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**From:** IHDA Asset Management <ASSET@ihda.org>  
**Sent:** Friday, March 13, 2020 5:25 PM  
**To:** Timothy Veenstra  
**Subject:** IHDA Management Bulletin #492 - Important Update



**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 30<sup>th</sup>, 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 30<sup>th</sup>**

- 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 30<sup>th</sup>**

- 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 30<sup>th</sup>

- 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](mailto:dph.sick@illinois.gov).**
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