



Tifton Judicial Circuit Shelter, Inc.,
DBA Ruth's Cottage and The Patticake House (RCPCH)

Pandemic Emergency Preparedness and Action Plan

Purpose: To plan, prepare, and respond to any type of pandemic that can affect the continuity of victims' services via our emergency shelter or any of victim support services in our domestic violence, sexual assault and child advocacy programs.

I. RCPCH will work to maintain clean and hygienic living conditions. *During a pandemic employees and shelter residents should exhibit additional precautionary measures which include, but are not limited to:*

- All persons working, residing in, or visiting the facilities of RCPCH will wear a mask. No entry to the building will be allowed unless a mask is worn.
- All persons should cover nose and mouth when coughing and/or sneezing by using a tissue and immediately throwing the tissue away. If a tissue is not readily available coughing and/or sneezing into one's elbow is a better choice than not covering at all.
- Maintain good basic hygiene (i.e. washing hands *frequently* with soap and warm water for a minimum of 20 seconds) to reduce the spread of germs.
- Hand soap and/or hand sanitizer is available in commons areas for residents, guests and staff including all bathrooms and the kitchen.
- Frequent cleaning/disinfecting of hard surfaces with a disinfectant solution (i.e. door handles, light switches, telephones, countertops, drawer handles, remotes, etc.) *Note:* For shelter, wipe down surfaces between shifts.
- All bedding and towels should be washed in hot water.
- Bathrooms should be cleaned regularly with bleach and/or non-acid cleaner provided by the agency.
- Social distancing of 6 ft between individuals should be practiced.

II. In the event of an outbreak and/or pandemic the RCPCH Executive Director, or designee, will communicate with the local health department and/or public health officials to determine best course of action to protect both residents and staff.

- Any employee with a chronic illness and/or underlying health condition that would place them at a higher risk for infection should speak with the Executive Director about their concerns. Reasonable accommodations will be made on a case by case basis.
- Any sick employees (especially those with a fever) will be sent home and cannot return to work until fever-free without medication for 72 hours.
- In the event of a pandemic, any employee returning from travel may be asked to quarantine themselves until a medical professional clears employee to return to work.



- Any employee requiring quarantine during a pandemic must utilize the amount of sick time he/she has accrued during employment. RCPCH will pay any employee, Exempt and Non-Exempt, emergency sick pay for any additional shifts beyond accumulated sick leave for up to two weeks in the event an employee must be quarantined. Medical documentation must be turned in to the Executive Director to receive emergency pay.
- During a pandemic, staff reporting to work are eligible for Supplemental Pay according to the schedule in **Attachment A** provided with this PEPAP. This additional compensation is subject to funding availability and will last until the RCPCH Executive Committee determines a safe ending date.
- In the event a pandemic leaves the shelter short staffed, employees may be asked to work additional hours to alleviate the burden equally among all staff members and as to not exhaust one employee. Overtime will be paid for staff working beyond the 40-hour week, if necessary, to keep shelter in operation.
- In the event “shelter in place” is needed, the Executive Director, Assistant Director, Shelter Manager and Board President will discuss and develop a plan that will promote a continuation of services with as little disruption as possible.
- All outreach events and activities that involve in person contact will be postponed.

III. During a pandemic, the most crucial service that needs as little interruption as possible is emergency shelter for domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking survivors. The Shelter Manager will ensure that all residents have information on the pandemic, advise residents when shelter in place is implemented, and inform them of any office/school closings. In addition, RCPCH will implement the following to promote the health and safety of residents in shelter:

- RCPCH will continue to accept new clients as bed space is available in which families and/or singles do not have to be cohabitated.
- Entering residents should be provided the Coronavirus Resident Agreement Form (**Attachment B**) with review provided by staff. Residents should initial and sign document for their file.
- Residents should be asked daily, if they are willing to answer, “Do you have a sore throat, fever, aches, chills, or diarrhea?”
- If a resident says “yes”, they will be asked to quarantine themselves and to call the TRHS hotline for directions. 220.353.2819
- Anyone who is seeking shelter and discloses that they have tested positive for infectious disease (COVID 19 for example) should be offered shelter in an area hotel room with supportive services (meal cards, etc.) provided by RCPCH. If someone currently in shelter who is tested positive should be quarantined in an apartment with food/groceries brought to them. If there is not space to provide quarantine, then they should be relocated to a hotel with support services provided.
- Employees will ensure all residents have hand soap and/or hand sanitizer in their bathrooms.
- Shelter transportation will be on a limited basis and necessity will be determined on a case-by-case basis by the staff.



IV. RCPCH understands that not all pandemic situations are the same. In any instance that the above protocols are insufficient, the Executive Director, or designee, will take direction from the local health department, public health officials, and/or CDC.

- In the event of a *mandatory* order to stay sheltered, essential shelter staff will be provided an Employment Verification Letter (**Attachment C**) if stopped during travel to and from work.

V. During Shelter in Place Orders, RCPCH will compensate employees who have been told it is not safe for them to come to work according to their regular work schedule or assigned shift/schedule for the month. Staff with the ability to work from home should do so and track their hours on tasks. Professional staff who may need to be called in to provide a service should also track those hours on the job.

Staff who meet the following criteria should not report to work during Shelter in Place:

- 65 and over
- Asthma
- Diabetes
- Heart Disease
- Lung Disease
- Hypertension
- Any condition that compromises the immune system
- Taking any medication that compromises the immune system

Staff who report to work at their facilities during a pandemic will be required to complete a questionnaire such as the “Mandated COVID-19 Employee Questionnaire” (**Attachment D**) each time they present to work. These forms are to be supplied to the Assistant Director.

VI. Upon lifting of a shelter in place order, but while the pandemic is still active, the following transitional guidelines will be in place.

1. If returning staff was sick with COVID-19, they must submit documentation from a medical professional indicating that it is safe to return to work. This may be in the form of an email or text if a signed paper document is not feasible.
 - If an employee has been sick but not tested, then they should not leave isolation until there is:
 - No fever for at least 72 hours without the use of medicine to reduce fever; and
 - Other symptoms have improved; and
 - At least 7 days have passed since symptoms first appeared.
 - If employee will be tested to determine if still contagious, they should not leave isolation unless he or she:
 - Has had no fever for at least 72 hours without the use of medicine to reduce fever; and
 - Other symptoms have improved; and
 - The employee has received two negative tests in a row, 24 hours apart.



2. If an employee was caring for someone who was sick with COVID-19, employee should quarantine for 14 days after the last exposure prior to returning to work. If it is possible for employee to work at home, this should be implemented.
3. If employee is not aware of any exposure to COVID-19 and are returning to work, they must follow the safety guidelines of RCPCH such as washing hands, using sanitizer, use of mask in public places, maintaining social distance and not participating in group meetings of more than ten or where social distancing is not possible.

VII. Following the lifting of a shelter in place order, maintaining a safe workplace remains critical and RCPCH will follow these guidelines.

1. Sick employees need to stay home.
2. Cleaning protocols continue to be followed as they were during shelter in place orders.
3. Personal safety precautions need to continue such as social distancing, use of masks, hand avoidance of touching, limiting of meeting sizes, separation in workspaces, and not gathering in common areas.
4. Continuing the daily use of Mandated Employee Questionnaire form each time you report to work.
5. Checking in with residents, clients, and guests to our facilities as to their general health and providing them with sanitizer and mask, if they do not present with their own.