



COVID-19 Preparedness Plan for Northeast Residence, Inc.

Created: **June 29, 2020**

Last Updated: **August 11, 2020**

Northeast Residence Inc. (NER) is committed to providing a safe and healthy workplace for all our employees and people we support. To ensure everyone's health and safety, we have developed the following COVID-19 Preparedness Plan in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. All NER employees are responsible for implementing this plan. Our goal is to mitigate the potential for transmission of COVID-19 in our workplaces and communities, and that requires full cooperation among our employees, management and people we support. Only through this cooperative effort can we establish and maintain the safety and health of our employees, people we support, and our workplaces.

Our employees are our heroes. We simply can't provide support for the people living in our homes without healthy employees. NER takes the safety and health of our employees seriously. Our COVID-19 Preparedness Plan follows Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) guidelines, federal OSHA standards related to COVID-19, and Executive Orders issued by Governor Walz (<https://mn.gov/governor/news/executiveorders.jsp>). This plan addresses:

- hygiene and respiratory etiquette;
- controls for social distancing;
- cleaning, disinfecting, decontamination and ventilation;
- prompt identification and isolation of sick persons;
- communications that will be provided to managers and employees; and
- management and supervision necessary to ensure effective implementation of the plan.

Screening and policies for employees exhibiting signs and symptoms of COVID-19

Employees have been informed of signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and are encouraged to self-monitor for onset of symptoms. The following policies and procedures are being implemented to assess employees' health status prior to entering the workplace and for employees to report when they are sick or experiencing symptoms.

1. All visitors and employees will be asked to complete the NER Visitor and Employee Health Screening Checklist upon entering an NER facility. You can download the checklist (<https://www.nerinc.org/media/61040/NER-Health-Screening-Checklist.pdf>) for printing.
 - a. Employees presenting for a work shift should complete the NER Visitor and Employee Health Screening Checklist at the beginning of the shift and email a picture of the completed checklist to their supervisor. If the staff member does not have access to a smart phone, they should call their supervisor and tell them how many of the boxes they checked "Yes". (If any boxes are checked "Yes", the employee should be told to leave NER facilities, stay away from people, and consult their healthcare provider. The immediate supervisor or back-up management staff will report this information to Human Resources.

Employees working a split shift (i.e., 2 different time blocks in a single day) must complete a new checklist at the beginning of each shift and send it to their supervisors.

Staff who routinely visit multiple NER sites during a single shift are not required to complete a Health Screening Checklist for each site they visit. They should only complete a single checklist at the beginning of their shift.

We want to prevent supervisor's phones from unnecessarily disturbing them during their non-work hours. For staff who begin shifts before 8am or after 5pm, please complete a checklist and do the following:

- i. If you have checked "Yes" in any of the boxes (indicating you have at least one symptom), please take a picture of your completed checklist, text that document to your supervisor and then call them. You will not be permitted to work your shift, and they will need to find a replacement. Human Resources will be notified by the immediate supervisor.
 - ii. If you have not checked "Yes" in any of the boxes, please email the checklist to your supervisor.
 - b. Visitors (i.e., anyone who is not NER staff) should complete the NER Visitor and Employee Health Screening Checklist and turn that form in to either the employee with whom they are meeting, or a supervisor/manager at the site. If the person entering the facility checks "Yes" to any item on the checklist, the employee to whom they turned in their form will inform them that they are not permitted to enter the facility, advise them to go home, stay away from people, and consult their healthcare provider.
2. If an employee is feeling sick or otherwise experiencing symptoms listed on the checklist while they are at home, they are to report to their supervisor that they are sick and must stay home. Their supervisor must report this illness to Human Resources.
3. If an employee is feeling sick or otherwise experiencing symptoms listed on the checklist while they are at work, they are to do the following in order:
 - a. The symptomatic employee should wear a mask at all times and maintain a minimum of 6' social distance whenever possible.
 - b. The symptomatic employee should notify their supervisor immediately. If the supervisor isn't available, the employee should contact the back-up supervisor or the supervisor's supervisor. The supervisor will then notify Human Resources of the employee's illness and identify the person to replace the symptomatic employee. If the symptomatic employee is working at a home, the site Supervisor/Program Coordinator may be needed to fill-in for the symptomatic employee. If the site Supervisor/Program Coordinator isn't available, the Program Manager will need to fill-in themselves or find someone else to fill in.
 - c. If a replacement employee is required immediately to ensure the ongoing safety of people we support, the symptomatic employee should isolate themselves from others as much as possible until replacement staff arrives.
 - d. The symptomatic employee should go home and seek appropriate medical care.
4. All completed NER Visitor and Employee Health Screening Checklists must be stored in a secure (locked) location at the site where it was submitted, or on a secure electronic device.

NER has implemented leave policies that promote employees staying at home when they are sick, when household members are sick, or when required by a health care provider to isolate or quarantine themselves or a member of their household. Accommodations for employees with underlying medical conditions or who have household members with underlying health conditions have been implemented. Please refer to the “Time Off/Leaves of Absence” section of the 2020 Northeast Residence, Inc. Employee Handbook for details.

