



Management Bulletin #492 - UPDATE

DATE: March 13, 2020

TO: Owners/Agents of Properties with IHDA Funding

CC: Asset Management Department Staff

FROM: Asset Management Department, IHDA

RE: Modification of Asset Management Monitoring Activities based on COVID-19 (Coronavirus)

SUMMARY:

**** UPDATE ****

Modification of Asset Management Monitoring Activities

Starting now through April 30th, IHDA will modify its on-site Asset Management monitoring activities, and recommends all property managers follow enhanced guidance for preventing spread of COVID-19.

Management Reviews - Now through April 30th

- All scheduled on-site Management Reviews will be converted to Desk Reviews.
- Management Reviews for Section 8, Mod-Rehab and HOME programs may be deferred / rescheduled if the review is not due until later in the year.

Tenant File Reviews - Now through April 30th

- All tenant file reviews will be conducted through online submissions using the BDS secure document server. Instructions for using BDS are available on the [Property Manager's page](#) of IHDA's website.
- If your property is scheduled for a file review during this period, you will receive further information from your Asset Manager.

Physical Inspections - Now through April 30th

- Physical inspections of all occupied properties will be deferred.
- Inspections of rehab construction sites with residents in place will be suspended.
- Inspections of new construction sites where no residents are living will continue.

Enhanced Guidance for Property Managers:

- **Events:** Cancel community meetings, social events or parties.
- **Education:** Continue sending communication to residents about prevention tips,

cleaning activities, and how to communicate with the property management office in lieu of in person appointments.

- **Plan:** Prepare internal plans for how to handle active cases at your properties.
 - Residents/employees should be encouraged to report diagnosis to public health officials.
 - Seek testing if residents are concerned about exposure.
 - Sick residents should stay home.
 - Conduct enhanced/deep cleaning in affected areas.
 - Property managers/owners may want to consult with public health officials in your area.
- **Non-Discrimination:** Everyone is reminded that actions associated with important and timely response to issues surrounding COVID-19 are not the basis for unlawful discrimination of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, disability or family status.
- **Loss of Income:** For residents who have lost income/employment:
 - Encourage resident to file unemployment insurance claims. [Governor Pritzker and the Illinois Department of Employment Security \(IDES\)](#) have announced that the administration will file emergency rules to clarify that people who are unemployed due to COVID-19 can qualify for unemployment benefits to the full extent permitted by federal law.
 - Consider if there are other property based, or local rental assistance programs that might be available for such residents.
 - Conduct an interim recertification if the resident is already receiving rental assistance.
 - Refer resident to local food and utility assistance programs.

**** Original Guidance included for Convenience****

To minimize the health risks for building occupants, property managers should monitor guidance about COVID-19 and provide up to date information for their tenants and staff.

Good sources of accurate information include

- [Illinois Department of Public Health](#) (IDPH),
- the federal [Centers for Disease Control](#) (CDC), and
- the [Institute of Real Estate Management](#) (IREM).

Inform tenants about prevention measures

- Property managers should take some commonsense steps to help prevent spread of the virus at their place of work and at their properties. Those steps include:
 - Wash Hands regularly for at least 20 seconds using soap and water.
 - Avoid the touching of eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
 - Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
 - Stay home if you are exhibiting cold or flu-like symptoms.
 - Cover mouth and nose with the inside of the arm or with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. Throw the tissue away immediately. Wash hands as soon as possible afterward.
- IREM has prepared [fact sheet templates](#) to inform tenants how they may help prevent the spread of infection.

Encourage employees and residents to stay at home when sick, and travel safely

- Ensure employees are aware of sick leave policies.
- Inform residents about ways to communicate with management (phone, e-mail, mail) instead of office visits.
- Evaluate need for travel and provide safe travel information, such as the [CDC's Travelers Health Notices](#).

Perform additional cleaning of office work-spaces and public access areas

- Ensure repeatedly touched surfaces in the workplace, such as workstations, counter-tops and doorknobs are cleaned thoroughly and frequently.
- Provide employees with cleaning products and encourage routine cleaning. See the CDC's guidance on effective [cleaning and disinfecting products](#).
- Make sure soap and hand sanitizer are available in rest rooms, kitchen and other high traffic areas.
- Consider increasing outside air intake to the building to promote higher amounts of fresh air, or other similar measures as appropriate for property HVAC systems.

Plan for emergency or alternative office operations

- Prepare a continuity/emergency operations plan for your business if you don't already have one in place. Make sure employees have reviewed and understand the plan.
- Prepare to conduct some in-person transactions (such as lease renewals, recertifications, rent payments, work orders) by phone, e-mail, or other alternative methods.

Use screening questions to determine if planned appointments should be rescheduled

- If residents or staff answer yes to any of the following questions prior to an in-person meeting or in-unit non-emergency maintenance request, reschedule the appointment (or attempt to conduct in an alternative way).
 - I have traveled to a area where COVID-19 is spreading **within the past 14 days**.
 - I have been in close contact with people who have traveled to areas where COVID-19 is spreading **within the past 14 days**.
 - I have been around people who are sick with colds or flu.
 - I have symptoms of a cold.
 - I have a fever or have had a fever **within the past week**.
 - I have been nauseated or have vomited or had diarrhea **within the past week**.
- IHDA staff may use these same screening questions in order to determine whether to reschedule on-site visits, inspections or reviews in upcoming weeks.
- IHDA may postpone inspections or site visits for properties with active cases, or as recommended by public health officials.

If you suspect you are infected

- The CDC fact sheet [What to Do If You are Sick with Coronavirus Disease](#) addresses steps to take if you are infected, or suspect that you are infected with COVID-19.
 - The Illinois Department of Public Health has a **COVID-19 Hotline at 1(800) 889-3931, or by e-mail at dph.sick@illinois.gov**.
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