



County COVID-19 Action Plan: Preparing Your County to Slow the Spread of Coronavirus

Counties are required by State Law to have a Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP), which should be updated regularly. Ideally, these plans should follow Incident Command System (ICS) protocols. Since these plans are unique to how each county is organized, your best course of actions is to use them during this COVID-19 incident.

Also, to comply with staffing reductions under Executive Order 202.4, counties should use their Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP).

In the absence of a CEMP, or if your CEMP is outdated, below are emergency response guidelines which may be helpful to you.

1. Executive (Chair or County Exec) declares a local state of emergency.
 - a. Purpose:
 - i. Suspend local law that would inhibit emergency response (e.g. notice requirements).
 - ii. Invoke emergency powers regarding procurement and allocation of resources.
 - iii. Places Executive in position of incident command.
 - b. Examples are available on <https://www.nysac.org/health>.
2. Initiate a full or limited activation of your Emergency Operations Center (EOC) to coordinate response. In the absence of an EOC, create an emergency management team to be comprised of the following individuals:
 - i. Chair or Executive, with County manager;
 - ii. Attorney;
 - iii. Emergency management director;
 - iv. Public health director;
 - v. Public health emergency response coordinator;
 - vi. Office of Aging director;
 - vii. DSS commissioner;
 - viii. Communications/Public Information director;
 - ix. Finance department/purchasing officer;
 - x. Fire Coordinator;
 - xi. EMS Coordinator;
 - xii. Sheriff and City and State law enforcement; and
 - xiii. 911 Director.

- b. This group should:
 - i. Meet at least daily;
 - ii. Coordinate response;
 - iii. Provide answers to people in the field;
 - iv. Communicate liability/risks;
 - v. Communicate with and monitor media and direct rumor control;
and
 - vi. Be available 24/7.
3. Schedule a meeting with department heads.
 - a. To discuss concerns, what they can bring to the table, and how functions/services will need to change.
 - b. To develop staff reduction plans, per Executive Order 202.4.
 - c. Initiate Continuity of Operations Plans (COOP).
4. Start tracking expenses.
 - a. Necessary for state/federal reimbursement.
 - b. Whether using paper or electronic procurement system, order all COVID purchases to be marked with keyword COVID or otherwise coded.
 - c. Create and fund a COVID budgetary account to draw on.
5. Inventory the assets available to respond to an emergency.
 - a. Assets include trained people, as well as equipment.
 - b. Consider both county and municipal resources (e.g. personnel, equipment), as well as private and non-profit resources, such as first responder and health care resources.
 - c. Document what the asset is, who owns it, where it is located, and a point of contact.
 - d. Develop plan for procuring equipment and supplies you will need.
6. Prepare a technological plan.
 - a. Set up an emergency operations center (EOC) with computers, printers, etc. if you don't have one.
 - b. Provide non-essential employees with the technology needed to work from home.
7. Create an up-to-date telephone registry.
 - a. This should include anyone you may need to contact - railroads, utilities, state agencies, etc.
 - b. Ideally, this exists BEFORE any incident occurred and is part of your CEMP.
8. Update registry of vulnerable residents.
9. Develop an emergency communication plan.
 - a. Develop a crisis communication program for keeping the media and the public up to date with the latest information about the outbreak in your community. NYSAC is releasing a crisis communication report that counties can use to help guide its communication strategy.
 - b. Every county should also have a system for reverse 9-1-1 communication.

- c. Control the messaging. Allow departments to use only approved official content.
 - d. Develop standardized Situation Report to be updated regularly and as needed as situation changes. Share the SitRep with department heads, county elected officials, local chief elected, state and federal reps.
 - e. Develop standardized CONFIDENTIAL Addendum to the SitRep to share confidential info (e.g. addresses of quarantined/isolated individuals, non-public contact numbers, etc.) only with need-to-know agencies.
 - f. Establish hotline and rumor control phone bank to provide accurate information to public.
 - g. Utilize print, broadcast, and social media. For social distancing purposes, discourage the use of in-person press conferences.
10. Develop plan to communicate daily with the State/Governor.
 11. Assign personnel to monitor issuance of new Executive Orders.
 12. Be aware of revenue streams and their vulnerability.
 - a. Sales tax receipts will plummet.
 - b. Do you keep the DMV open for revenue?
 - c. How will the county make payroll?
 13. Prepare to enforce state/regional restrictions on mass gatherings, restaurants, bars, gyms, etc.
 14. Identify mass quarantine facilities.
 - a. Potential to partner with colleges after students are sent home.
 - b. Motels.
 - c. Off-season migrant housing.
 15. Identify emergency vs. non-emergency services/personnel.
 - a. Determine who can legally be furloughed.
 - b. Determine which services must legally be provided during an emergency and which staff can be reassigned.
 16. Anticipate social services challenges.
 - a. Congregate meals for seniors will need to be home delivered.
 - b. Schools may need help feeding students.