



## Bayfield County Administrator

117 E 5<sup>th</sup> Street, PO Box 878, Washburn, WI 54891

Ph: 715-373-6181 Fx: 715-373-6153

Mark Abeles-Allison, *County Administrator*

Kristine Kavajecz, *Human Resources Director*

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TO: Bayfield County Employees  
FROM: Mark Abeles-Allison, County Administrator  
DATE: March 20, 2020  
RE: COVID-19 Prevention and Response

COVID-19 is presenting us with challenging times. We will get through this by continued support for each other and working together.

First, let me thank all of you for dealing with this extraordinary situation in a calm and thoughtful manner. Staff across the county is being challenged in many ways and the response is phenomenal.

In the face of a serious public health emergency and rapid-fire regulatory change Bayfield County is working to maintain essential public services while protecting employee and public health and safety. We are also working to position the county to so that we may continue services in the future.

Responses to COVID-19 are ever changing and we will keep you updated as more is known. The Health Department is on top of this and are working hard to give up to date and accurate information and guidance. If you want more specifics on COVID-19 please go to the Health Department's website at <https://www.bayfieldcounty.org/1178/CORONAVIRUS-COVID-19>

For up to date information from the Centers for Disease Control, please visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

For the latest information on Covid-19 in Wisconsin, please visit: <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/outbreaks/index.htm>

Given the seriousness and magnitude of the situation, we are striving to minimize staff at the courthouse. We are doing this through remote work and work-from-home options. This

separation will provide depth to the county operation in the event that the virus spreads, while continuing base operations at the courthouse.

There are some standard questions about how Bayfield County is responding to COVID-19. This document provides overall guidance. As situations change this will be updated.

### **Restricted Access to County Offices:**

Effective Friday, March 20, 2020, all county offices, with the exception of the Sheriff's Office, Circuit Court and District Attorney, will be closed to in-person transactions. County operations will continue, however, the public will only be allowed access to the Sheriff, Circuit Court and DA offices. Signs will be posted on all entrance doors.

### **Travel**

Bayfield County has directed Bayfield County departments to **cancel all work-related non-essential travel**. In addition to work-related travel, many of you are traveling for personal vacations this time of year. Please carefully consider your personal travel plans, as the Coronavirus is spreading rapidly throughout the country and the world. At this time we are asking any employee that has travelled, or has a family member that has travelled outside the region to complete the Return to Work document attached.

### **Working from Home**

Most offices have arranged *Work from Home* opportunities for staff. If your department doesn't have the capability for staff to work from home, it may have some ability to flex your time to work different hours to help accommodate your circumstances. Staff working from home must have a completed Telecommuting Agreement in place.

I.T. is available for support from 8-4pm Monday through Friday. The main telephone number for IT is **715-373-6319**.

The intent of working from home is to isolate yourself and your family from the rest of the public. Employees working from home should **not** come to the courthouse and should limit their contact with anyone unless absolutely necessary (groceries etc).

Employees should stay in daily contact with their supervisors to ensure that work expectations are clear. Many departments may have additional needs in addition to other county department needs.

**Leave Time: NEW TEMPORARY COUNTY PERSONNEL POLICY and FAMILIES FIRST  
CORONAVIRUS RESPONSE ACT:**

It's still cold and flu season so no need to overreact, but if you have **a fever, a dry cough, shortness of breath, aches and pains, sore throat, and fatigue** you should let your supervisor know and stay home.

Employees affected by COVID-19 (exhibiting symptoms, self-quarantined based on medical provider recommendation, diagnosed with COVID-19, or caring for dependent children due to school or day care closure) **that are unable to work from home** will be eligible to use sick, vacation or compensatory available paid leave . In addition, the employee may be eligible for protected leave under federal Act HR6201, which will be effective on April 2. Until then, in the event an employee has no paid leave available, the employee will be allowed to borrow up to ten days of sick leave, to be paid back with future credits. Employees may also choose to use unpaid leave in lieu of their available paid leaves.

Employees that choose to voluntarily self-isolate and **NOT** work from home may choose to use unpaid leave, available vacation or compensatory time.

**Time Reporting**

A federal act was passed that directs some employers to provide additional paid sick leave and family medical leave for specific COVID 19 related reasons. That act does not go into place until April. Until then, employees that are unable to work will need to use available paid leave time, or may choose to use unpaid leave.

We are asking departments to submit daily reports on employees that are unable to work that day, for ANY reason. This will allow us to assess daily leave trends amongst county employees and make workforce decisions. When reporting that you are unable to work, please be specific. Examples: Unable to work due to a dentist appointment, on vacation, unable to work due to sickness (be specific if COVID or non-COVID), healthy but taking a comp day. We need to know the true reason for not working, not the type of pay you are requesting.

**WHAT CAN YOU DO?**

**Social Distancing**

Social distancing is a concept many of us aren't familiar with. What it means is that we remain out of congregate settings, avoid mass gatherings, and maintain a distance (approximately 6 feet) away from others. It's encouraged that you follow this guideline as much as possible. Social distancing decreases the likelihood of community spread. Community spread means

individuals have been infected with the virus, including some who are not sure how or where they became infected.

**Wash your hands, don't touch your face, don't come to work if you are sick, communicate your travel plans, and be patient and kind to others.**

While the maintenance department is cleaning commonly touched areas multiple times each day, we can all pitch in to help with keeping areas clean. Wash your hands after you've touched surfaces in common areas.

#### **What to do**

If you believe you have been exposed to COVID19 please contact your medical provider or the Bayfield County Health Department immediately for the latest recommendations.

#### **Local Contacts:**

##### ***MEMORIAL MEDICAL CENTER:***

You can get tested for the novel coronavirus that causes COVID-19 at your doctor's office or at the hospital, however; currently, only people who meet certain criteria will be tested. Criteria include: symptoms such as fever, cough or shortness of breath, and likely or known exposure to a person with COVID-2019. If you think you meet these criteria and need to be tested, call ahead to your doctor's office to determine your next steps. If you are not having any symptoms or if you are having symptoms but no exposure, then you would not be tested at this time.

If you do not have a primary care provider, please call any of the local primary care clinics:

**Essentia Health – Ashland Clinic: (715) 685-7500**

**NorthLakes Community Clinic: (715) 685-2200**

**Main Street Clinic: (715) 682-5601**

**St. Luke's Chequamegon Clinic: (715) 685-6600**

**For Teamster Health AND State of Wisconsin Health Plan members, use  
1-800-Teladoc (835-2362) or [Teladoc.com](http://Teladoc.com)**

Participants covered under the State of Wisconsin Group Health Insurance Program should visit the new ETF webpage, [Your Health Benefits and COVID-19](#), for answers to commonly asked questions from members and employers.

We will provide additional information and policy changes as the situation evolves. Thank you for being dedicated to your co-workers and the residents of Bayfield County. By working together, we can diminish the impact of COVID-19.