

Baranof Island Housing Authority



Infectious Disease Pandemic and Outbreak Policy

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I. PURPOSE

The Baranof Island Housing Authority (BIHA) seeks to establish an Infectious Disease Pandemic and Outbreak Policy to ensure the safety and health of BIHA tenants, clients, Board members, and staff. The Board of Commissioners authorizes the Executive Director (E.D.) to implement the provisions of this Policy.

II. POLICY STATEMENT

A. RESPONSIBILITY

BIHA is responsible for protecting staff administering, applicants requesting, and tenants receiving services through BIHA programs and residences. To protect the safety and health of BIHA staff and clients, BIHA shall utilize the following policy to ensure best efforts against an infectious disease pandemic and outbreak as proclaimed by the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and recognized by the State of Alaska Proclamation.

BIHA staff must be diligent in observing visible symptoms of infections/diseases of BIHA staff and clients asking fact-finding questions. Staff must take preventive action and err on the side of caution if a person's condition is questionable. Where serious infection or communicable disease is suspected, staff are to immediately refer the individual to medical services and follow guidelines provided by the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and other authoritative sources. Where the infection/disease is determined to be a reduced risk, staff are to provide clear instructions to the individual about any restrictions that may be temporarily implemented to reduce the spread of disease (e.g., flu, colds).

At no point is staff to put any individual at risk by administering services inside BIHA facilities. Staff are to exercise extreme caution and err on the side of protection where a person has a severely compromised immune system (e.g., persons living with HIV/AIDS, diabetes, etc.). Staff are to make sure that all symptoms and actions are clearly documented and communicated to medical professionals.

B. INTERPRETATION

- Whenever used throughout this policy, Executive Director (E.D.) shall mean the Executive Director or designee.
- Whenever used throughout this policy, "applicant" shall mean a family or an individual who applies or expresses an intent to apply for housing assistance.
- The use of client may refer to a renter or a homebuyer.

- Whenever used throughout this policy, unless the context shall otherwise provide, the singular number shall include the plural, the plural the singular, and the use of any gender shall include all genders.
- All references to days in these policies shall mean calendar days, unless specifically stated otherwise.

III. FEDERAL AND STATE GUIDELINES

BIHA recognizes all federal and state guidelines related to procedures meant to protect businesses, agencies, and individuals against the spread of an infectious disease pandemic and outbreak. The procedures outlined in this policy are intended to supplement federal and state guidelines as they relate to an infectious disease pandemic and outbreak.

IV. STAFF ATTESTATION

Before entering BIHA facilities, employees will be required to fulfill an employee document attesting to the physical symptoms and contacts of BIHA staff. The attestation form will be made available to staff via an online submission form or paper form (Appendix A – Example Attestation Form) before staff are allowed to enter a BIHA facility.

V. ACTIVATION LEVELS

A. INITIATION OF ACTIVATION LEVELS

BIHA will initiate activation levels based on the state and nature of the infectious disease pandemic. BIHA's E.D. will issue a statement regarding the appropriate risk levels and mitigation efforts to be implemented by the BIHA based on the CDC guidance, state or local mandates.

B. OVERVIEW OF LEVELS

Each activation level builds upon existing guidelines with the purpose of coordinating an appropriate response and protocols. Activation levels and their respective activation scenarios are pandemic specific, but typical levels are as follows:

1. Level 1: CDC issues precautionary message but no confirmed cases in the state or community are reported.
2. Level 2: Confirmed case(s) in Sitka or surrounding communities.

3. Level 3: Substantial increase in the number of confirmed cases as identified by an authoritative source, such as CDC guidance, state or local mandates.

VI. ACTIVATION PROTOCOLS

A. ACTIVATION LEVEL I

Under Activation Level I, the following action must be completed by BIHA staff as directed by the E.D.

