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*Town of Duck Lake Pandemic Planning*

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**Preface:**

This document is designed to give guidance to the Town of Duck Lake in preparing and working through a pandemic.

**What is a Pandemic?**

A disease prevalent over a whole country or the world.

**Who is responsible for what?**

Many groups and agencies have a role to play in planning for and responding to a pandemic.

**International:**

The World Health Organization (WHO) watches for and tracks the emergence of new strains of influenza around the world. The WHO determines the level of pandemic alert and when to move from one phase to another. It will be the WHO that declares a pandemic on an international level and notifies federal health authorities.

**Federal:**

The federal government holds responsibility for the nationwide coordination of the pandemic influenza health response, including surveillance, international liaison, and coordination of the vaccine response (the way vaccines are obtained, allocated and funded).

It is up to the federal government to activate the Canadian Pandemic Influenza Plan once a pandemic is declared.

**Provincial:**

The province has the responsibility for coordinating pandemic influenza planning and mobilizing contingency plans and resources in the province. Health emergency response begins at the local (regional health authority) level.

The Saskatchewan Health Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Plan provides a framework for activities to be carried out in each pandemic period.

**Regional Health Authorities:**

Regional Health Authorities (RHAs) are responsible for planning the local response to a pandemic according to provincial and national guidelines. This includes planning health services delivery and working with local partners (e.g., emergency responders, mortuary services) in advance of a pandemic to ensure a coordinated response when pandemic influenza strikes.

Other key players that will be affected by pandemic influenza and are in various stages of contingency planning include:

- Municipalities
- Schools
- Health care professionals
- Non-government organizations
- Business sectors

**Municipalities:**

Key Roles:

- Keeping essential services operating;
- Ensure the safety of their councils and staff;
- Follow recommendation of the Health Region, Provincial and Federal Governments;
- Communications to the public (ensure a clear and correct message is sent);
- Communication with the Health Region and Province Government;
- Communication with local emergencies services;
- Offering support to the Health Region when requested;
- Monitoring staff and using resources where required;
- Surveillance;
- Work as a liaison with community and service groups
- Activation of Emergency Plan if requested by health region;
- Setting up an incident command center if requested by health regions;
- Providing meeting space if required;
- Providing facility space if required;
- Emergency and Response.

Town of Duck Lake  
Pandemic Operating Procedures

This document is intended to define the operational procedures for the Town of Duck Lake Council, management and staff in order to continue to provide essential services to the community in the event of a pandemic outbreak.

Incorporating recommendations from the Federal and Provincial governments, the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Municipal Affairs, this document is not intended to be an all-encompassing strategy to manage all aspects of a pandemic outbreak, but rather a framework for decision-making and managing the available resources of the municipal corporation during such times.

Specifically, this plan is designed to address the ways and means by which the Town of Duck Lake will continue to deliver essential services that residents will continue to require in the event that a pandemic outbreak causes high absenteeism rates among Town workers. Furthermore, it will provide guidelines for limiting the spread of infection amongst employees and those residents accessing Town services.

Depending on the severity of the pandemic, the Town may be required to deliver these services with 30% to 50% of employees unable to work due to illness, self quarantine or isolation, or the need to provide care to sick family members.

**1. Information for Employees**

The Town will educate employees on the signs and symptoms of contagions and precautions that should be taken to minimize the risk of contracting the virus.

If employees are required to travel for work purposes, travel will be postponed and rescheduled when it is safe to resume travelling.

If employees are travelling on their personal time they will be expected to follow all Federal and Provincial guidelines for self-isolation or self-quarantine.

**The Town will take measures to ensure that all staff practice proper distancing techniques recommended by any Federal or Provincial agency, with all other employees and residents. Depending on the severity of the pandemic, this will include working from home if possible and requiring that staff work separately as to ensure the safety of staff and residents.**

As the Town provides essential services, employees will be expected to report to work as usual unless they are ill, need to self isolate or self quarantine or need to provide care for family members. Any employees experiencing symptoms will be required to stay home and follow Federal and Provincial guidelines to self- isolate or self- quarantine to avoid exposing co-workers and residents . Employees reporting for work who are obviously displaying symptoms will be immediately instructed to go home and self isolate or self quarantine by their supervisor.

