

Worksite Specific Plan

Department: Veterans Service Department

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Worksite Location(s): 1120 Golden State Ave., Bakersfield, CA 93301

The Veterans Service Department will have staff return to work on Monday, June 1st. The plan is to have staff in place and reopen our phone lines for clients to contact the office. Until now, the department have been relying solely on contact via our department e-mail address. Opening the phone lines will allow the department to start scheduling telephonic appointments. This will not only allow more clients to receive services from the department, but it will also limit staff's exposure to the public for the time being. When necessary, staff will be able to invite clients to the office for items that require physical interaction. The department expects to utilize this method of engaging clients for two weeks. During this time we will allow clients to come physically to the office on rare occasions and by appointment, since most services can be provided with a phone call or an e-mail.

A. Individual Control Measures and Screening

Temperature and/or Symptom Screening

A temperature check will be performed on all persons entering the Veterans Service Department by use of a contactless thermometer. Persons registering a temperature of 100.4 or higher will not be allowed entry into the building and asked to return after being fever-free for 72 hours.

Staff will be encouraged to check their own temperatures prior to coming to work, but will have their temperature checked at the start of the business day. Staff having a temperature of 100.4 degrees or higher will be asked to return home and use their sick leave accruals or they may take advantage of paid sick leave under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act.

Face Coverings

Face coverings are required when proper physical distancing measures cannot be implemented (such as the lobby, hallways, restrooms, and the breakroom); however, face coverings are permitted and encouraged to be worn by anyone wishing to wear one. The Department has disposable masks available if needed, but staff are encouraged to wear their own washable, face coverings. Staff will not be required to wear face coverings while working in their offices.

It will be ~~recommended~~required that visitors wear face coverings when entering the office. Our lobby is separated from staff areas by a plexiglass partition, with only limited access to pass documents from one side to the other. This is also the case for our newly constructed client interview areas. Visitors to the office will not be permitted to enter the staff area for the foreseeable future.

B. Protecting High-Risk Employees

Identifying High-Risk Employees

The Department is currently aware of two high-risk employees, but has consistently encouraged all staff who are 65 and over and/or have a chronic health condition not previously identified to notify their supervisor so we can discuss appropriate accommodations. When made aware of potential health concerns of staff or members of their household, the department will explore possible alternative work or leave options.

Protecting High-Risk Employees

Remote work has been offered to a high-risk employee whose work assignment permits it. While this option was not selected, the staff member has an office from which to work and the work assignment is being modified to involve no face-to-face client contact. Remote work is also not feasible for the second high-risk employee but the staff member has an office from which to work and the work assignment has also been modified to involve no face-to-face contact.

C. Physical Distancing

Telework Options

For the majority of our staff, telework will be available. VPN access has been requested for employees able to work remotely. For those who opt to work remotely, our client tracking software easily allows for the Supervising Veterans Service Representative to monitor and supervise their work. Through the use of teams and Skype, staff and supervisors can communicate remotely if issues arise.

There are, unfortunately, some tasks that require a physical presence in the office whether to answer incoming phone calls or assist clients with issues that require an in-person visit to the office.

At present we have two employee exclusively working remotely. Three staff members will have an alternate work assignment that allows for both remote and on-site work. Other staff has declined the option to work remotely at present.

Scheduling Adjustments

In our effort to limit the number of staff on-site, remote work has been offered to those employees who are capable of performing their assigned duty remotely. As staff gets more comfortable with remote work, staggered shifts will be utilized to limit staff on-site. The department has also offered staff alternative work schedules but currently no one is utilizing this option.

Workstation Adjustments

Currently, all work stations have over six feet of separation. All but two staff members have individual offices and staff is able to close the door while working in their office to further limit

contact with others. For the two staff members without an office, their work stations are over six feet apart and there is six feet of clearance around their worksites.

Other Physical Distancing Strategies

Common areas such as the kitchen area and the front office area will have limited access. The kitchen may only be occupied by one staff member at a time, while the front office area will have specific accessible walkways for use by staff who do not work there. Access to the copy/fax machine in the front office area will be limited to the North doorway only, which ensures more than six feet of separation when it is in use.

All department wide training will be conducted via e-mail or Microsoft Teams, and we have canceled all meetings of organizations who have traditionally used our conference room for their meetings.