If Human Resources learns an NER employee has tested positive for COVID-19, Human Resources will notify employees who have been in contact with the infected employee to tell them about their exposure and conduct an interview to assess the risk associated with the exposure (see [Interview Guide](#)). All employees who had prolonged close contact (less than 6 feet apart for more than 10 min per day) with a positively tested person within the last 48 hours will be asked to leave the site as well and will only be permitted to return to work after they have self-monitored for symptoms of COVID-19 for 14 days and are symptom free. The site Supervisor/Program Coordinator or Program Manager (whoever is available) will contact Minnesota Department of Health or 651-201-5414 MN Department of Human Services and follow their recommendations.

In addition, a policy has been implemented to protect the privacy of workers’ health status and health information. NER will follow all state and federal laws and/ or regulations regarding HIPAA, ADA and personnel privacy. NER will follow all recommendations by the CDC and OSHA regarding a safe and healthy workplace.

Handwashing

Basic infection prevention measures are always being implemented at our workplaces. Employees are instructed to wash their hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water frequently throughout the day, but especially at the beginning and end of their shift, prior to any mealtimes and after using the toilet.

All people we support and visitors to NER facilities will be required to wash or sanitize their hands prior to or immediately upon entering the facility. Hand-sanitizer dispensers (that use sanitizers of greater than 60% alcohol) are located at NER facilities in entrances and/or frequently used spaces so they can be used for hand hygiene in place of soap and water, as long as hands are not visibly soiled.

Staff at each NER home is responsible for ensuring that the home has an adequate supply of hand sanitizer. The Office Coordinator is responsible for ensuring the corporate office has an adequate supply. If Supervisors/Program Coordinators are unable to acquire hand sanitizer, please notify Maintenance. The Office Coordinator working at NER’s front desk in the corporate office will check sanitizer supply levels in the welcome area and conference room, and ensure the dispensers are full and will order additional sanitizer as needed.

Respiratory etiquette: Masks, and covering your cough or sneeze

Pursuant to Governor Walz’s Executive Order 20-81 (https://mn.gov/governor/assets/EO%2020-81%20Final%20Filed_tcm1055-441323.pdf), NER employees are expected to wear face masks at all times, unless they have “a medical condition, mental health condition, or disability that makes it unreasonable for the individual to maintain a face covering.”, in which case they are encouraged to use alternative face protection such as face shields. NER will provide masks to any NER employee or visitor who doesn’t have one so they can interact safely at work. A box of masks is always available at the front reception desk in the corporate office.

People Supported statement for Preparedness Plan

- Employees will encourage and remind all people supported to wear a face mask, follow social distancing and sanitize/wash hands often when out in the community including going to day programs/work. This includes the NER Adult Day Care and Extended Day Program upon reopening.
- We recognize many people supported will not be able to follow the standard guidelines such as wearing a face mask or social distancing due to their disability.
- Upon returning to their home, employees will encourage each person supported to shower/bathe, put on clean clothing and launder clothes and cloth face mask worn that day.
- Twice daily people supported will have their temperature taken and recorded. Employees will monitor for symptoms of COVID-19 or other illness and notify the site Sup/PC and RN, as needed. All information will be documented by employees.

Employees, visitors and people supported are instructed to cover their mouth and nose with their sleeve or a tissue when coughing or sneezing and to avoid touching their face, in particular their mouth, nose and eyes, with their hands. They should dispose of tissues in provided trash receptacles and wash or sanitize their hands immediately afterward. Respiratory etiquette will be demonstrated on posters and supported by making tissues and trash receptacles available to all workers, customers and visitors. At least one poster demonstrating respiratory etiquette and instructions for social distancing will be displayed in each NER home, and in frequently used corporate office spaces. Poster can be downloaded here (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/2019-ncov-factsheet.pdf>) and printed.

Social distancing

Social distancing of six feet or more will be implemented and maintained between employees and visitors in the workplace through the following:

- Every employee must work remotely whenever it is possible to fulfill work responsibilities without physically being at the workplace. Employees are encouraged to use electronic means for communicating with NER colleagues, and processing documents electronically whenever possible in order to prevent trips to the office.
- When an employee’s work requires them to be physically present at an NER facility, social distancing guidelines should be followed. Employees are encouraged to stagger breaks to prevent kitchen areas from becoming too crowded.
- At no time will the corporate office host any gathering of people (e.g., meetings, conferences) indoors which exceed 50% of the room’s capacity or 10 people, whichever number is smaller. This means that during the COVID-19 pandemic and until further notice, the following maximum capacity limits should be observed for each of the following rooms:

Room Name	Max Capacity with 6' Social Distancing
248 Vadnais Heights Room (training)	30
248A Vadnais Heights Room (training) (½ Room)	15
248B Vadnais Heights Room (training) (½ Room)	15
203 White Bear Lake Room (board)	6
204 Little Canada Room	4