1. Identify and assign roles and duties to staff.
2. Train staff on the application of the Infectious Disease Pandemic and Outbreak Policy and any implementation procedures
3. Provide staff with names and contact information for key individuals and applicable agencies who will be primary points of contact for the infectious disease and pandemic response.
4. Identify first responders for BIHA staff and tenants (e.g., SEARHC, law enforcement, paramedic/EMT)
5. Establish procedural protocols and guidance regarding implementation,
6. Inventory Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and other applicable equipment.
7. Order PPE to meet the needs of staff and keep an up-to-date inventory to ensure PPE is available.
8. Review quarantine protocols and self-quarantine protocols based on CDC information.

B. ACTIVATION LEVEL II

Under Activation Level II, the following must be completed:

1. The ED and key staff will meet regularly.
2. The ED maintains the option of accelerating any of the strategies or revising the levels of activation at any time depending on circumstances.
3. Review duties of staff periodically, as needed.
4. Staff shall follow contagious outbreak protocols provided by the CDC.

5. Update names and contact information for key individuals who will be primary points of contact for the contagious outbreak response.
6. Stay current on contagious outbreak information and share with staff.
7. Ensure that key individuals participate regularly in scheduled calls and briefings, as needed, with local, state, and federal agencies and disseminate information to BIHA staff and officials and participants.
8. Update first responders list (e.g., SEARHC, law enforcement, paramedic/EMT), and establish protocols and guidance.
9. Update quarantine protocols and self-quarantine protocols based on latest CDC information.

C. ACTIVATION LEVEL III

Under Activation Level III, the following must be completed:

1. Schedule special Board meetings by teleconference, if needed.
2. Ensure more frequent communications as needed.
3. The E.D. maintains the option of accelerating any of the strategies or revising the levels of activation at any time depending on the circumstances.
4. Update and follow the contagious outbreak protocol based on CDC information.
5. Update names and contact information for key individuals who will be primary points of contact for the contagious outbreak response.
6. Stay current on contagious outbreak information and share with task force.
7. Ensure that key individual participate regularly in scheduled calls with local, state and federal agencies and disseminate information to BIHA staff and officials and participants.
8. Update first responders list (e.g., SEARHC, law enforcement, paramedic/EMT), and establish protocol and guidance.

VII. PREVENTION EFFORTS

The following procedures shall be recognized at all activation levels and must be implemented and adhered to daily:

1. All sick employees must stay home.
2. All staff and individuals entering and residing in a BIHA facilities must wear facial coverings.
3. All staff and individuals in BIHA facilities must always recognize safe social-distancing protocol (six-feet apart), or as recommended or revised by authoritative sources.
4. Masks and gloves for high contact locations will be provided for clients and staff to use.
5. All staff are to wash and sanitize hands frequently after, but not limited to, the following actions:
 - a. Handling money;
 - b. After a respiratory action (e.g. coughing, sneezing, etc.);
 - c. Before and after in-person meetings;
 - d. Touching common surfaces (e.g. doorknobs, public counters, etc.); or
 - e. Using the bathroom.
6. Sanitation and hand washing reminder signs are to be posted in kitchens, washrooms, and other areas deemed appropriate.
7. All regularly used surfaces shall be disinfected at the beginning or end of each day and after each use or contact.
8. Frequently touched surfaces are to be routinely cleaned, and public surfaces and objects are to be cleaned before and after each use.
9. Public electronic devices are to be covered with a wipeable surface (e.g., plastic cling wrap) and cleaned using alcohol-based wipes or sprays containing at least 70% alcohol.
10. Staff will be required to clean and disinfect their working area prior to leaving their area or office at the end of the day.

In the event that the State or local government issues a command requiring additional protocols, all BIHA offices will comply and respond accordingly.

VIII. OPERATIONAL PROTOCOLS

A. GENERAL

At all levels of activation, the E.D or his designee shall communicate to the Board of Commissioners about the Infectious Disease Pandemic and Outbreak Policy and Procedure, as well as the current level of activation. Managers will communicate down to their respective departments regarding protocol plans, departmental specific staffing issues, risk mitigation, and other communication. Finally, the E.D. shall be the point of contact for all communication with public officials.