Information will be made available to all employees regarding proper etiquette for coughing and sneezing, proper hand-washing techniques and safe hygiene practices as recommended by provincial and regional health agencies.

**Depending on the severity of the pandemic employees may be restricted from interacting with the public unless an emergency situation deems it necessary.**

If possible, face masks will be made available to front-line employees dealing with the public directly.

All Town employees will be encouraged to consider getting vaccinated; however, vaccinations will not be mandatory. In cases where the costs are not covered by the Province, the Town will cover the costs of vaccination for Town employees.

Key messages to Town staff will be:

- Stay home if you are sick. If you report for work exhibiting symptoms, you will be sent home immediately by your supervisor
- Wash hands frequently and thoroughly and use hand sanitizer frequently
- Avoid touching your mouth and eyes
- Disinfect your work station at least twice daily (telephone, door handles, keyboards and commonly touched surfaces)
- Cough or sneeze into your sleeve
- Get a flu shot

## **2. Information for Town Residents**

The Town will make information available to residents as it is provided by the Saskatoon Health Region, the Ministry of Health and other Federal and Provincial agencies. Such information will be distributed as soon as it becomes available via brochures, posters, mail-outs, social media, the Town website, the Town sign or in the newspaper as directed by the agencies responsible and as the situation warrants.

The Town will make every effort to keep communications open and work with businesses, health care providers, clubs and associations, etc.

Communication with residents will identify the essential services that we will maintain as well as those that may be suspended. We will respectfully request everyone's cooperation, understanding and patience.

### **3. Defining "Essential Services"**

In determining what services are essential during a pandemic, consideration has been given to the general public and the services that they will require, as well as those services which will be necessary in order to maintain the health, welfare and the morale of the employees of the Town of Duck Lake.

There may be certain services that are not specifically identified as essential in this plan that the Town could continue to provide as staff resources allow. The ability to provide these services will need to be addressed as requests for them arise.

In summary, the key services that will need to be maintained to a greater or lesser degree are water, sewer, snow removal, rectifying icy conditions, garbage collection, fire and rescue, account processing and other administrative services.. Some of these services can be given lower priority depending on the time of year.

A more detailed analysis and plan for each of the identified essential services follows:

#### **3(a) Water**

The location of the water treatment plant is quite isolated and it will be a relatively simple matter to maintain a virtual quarantine of the facility. The water system can, if needed, be kept functioning through most situations with 1 employee. We currently have 1 certified worker who would be capable of doing this, one uncertified employee who would be capable of doing this with phone and email consultation with our certified employee and a third certified person who could be brought in on a contract basis. The Town also has neighboring communities with certified operators that may be contracted in emergency situations.

We deal with a number of suppliers for various chemicals and materials that are continually consumed in the regular operations of the water treatment system. As a pandemic will not be a surprise event, there is no need to stockpile massive quantities of these products "just in case". As news reports and information from regional, provincial, federal, and even international health agencies start to develop a clear picture of an impending pandemic, we may begin purchasing larger quantities of these products in the event that suppliers are unable to deliver product on a timely basis due to their own staff shortages.

The repair of water leaks will continue as usual, with required social distancing being

maintained, for as long as there are staff and other required resources available to isolate the leak and supply temporary water to residents.

During a pandemic, utility disconnections for utilities in arrears will be suspended for a period of time determined by Council.

### **3(b) Sewer**

The sanitary sewer system is generally very reliable and requires only a minimum of employee intervention to remain operational. All public works employees are familiar with the basic operations of the lift stations and are able to perform the necessary steps to address virtually all issues that arise.

