

Town of Chester, VT  
Selectboard Statement Regarding COVID-19

The Selectboard of the Town of Chester, acting in their capacity as Selectboard and as Board of Health, are concerned about the safety of their residents and municipal employees. As of this date, the State of Vermont and neighboring counties in New Hampshire are experiencing increased rates of transmission due to the COVID-19 virus and its variants.

The Center for Disease Control recommends numerous guidelines for disease mitigation, including frequent washing of hands, maintaining distances of 6 feet and face coverings in public settings indoors in areas of “substantial” or “high” rates of transmission. On November 22, 2021, the Vermont Legislature passed Bill S.1 that empowers Vermont municipalities to enact local rules requiring the wearing of face coverings in indoor public settings. The Governor has signed that bill into law.

The Town of Chester is not supportive of implementing a mask mandate, at this time. However, the Selectboard is strongly encouraging all residents and visitors of Chester to renew their efforts to control the spread of COVID-19 by employing to the best extent possible all of the known mitigation strategies set forth by the CDC and the Vermont Department of Health, including:

- Encourage vaccination of eligible residents, to include booster shots;
- Diligence in washing hands and use of hand sanitizers;
- Practice social distancing whenever possible;
- Avoiding large indoor gatherings when possible;
- Wearing face masks when you are in an indoor congregate setting;
- Encouraging frequent testing especially after being with large groups of individuals.

The Town of Chester encourages all businesses who serve the public indoors to formulate a disease mitigation strategy and/or mask wearing policy suitable for their business. The protocols developed for use by town staff are attached to this statement for reference and/or available at Town Hall.

In its effort to help inform the public regarding the status of COVID in our community, the Town of Chester encourages all businesses to post a copy of this statement in a location visible to employees and the public.

The Town of Chester is committed to keeping all residents and visitors of Chester safe while also recognizing and supporting the needs of our local businesses.

Chester Selectboard

TOWN OF CHESTER  
COVID PRACTICES IN PLACE

1. Town Employees will do their best to reduce the spread of COVID or its variants, while maintaining the operations of the Town of Chester.
2. Guidance from the State of Vermont and CDC indicates that COVID is spread amongst individuals who are closer than 6 feet apart, without masks for a period of 15 minutes or longer. The Town of Chester protocols are established with those guidelines in mind.
3. All town services will remain in full operation for regular hours, until or unless the State of Vermont proclaims another State of Emergency
4. The Town of Chester has Instituted the ability to pay via Credit Card or Direct Debit from a checking or savings account. In addition, a drop box has been installed at Town Hall. These services will remain in effect permanently.
5. Vault usage for Title Searchers and/or Attorneys is managed using a signup sheet managed by the Town Office staff. Land records have been made available online back to 1980.
6. Plexiglass has been installed at the front counter of Town Hall to help reduce direct contact with the public. This plexiglass will remain installed until such time as it is evident that the spread of the virus or its variants has passed.
7. Office spaces are disinfected weekly to help limit the transfer of germs.
8. All office staff at Town Hall, Police Department and Ambulance have independent working stations, i.e. in a separate office or a minimum of 10 feet distance between desks. All Public Works employees, on average, are able to perform their duties meeting the criteria set forth above.
9. While working at desks or in a separate office space or in a space where appropriate distancing can be achieved, masks do not need to be worn.
10. When in work situations where distancing of 6 feet apart is not possible, masks should be worn if possible and so long that it does not jeopardize the safety of the employee.
11. All town staff meetings are held on the second floor of town hall where appropriate distancing can be obtained.
12. The Town of Chester has a healthy sick time program as well as an employee sick bank in place. If an employee is out due to COVID or a COVID related incident such as quarantine for testing, hours will be reduced from the employee's sick time hours first. Once all sick time hours have been depleted, future sick time hours will be withdrawn from the sick bank.

13. If an employee tests positive for COVID, the employee will remain in quarantine for 14 days or until such time as symptoms have ceased, but no sooner than 10 days from the date of exposure.
14. If an employee has been exposed to an individual who has tested positive for COVID, the employee must get tested 3-5 days from the date of exposure. If the employee is vaccinated and has NO symptoms, the employee may continue to work. If the employee is unvaccinated, the employee must remain in quarantine until a negative test has been received. In either case, the employee must obtain a test. All test results must be submitted to the Town Manager upon receipt.
15. If an employee is not feeling well with any symptoms, even just a cold, it is recommended that they stay home from work. This is an effort to prevent any flu or severe colds from spreading throughout the departments.
16. The ambulance department is establishing a testing site at the Public Safety Building for testing of municipal employees only. You will be informed when this fully implements.
17. These protocols will be amended as necessary.

December 20, 2021

Julie S. Hance  
Chester Town Manager