The creation of directional hallways is not feasible for our office space so face coverings will be required when staff leave their workstations. However, we have created specific routes of ingress and egress for both staff and clients. Staff will enter through a newly established side door while clients will still access the building through the front door. Staff and clients will exit through the old employee entrance.

Employee breaks are currently staggered for all staff. All non-essential travel has been suspended; we are encouraging clients in the outlying areas to contact us via phone or e-mail for assistance.

Staff restrooms have been designated single occupancy. Signs with a "Vacant/Occupied" slider have been affixed to the exterior door of each staff restroom. Staff have been instructed to use the slider when utilizing staff restroom.

D. Additional Measures to Limit Exposure to the Public

The department has been assisting clients via e-mail and phone since March 17th. Currently, contact must be initiated via an e-mail to the office. The return to work plan involves bringing back front office staff to allow clients to call the office to be put on a virtual waiting list from which staff will return calls in the order they are received. A phone call or e-mail will be the only way to request assistance from the department initially. Appointments or scheduled office visits can be made once it is determined what assistance the client requires. A press release will be created to inform the community of these modifications and social media outlets will be used to help get the information to our clients.

When the building is opened to the public, physical distancing markers will be used to ensure proper physical distancing as well as stanchion posts with retractable rope barriers to guide clients through the lobby area. Limited seating will also be available that is pre-spaced to ensure proper physical distancing.

If temperature checks are still required when the building is open to the public, a staff member will be used to conduct the temperature checks and limit access to the lobby. Initially, clients will access the building by appointment only. Upon arrival, the client will call the office to let us know they have arrived. A member of the department management team will provide entry at which time the client's temperature will be checked. The building will remain locked when clients are not physically entering the building. If the department fully opens its doors to the public, a member of the management team will be stationed outside of the building to limit access, ensure physical distancing, and take client temperatures prior to their entry.

Additionally, when the building is open to the public, clients will not be permitted into the staff areas as they were in the past. All face-to-face meetings will be conducted either at the front counter or at our client interview area, both of which separates staff from clients with a sheet of plexiglass.

E. Ensuring a Clean and Hygienic Work Environment

The Department's cleaning needs are currently performed daily by a General Services contracted company, Huffman & Downs. In a recent e-mail, Huffman & Downs explicitly stated that on areas they clean, they use a chemical cleaner that kills the Human Coronavirus. To supplement those efforts, the Department has provided each work station with disinfecting wipes and when available, hand sanitizer will also be provided. There are three wall mounted hand sanitizer dispensers throughout the office (one in the lobby for client use and two in the staff area). Employees will be encouraged to sanitize their workstations and wash their hands often.

Common areas such as the kitchen and copy machine will be disinfected by a member of the department management team twice daily, once at the start of the work day and once after the lunch hour. After a client interview area is used, staff will disinfect the workstation upon completion by wiping down the desk surface, computer keyboard, and mouse.

Employees will be asked to bring their own, washable face coverings, but disposable ones will be provided when necessary. It will be recommended that clients wear face coverings but they will not be refused access or provided a disposable mask. Client interaction will be strictly controlled for the foreseeable future, and when it is necessary, there will always be either more than six feet of separation between staff and the client or a plexiglass barrier separating them.

F. Training and Communication of Managers/Supervisors/Employees

Once approved, staff will be provided with both this site specific plan as well as the County's Return to Work Guidelines. The documents will be e-mailed to all staff since the County's Return to Work Guidelines have resources hyperlinked throughout. Department management will continue to assure staff that the County seeks to ensure staff welfare while attempting to provide needed services to our clients, and staff will be provided, through an email, with the County's resource information: <https://www.kerncountyemployees.com/resources/kern-county-employee-resources-during-the-covid-19-emergency>. The department expects this to occur prior to May 22, contingent on approval of this document.

As the Department slowly offers more services, staff will continue to have the opportunity to voice any concerns they may have with existing procedures and to have the opportunity to offer suggestions for improvement on those procedures. The Department encourages staff to notify their supervisor if they have questions, comments, or concerns about any department procedure.

The Department expects that staff will be informed (via phone calls, e-mails, and meetings with proper physical distancing) during the week of May 18-22nd, contingent on the approval of this document, of Department expectations regarding: 1) the new processes to be implemented during the foreseeable future; 2) how to handle anyone exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19; and 3) the use of the various leave options available to them.