During periods of pandemic, depending on severity, all general (preventive) sewer cleanings and maintenance may be suspended until such time as the threat of infection subsides.

Information requesting the public to refrain from flushing disinfecting wipes will be broadcast to the public.

### **3(c) Garbage Collection**

Currently the Town contracts Loraas for curbside waste and recycling. If LORAAS contracted services are suspended, the Town will work to devise a plan to ensure garbage collection needs are met.

Depending on the severity of the pandemic, the Landfill may be shut down to ensure the safety of the staff and residents.

### **3(d). Fire and rescue.**

Fire and Rescue services will continue as normal wherever possible.

All fire and rescue personnel will be expected to follow all Federal and Provincial regulations.

Depending on the severity of the pandemic, non-essential fire and rescue training may be postponed.

### **3(e) Front Office Services, Payroll and Accounts Processing, etc.**

In spite of a pandemic, all suppliers and vendors will continue to expect prompt payment of their accounts. Likewise, employees will also require that regular payroll continues to ensure that they are able to meet their own ongoing financial obligations.

Two office staff are cross-trained in these core functions and would be capable of performing them if it became necessary.

A great deal of the Town's revenue is collected through online payments and /or through mail service, and this would not be affected by a pandemic. Furthermore, the Town operates with a sufficient financial "cushion" of cash on hand that other forms of revenue collection could be delayed for a number of days, with the length of the delay being dependant on the time of year.

Staff handling cash during a pandemic must wash their hands frequently and are expected to use alcohol-based hand sanitizer after every transaction.

The communal pen that is usually available for customers to write their cheques will be removed. A supply of inexpensive pens will be available for customers who do not bring their own pen with them. Customers will keep the pen that is provided to them.

If possible, face masks will be made available to front-line employees dealing with the public directly.

Commonly-touched surfaces in the office should be cleaned and disinfected regularly. This includes keyboards, computer mice, telephones, drawer handles, etc. All door handles and the front counter surface must also be cleaned regularly and after anyone exhibiting symptoms has been in the office.

**In the event of a serious pandemic the office doors will remain closed and locked to the public. The Town may also allow "work from home" measures to ensure office staff stay safe and healthy.**

#### **4. Other Considerations**

Janitorial services will continue so long as the janitor is able to report for work. Nitrile gloves and face masks will be provided for the handling of garbage containers, particularly when garbage containers may contain used tissues.

Where feasible, the floor must be damp-mopped daily with a mixture of water and either disinfectant detergent or chlorine bleach. All other surfaces are to be regularly cleaned with a chlorine bleach and water solution (9 parts water to 1 part bleach)

If the janitor is unable to report to work, each staff member will be responsible to maintain the garbage receptacles and general cleanliness of their own workstation.

Appointments between Town staff and various stakeholders will continue; however, depending on the severity of the pandemic, staff may decline face-to-face meetings and conduct these meetings over the phone or online.

Essential face-to-face meetings (including council meetings) will still take place provided that appropriate social distancing measures are observed. Face masks may be used by the participants in such meetings where the pandemic is thought to be particularly dangerous or at the request of the attendees. If the Council Procedure Bylaw allows, Council meetings may be held through teleconferencing or other such means, as long as required public access is taken into account. Non-essential meetings will be postponed to a later date.

A pandemic Preparedness Kit will be made ready and stored at the Town Office. This kit will contain a supply of disinfectant wipes for commonly-touched surfaces, face masks, hand sanitizer and nitrile gloves. This kit will be reviewed preceding the onset of each annual flu season and in the event of a pandemic to ensure that sufficient quantities are stocked and that stale-dated products are replaced.

This Preparedness Plan will be reviewed in its entirety at least annually and both preceding and following a pandemic event to ensure the viability of the plan. This review will also help to ensure that it is in alignment with information that is provided from Federal, Provincial and health authorities and to incorporate any changes from lessons learned that are necessary to make certain it continues to serve its intended purpose.