205 Roseville Room	4
206 Maplewood Room	6
228 Shoreview Room	2
237 Oakdale Room	2

- Collective gatherings of employees at any NER indoor location are restricted to 10 people or less.
- The corporate office elevator may not be used by more than 1 person at a time, unless 2 are required in order to attend to a person supported.
- Posters reminding visitors and people we support of the importance of social distancing and respiratory etiquette will be displayed in visible locations at all NER facilities. Poster can be downloaded here (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/2019-ncov-factsheet.pdf>) and printed.
- Staff meetings are canceled until further notice however written information will be provided along with monthly training forms (pre-typed) for staff to review information. Supervisors/Program Coordinators will be expected to make sure all staff review the written material and submit a MTR.
- Community meetings are canceled until further notice. Communities should hold meetings virtually.
- Management meetings are canceled until further notice.
- Orientation and related classes will continue face to face and will be held in the NER conference room which will be sanitized by the training hosts before and after each use. Social distancing will be maintained in the training sessions, masks will be worn by all participants, and COVID-19 room capacity restrictions will be observed.
- The corporate office will remain closed to unannounced visitors and locked until further notice. For those visitors with appointments and the staff serving them, the reception area at NER's corporate office has been outfitted with a plexiglass shield to prevent contamination. Hand sanitizers and disinfecting wipes are available in lobby area, conference room and mail room. Magazines, candy dishes and shared pens have all been removed from common areas. When a pen is required, a sanitized pen will be issued.
- Shared office supplies such as copiers, staplers, copier keypads will be cleaned and disinfected after each use by the person who used the equipment.
- At no point should employees ride in vehicles with other employees as part of performing work responsibilities, except when required to transport people we support.

Cleaning, Disinfection, and Ventilation

Regular housekeeping practices are being implemented, including routine cleaning and disinfecting of work surfaces, equipment, areas in the work environment, including restrooms, break rooms, lunchrooms, and meeting rooms. Frequent cleaning and disinfecting will be conducted in high-touch areas, such as phones, keyboards, touch screens, controls, door handles, elevator panels, railings, copy machines, credit card readers, delivery equipment, etc.

Corporate restrooms, training areas and meeting rooms are cleaned every week by a professional cleaning service.

Each employee will be responsible for cleaning their own workspaces. The maintenance team will remove garbage from the area in back of the corporate lobby and take it to the dumpster. The Office Coordinator will disinfect

areas in the lobby including shared equipment and door handles at the end of each day. Program staff will disinfect area where cubicles are located at the end of each workday. Human Resources and Finance will disinfect the back area of the corporate office building at the end of each workday. Staff will use disinfectant wipes and sprays. Adult Day Care and Extended Day will be responsible for cleaning and disinfecting their program areas/restrooms/elevator and railings on back stairs at the end of each workday.

Appropriate and effective cleaning and disinfectant supplies have been purchased and are available for use in accordance with product labels, safety data sheets and manufacturer specifications and are being used with required personal protective equipment for the product. The maximum amount of fresh air is being brought into the workplace, air recirculation is being limited and ventilation systems are being properly used and maintained. Steps are also being taken to minimize air flow blowing across people.

The corporate office has five mechanical rooms all of which have fresh air supplies of outside air. Twelve air conditioners provide dehumidification for the corporate office along with eight stand-alone dehumidifiers that are emptied up to twice daily. This generally maintains a healthy indoor relative humidity of less than 70%. The HVAC units are running 24/7. Ten of the units have the thicker pleated filters. All homes have a supply of outside air for their mechanical rooms. All homes have a central air conditioning system that provides dehumidification. Some homes have additional dehumidifiers. The homes furnaces have the thicker pleated filters where possible.

Communications

This COVID-19 Preparedness Plan was distributed via email to all NER employees and posted in communication logs as well as posted in a prominent area at NER homes and programs. Legal Representative/Families and Case Managers have been informed of the preparedness plan and directed to view it at the NER website. Additional communication will be provided on an ongoing basis to all employees via email and/or communication book, and new employees will be provided with the Preparedness Plan during their orientation. Instructions will be communicated to visitors about required hygiene practices at the front door of NER's corporate office and via NER's Web site. All people entering an NER facility Visitors will also be asked to not enter the NER facility if they are experiencing symptoms as indicated on the NER Health Screening Checklist (<https://www.nerinc.org/media/61040/NER-Health-Screening-Checklist.pdf>) or have contracted COVID-19. The staff member receiving the Checklist will instruct such individuals to go home per instructions on the checklist.

Managers and supervisors are to monitor how effective the program has been implemented by regularly checking-in with their employees to monitor compliance with this Preparedness Plan, capturing suggestions for improvements to the plan or questions and concerns about the plan and communicating them to Interim Executive Director Eric Schnell (eschnell@nerinc.org).

This updated COVID-19 Preparedness Plan has been certified by Northeast Residence Inc. management and was posted throughout the workplace on 7/31/2020. It will continue to be updated as necessary.

Certified by:

Eric Schnell

Interim Executive Director