B. ADMISSIONS & OCCUPANCY

Activation Level I and II

New application services will be curtailed. During this period, BIHA will try to assist clients to the extent feasible through electronic or written means. Additionally, the following new application services will be modified:

1. Resident showings will be limited to no more than 2 persons, using self-distancing precautions.
2. Necessary original documents must be in a designated drop-box for processing. Staff, while wearing personal protective gear, will process documents at least 24 hours after drop-off.
3. Rental agreements will be sent electronically or by mail, followed up with phone conversations to review the agreement and other pertinent documents.
4. Move-in/move-out inspections will be limited to the primary lease holder and a member of the BIHA staff.
5. Lease enforcement/complaints can be followed up via emails, text or phone-calls.

Activation Level III

Activation Level III will continue the same guidelines as Activation Level I and II, except for the following:

1. Resident showings will be at the discretion of BIHA management.

2. Drop-box services are canceled until risk of contagious outbreak is reduced, BIHA will assist clients to the extent feasible through electronic or written means.
3. Documents will be processed at least 48 hours after received.

C. PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY; ANNUAL/INTERIM RECERTIFICATIONS

BIHA will use a household/s previous interim/annual action for income and asset information for the household's next annual recertification. Household's experiencing a decrease in their income since the last action, must notify the BIHA staff member responsible for recertification to report the change. BIHA staff will do everything feasible to verify the decrease in income through third party sources, such as fax, email, or scanned documents. Tenant's may drop off necessary documents in BIHA drop boxes.

D. INSPECTIONS

Under Activation Levels I and II, inspections will be carried out by two individuals: the primary lease holder/applicant and a member of the BIHA staff. Under Activation Level III, inspections will be approved at the discretion of management, and inspections may be delayed until after the risk to exposure is diminished. At all levels, inspectors will use precaution and use personal protective gear if an inspection is conducted.

Conditions that may affect inspections include government restrictions, availability of staff, regulatory guidance, and known conditions of occupants or units.

E. MAINTENANCE

At all levels, BIHA will implement the following guidelines for maintenance:

1. BIHA will use extreme caution when required to perform work in common areas.
2. Maintenance will process only critical and emergency work orders.
3. Sick employees must stay at home.
4. Employees will exercise extreme caution when entering a unit and are required to use proper protective clothing, respirators, gloves, face masks, eye protection and other protective gear before entering a unit.
5. Increased cleaning and disinfecting will take place in areas with heavy pedestrian traffic and on surfaces which come into frequent contact to humans, doors, handrails, elevator buttons, light switches for example should be cleaned once a day.

6. Vacant unit turn-out will follow an increased hygienic cleaning as recommended by CDC.
7. Maintenance shall review PPE inventory to ensure adequate supplies are in place should there be a disruption of the supply chain. This should include adequate cleaning supplies as well as any material or equipment necessary for the safe operations of our facilities.

F. FINANCIAL

At all Activation Levels, BIHA will continue to receive and make payments for goods and services provided or delivered. Tenants are expected to continue to make rent and utility payments in a timely fashion. Payments can be delivered through the mail, at a rental drop box (discontinued at Activation Level III), or through direct deposit.

Tenants should notify BIHA staff regarding difficulty making payments for rent and/or utilities. BIHA will make every effort to work with tenants on a corrective payment plan, and/or direct tenants to emergency assistance services offered by BIHA or other sources, if available.

G. REVENUE

BIHA staff, to the extent possible, shall make every effort to record revenues received and process deposits as needed. In Activation Levels I, II and III, payments will be received via mail, drop-box, and direct deposit.

H. ACCOUNTS PAYABLE

BIHA managers will keep expense receipts and use special contagious outbreak coding for accounts payable. BIHA staff will continue to process accounts payable on a modified schedule and reach out to vendors informing them of when to expect payment.

I. TELEWORK

Under all Activation Levels, telework is recommended. If feasible, the following telework guidelines apply:

1. BIHA will follow CDC guidance in response to the Contagious Outbreak.
2. Staff members who are at a heightened risk of serious illness may be required to work from home.
3. Staff members with a vulnerable household member will be encouraged to work from home.
4. BIHA managers will help coordinate employee schedules and work with IT and compliance to establish a home workstation.
5. All department heads are instructed to work to accommodate such requests within the regulatory restrictions placed on the organization.
6. IT department may elect to make laptops and other office equipment available for work at home, subject to the availability of equipment and/or funds.

