continue to be held, members will observe spatial separation recommendations and an option to attend remotely will be offered.

ACEDC PROGRAMS AND ASSISTANCE

ACEDC will monitor federal and state efforts to provide assistance to businesses, inform businesses in the region of program eligibility and availability and assist businesses to access the programs.

ACEDC will offer office space and internet access to any workers or individuals seeking isolated, remote access to office space and technology. Further, remote meeting technology will be made available. These will be made available to members first, then on a first-come, first-served basis. The office can accommodate four individuals working in separate offices.

At the appropriate time and due to extenuating circumstances, ACEDC will consider modifications to lending and loan servicing practices.

APPROVED BY ACEDC BOARD: March 19, 2020

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