




MEMORANDUM

Kathy Gallagher, Director

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To: All Staff – Code 2A
From: Kathy Gallagher, EHS Director 
Subject: **IMPORTANT NOTICE:** COVID-19 – EHS Staff

Date: March 17, 2020

It is my goal to keep in touch with you as frequently and clearly as possible during this time of rapidly changing events and circumstances related to COVID-19. As members of the EHS team, you are key players in supporting the community during these challenging times. We are all affected by the uncertainty of the situation, both personally and professionally, and I am – more than ever – grateful for your contributions to the people we serve.

Today I am writing to provide further clarification of the [Order of the Contra Costa Public Health Officer](#) that was issued yesterday afternoon, and in particular, to what it means for us as EHS staff.

The most important thing to note is that Employment and Human Services Department staff members are considered to perform “essential services” as described in Section 10d of the Order. This is because our programs provide access to medical care, food assistance and other critical human needs that are only going to become more pronounced during this time when people who are already vulnerable may face additional health and economic risks. As our mission states: the Employment and Human Services Department partners with the community to deliver quality services to ensure access to resources that support, protect and empower individuals and families to achieve self-sufficiency.

Here are the key points you need to know, in light of the Public Health Order:

- As a result, all EHS staff (except for CSB’s Head Start staff as all child care centers are closed) are expected to report to their office on March 18, 2020, and until further notice.
- EHS provides essential services, and we are essential workers.
- If you are already approved to work from home, then continue to do so.

- We are reviewing the possibility of additional staff being able to work remotely. Bureau Directors, Managers and Supervisors will assess which tasks require on-site activities and which may be able to be conducted remotely.
- Right now we require additional equipment and system capacity for significantly more people to work remotely. Our IT division is working aggressively to expand that capability, along with all other County departments facing the same challenge.
- For those of you who are conducting our work in an office, we will be implementing social distancing arrangements in our facilities.
- This remains a dynamic situation, and we will continue to keep you posted.

For all of us as workers and as members of the community, the COVID-19 situation remains very fluid, and we expect ongoing changes. Here are a few additional points:

- The Department is awaiting further mandates and direction to come from the federal and state governments about the delivery of social services
- Members of our community are likely to have increasing, immediate needs in the days ahead. In addition to potential health episodes and lost income, there will be stress related to people being in close quarters during Shelter in Place that may lead to additional risk of abuse, for both children and the elderly. As members of the EHSD team, you help to fill these needs every day of the week, and now is an even more important time for you to continue your commitment to this service.

We are setting up an [EHSD Staff Update page](#) on EHSD.org where we will post updates.

We also have the ability to text you with urgent messages to your cell phone or iPad. Finally, it's important that your supervisor or manager has a personal e-mail address and cell phone number where you can be reached for messages as well. Please also note that EHSD has an emergency phone number, 888-704-3473, which we also plan to utilize to get information out to staff.

Thank you, and I appreciate your patience, flexibility and ongoing commitment to performing the meaningful work of our department, especially during this challenging time. Please continue to do your best to take care of yourself, your family and each other.