7. BIHA may elect to provide computer access through a VPN connection in accordance with prescribed protocols established by IT resources.
8. Maintenance capabilities may be limited. Any maintenance work will be conducted as follows:
 - a. BIHA's phone will be forwarded to staff and repair requests forwarded to Maintenance;
 - b. Maintenance staff will make only urgent repairs;
 - c. Any staff required to perform work at any of the properties shall always wear proper protection and utilize safe work practices;
 - d. No unauthorized personal protection gear is allowed; and
 - e. Maintenance staff must to closely monitor their health and report any symptoms.

J. TRAVEL AND TRAINING

Under all activation levels, travel is canceled unless urgent and approved by the E.D. If required, traveling employees will be required to quarantine for the period defined by the CDC. Staff who travel for personal reasons must quarantine for 14 days or test negative before returning to work, or follow modified, established requirements published by authoritative sources.

IX. COMMUNICATION

A. GENERAL

Regardless of activation level, BIHA will communicate clearly and effectively with employees, residents, government officials and the public in a timely manner. Various forms of communication will be utilized including but not limited to flyers, emails, letters, and web announcements. Finally, BIHA will posts signs at all facility doors notifying visitors of any changes in operation.

B. EMPLOYEES

Immediate employee communication will be limited at all activation levels to text and emails. Changes in policies and procedures will done in writing to remove any confusion or to limit misinterpretations. Staff meetings shall be hosted virtually whenever possible.

C. RESIDENTS/TENANTS

Communications with residents/tenants will be limited to phone calls, letters, emails and website announcement. In-person communication shall be limited. Written communication will include basic information regarding the infectious disease and pandemic including preventive measures regarding spread and protection against infection.

D. VENDORS

Vendors shall be notified via emails and/or phone of any change to the work environment, or if any apartments, buildings, or neighborhoods undergo quarantine. At levels II and III, urgent work orders requiring immediate attention in an area of concern will be disclosed, and BIHA will implement a plan to complete urgent work orders.

All activation levels, deliveries shall be limited to the outside entry way. If possible, packages may be disinfected or permitted to sit more than 24 hours before processing.

E. GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS

BIHA will work closely with state and local officials to monitor the contagious outbreak and report any known instances of the virus that have affected staff. When government decrees are issued, BIHA will work to communicate these directives to residents/tenants and staff. The E.D. shall be the point of contact for all communication with public officials.

F. INCIDENT RESPONSE

In the event an employee or tenant has contracted the contagion, the task force should meet, and the E.D. or his/her designee shall activate the appropriate level of response.

X. STAFF INFECTION

In the event a BIHA staff member becomes sick or interacts with an infected individual, the following procedures must be followed.

1. The staff member will be sent home.
2. BIHA staff and designated contract tracers will investigate all close contacts with the infected staff member and notify all close contacts via available contact information.

3. The staff member's designated work area will be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected.
4. The staff member will remain in quarantine and away from BIHA facilities for the designated contagious period of the infectious disease.
5. If available, the staff member will be required to test negative for the infection until returning to the work facility.
6. If necessary and available, the staff member may work remotely if deemed capable by a medical health professional.
7. BIHA will notify the public of ongoing possible and positive infections within their facilities, but BIHA will not make private information of staff public.

XI. CLIENT INFECTION

In the event a BIHA client becomes sick or interacts with an infected individual, the following procedures must be followed.

1. Tenants will be required to quarantine in their residence for the designated contagious period of the infectious disease. If possible, the infected client should self-isolate in a designated room in the dwelling and should always wear a mask.
2. All occupants will be required to self-isolate within the residency, and they are advised to wear a mask within the residency.
3. Tenants are advised to contact BIHA staff regarding emergency assistance eligibility.
4. Non-occupants are not permitted inside the dwelling during the self-isolation period.
5. Tenants should continue to use 911 emergency services, if needed.
6. Communication with BIHA staff will be limited to direct mail, email, telephones, and door-to-door letter notifications.
7. Maintenance and direct services from BIHA staff will be restricted to critical and emergency work orders only.

