Contagious Disease Policy

This policy supersedes any and all previous policies on contagious diseases.

Coverage

This policy applies to all employees, contractors and visitors and is intended to provide guidance for preventing the spread of contagious diseases in the work environment.

Definition

A contagious disease is a pathological process, the contributing agent of which may be passed on or carried from one person to another directly or indirectly. Contagious diseases include, but are not limited to, all diseases and conditions deemed reportable by the Center for Disease control in conjunction with local health officials.

Policy

It is the goal of NASDA, during any period of quarantine or infectious disease outbreak, to operate effectively and ensure that all essential services are continuously provided and that employees are safe within the workplace.

NASDA reserves the right to exclude any person with a contagious disease from the office, and other events, programs, and functions if NASDA decides that the restriction is in the best interest of the organization.

Persons shall not be so excluded solely on the basis that they have a contagious disease. Factors that will also be considered in determining whether to exclude persons with communicable diseases include:

- Whether the disease is contagious in ordinary public association,
- The nature of the disease, including the typical risks to other persons in good health, the public health situation in the region,
- The nature of the person's employment and whether NASDA is required by law to exclude persons with the disease.

NASDA reserves the right to require a written statement from a person's physician indicating that the person is no longer contagious.

NASDA has a commitment to treat all employees, contractors and visitors openly. This policy represents the intention to inform all people of NASDA’s community about the risk of exposure to communicable diseases. This policy also represents a commitment to strive to preserve and protect the confidentiality of employees, contractors and visitors who have developed a communicable disease. NASDA protects those affected from discriminatory or imposed isolation from the workforce community if possible. NASDA assumes that informed employees, contractors and visitors take necessary steps to protect themselves from infection.
Education

The major focus for protection from disease is to educate all employees. Education efforts may include alert messages, informational brochures, and discussions. Employees are informed of methods to avoid contracting the disease and are encouraged to take responsibility for their actions.

When a communicable disease approaches epidemic proportions or is judged to be a threat to the organization, NASDA initiates a program of education on that disease. Information makes employees aware of incidence rates of the disease, methods of transmission, known methods of prevention and/or cures and the employment of universal precautions.

Employee Responsibility

Proactive steps will be taken to protect the workplace in the event of an infectious disease outbreak or pandemic.

- Employees are encouraged to engage in good hygiene practices while at work, especially hand washing with soap and water or, if water is not available, using alcohol-based disposable hand wipes or gel sanitizers.
- Stay home if you have or suspect you have a communicable disease. If you become ill due to a communicable disease, return to work only after 24 hours of being symptom free without the use of fever-reducing or other symptom-altering medicines (e.g. cough suppressants).
- Employees who are well but who have an ill family member may continue to report to the workplace. They must monitor their health daily to ensure they remain free of the communicable disease.
- Employees must practice proper hygiene in the workplace by covering their mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing with a tissue or handkerchief. If this is not possible, then the armpit or hand can be used for coughs and sneezes, with immediate hand washing or sanitizing of hands.
- Employees should avoid touching their eyes, nose or mouth. If not possible, wash hands frequently.
- Employees should avoid close contact with sick people encountered in the workplace when possible.

Each employee has a responsibility to prevent the spread of communicable diseases when they are aware or suspect that they are or could be asymptomatic of a communicable disease. Awareness is showing or feeling signs of illness, such as coughing, sneezing, fever, joint aches, overall ill feeling (malaise) or a report of a communicable disease from a health care provider.
Awareness also includes known exposure to someone with a known or suspected communicable disease.

Good judgment skills by all employees are critical in safeguarding the health of the public, co-workers, contractors and others.

**Supervisor Responsibilities**

A supervisor always has the responsibility to manage the employee's workplace in an appropriate manner. If the supervisor notices or receives a report that an employee is exhibiting signs of a communicable disease, the supervisor will send the employee home if a reasonable person could conclude that a person appears to have a communicable disease and the spread of that disease is probable. If the supervisor is unsure after consulting with the employee, please consult the Director, HR. As a standard operating procedure, supervisors should visually come into contact with those they supervise, when possible, before making a determination.

- Advise employees who have symptoms of a communicable disease to consult with their health care providers and report to work only after symptoms have subsided. Employees must keep their supervisors informed on the anticipated length of absence.

- All supervisory employees are required to set their e-mail auto reply with an "Out of Office" response 1 day. Both tasks can be accomplished remotely.

**NASDA Office Closure Procedure**

NASDA follows OPM’s guidance on office closures. Should the CDC declare a pandemic in an area where NASDA’s Headquarters is located, and the federal government initiate their buildings to close, NASDA staff will begin teleworking from home. Staff will remain teleworking from home until OPM has reopened their buildings.

If staff become ill, they will need to take sick leave or other leave if they are unable to work from home.

**Travel**

NASDA will follow OPM’s guidance on international and domestic travel guidelines in the event a pandemic or outbreak occurs. This will also apply to any conferences or large meetings that have previously been scheduled. NASDA defines nonessential travel as travel that is not necessary. Usually the staff person will need to make a personal decision about travel that they consider necessary.

**Confidentiality**

Communicable disease-related diagnostic information reported to the Director, HR is treated as confidential, privileged information. Employees and contractors are protected to the best of our ability. NASDA will adhere to all local public health reporting requirements.