XII. DELIVERED GOODS

Delivered goods to tenants and BIHA staff will continue to be allowed. In all cases, delivered goods should be left at the door of the dwelling or BIHA facility. At the direction of tenants, BIHA staff managing their residency will accept delivered goods on their behalf, but those goods will be subject to a quarantine period of at least 24 hours before delivered to the door of a Participant's dwelling.

XIII. APPENDIX A

Attestation Form – EXAMPLE ONLY (2 pages)

CAREFULLY REVIEW EACH SYMPTOM BELOW AND RESPOND HONESTLY.

IF YOU HAVE ANY SYMPTOM BELOW – DO NOT RETURN TO OR ENTER YOUR BIHA WORKPLACE.

In the last 14 days, or since your last visit to a BIHA location, have you experienced one or more of the symptoms listed below?

Employee Self-Attestation:

- A temperature at or above 100.4 degrees or have reason to be concerned you may be developing a fever?
- A new cough that you cannot attribute to another health condition?
- A new sore throat that you cannot attribute to another health condition?
- New shortness of breath or difficulty breathing that you cannot attribute to another health condition?
- New muscle aches or pains that you cannot attribute to another health condition or a specific activity such as physical exercise?
- New loss of taste or smell that you cannot attribute to another health condition?
- Chills that you cannot attribute to another health condition?
- Had close contact, without the use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to include an approved fit tested respirator (**a face covering is not considered PPE**), with someone who is currently sick with suspected infectious disease symptoms or confirmed infectious disease? (Note: Close contact is defined as within 6 feet for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period).
- Received a positive test result/diagnosis, or are you currently suspected to have an infectious disease?

This list is not an exhaustive list of all symptoms. Other less common symptoms have been reported, including gastrointestinal symptoms such as nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea. Visit the [Center for Disease Control](https://www.cdc.gov) (CDC) or Alaska Department of Health and Social Services website for additional information.

If you answered “yes” to one or more of the above questions:

- You must not report to a BIHA work location*. If you begin experiencing one or more symptoms while at your work location you are to contact your supervisor remotely, by phone or electronic mail. You are to leave work while maintaining 6 feet of distance between you and others.
- Contact your health care provider for medical guidance.

Employee Attestation

I attest, I have read the above statement and prior to coming to a BIHA Work location on today's date, I do not have any of the above symptoms/conditions.

I have read the above statement and am unable to attest as outlined above. I acknowledge I am not to report to my BIHA work location and will follow my department call in procedures.

If you are unable to attest as outlined above, do not report to the BIHA work location, follow your department call in procedures and contact your health care provider.

I, _____, attest to the above.

XIV. 'COVID-19 SPECIFIC POLICY

DEFINITIONS

COVID-19 disease (coronavirus disease 2019) (SARS_COV-2) – a potentially lethal, contagious respiratory disease caused by the Coronavirus 2019 virus that can initially infect the nose, throat, lungs, and digestive system and can result in respiratory failure, cardiac injury, strokes, pulmonary emboli, encephalopathy, and shock. It is spread via respiratory droplets, contaminated surfaces and inhalation of airborne particles.

COVID-19 Pandemic – the COVID-19 outbreak occurring worldwide, over a very wide area, crossing international boundaries and affecting a large number of people, as declared by the U.S. government.

COVID-19 Vaccination – an FDA approved product that stimulates a persons immune system to produce immunity to the COVID-19 virus, protecting the person from COVID-19 disease.

EMPLOYEE COVID-19 VACCINATION INCENTIVE PROGRAM

1. BIHA shall offer a \$300 cash incentive to employees who can provide evidence of receiving the COVID-19 vaccination (single-shot or double-shot vaccine).
2. COVID-19 vaccination is optional at BIHA and not a required condition of employment.
3. An employee shall be considered fully vaccinated 14 days after the date of receiving the first shot of a single-shot vaccination or the second shot of a double-shot vaccination.
4. Employees can apply for the incentive by completing a COVID-19 vaccination Incentive Program registration form and providing documentation of vaccination to the Executive Director.
5. Eligible employees may apply only once for the COVID-19 vaccination incentive.