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**Sent:** Thursday, April 23, 2026 1:51 PM

**To:** NMENV-ehb <NMENV-ehb@env.nm.gov>

**Subject:** HIGH PRIORITY - EHB ALL STAFF NOTICE

Dear Colleagues,

As most of you are aware, the Environmental Health Bureau is currently dealing with extreme budgetary constraints. Senior management within the Environment Department have been working concertedly with us to address these shortfalls and I am writing now to let you all know that solutions are being implemented to keep staff support and payroll services intact. We are a team and you are all important. Bottom line. Full stop.

THE TOUGH PART – WHAT OUR PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES MEAN FOR OPERATIONS

Unfortunately, our current budget constraints mean that all agency travel, all routine field inspections of restaurants, public pools and spas, and liquid waste systems must be suspended until further notice. This includes the suspension of all on-site restaurant inspections for existing facilities.

Plan reviews and application submissions for the opening of new food facilities will continue remotely without interruption. We are developing a process that will allow photographic inspection services to support new facility approvals similar to what was utilized during the COVID 19 epidemic.

During this period, liquid waste installers may also continue to submit requests for photographic inspection of septic systems in accordance with established agency guidelines.

Pools and spas will be handled on a case-by-case basis that includes clearance from Division and Senior Management Team support. Inspectors dealing with these facilities should submit the details of proposed inspections (including timings) to Marci Nevarez, Melissa Charlie, and me directly. We will then elevate the requests to Secretary Kenney's office in order to find resources for the inspections.

IMPORTANTLY -

WE WILL NOT COMPROMISE OUR CORE MISSION. ALL matters pertaining to public health concerns should be IMMEDIATELY elevated to the attention of managers. Our work protecting the public remains paramount and we will find resources to deploy staff in the event we receive reports of food-borne illness, unsafe operation at the facilities we monitor, or any other situation that threatens human wellbeing. Any such issues should be brought to the attention of Marci Nevarez, Melissa Charlie, and me. We will work with senior management to get you the resources you need to address them.

## SPECIFIC GUIDANCE ON OPERATIONS DURING THIS PERIOD.

### TIME SHEETS AND OFFICE PRESENCE

This notice DOES NOT imply in any way that we have stopped, or even slowed, work. All Environment Health Bureau staff are expected to maintain normal working hours at their assigned duty stations. While we cannot go out in the field at this time, there is plenty we can do. Please work with your supervisors to identify any outstanding permit, online training, and office activities that you have outstanding. Use this period to clean-up, organize, file, and get in any outstanding State Personnel Office training requirements you have outstanding. If you run short on things to do, contact your supervisors. Supervisors, if you are looking for ways to deploy staff, let department management know. We still have lots of stuff to do.

Reporting for work and logging time in SHARE will be required as always. Any staff who are presently working with a manager on-site should simply come to work in their respective offices and let their supervisors know when they are arriving/departing. Staff without a supervisor on site should continue registering their working hours with supervisors via Microsoft Teams, text messages, etc. As a reminder, NMED policy requires written requests and supervisor preapproval for leave. Timesheet logging for all staff should continue to be charged according to the activities they are undertaking. If you are cleaning up permit files, charge to permitting, if you are taking an online class, charge to training, etc.

### TRAVEL TO TRAININGS OR MEETINGS

All travel to in-person trainings or meetings is off the table at this point. If virtual alternatives exist (as is the case for many SHARE trainings), these alternatives should be pursued. In-office meetings with contractors and operators may continue, but staff may not travel in the absence of authorization from senior management. In all cases, it should be made clear to contractors and operators that we presently do not have the resources to send inspectors out for site visits.

Department personnel delivering trainings to our own staff, and external contractors/operators should shift these trainings to virtual formats or deliver them out of our office facilities. Again, no travel is authorized at this time.

### VEHICLE USE

All departmental vehicle use is suspended until further notice. Vehicles should be parked either at NMED office facilities or – in the case of inspectors who are operating remotely – at their home residences. We will work with senior management to arrange a pickup and parking schedule that returns Division vehicle to the Horizon Building in Albuquerque. Consistent with NMED Policy 07-07, should staff not utilize state vehicles to commute to and from office facilities or any other work related activities. Furthermore, we cannot continue to provide

vehicular services to other divisions within the Environment Department because fueling costs are borne by our division. DO NOT ALLOW VEHICLES TO BE CHECKED OUT OR DEPLOYED FOR ANY REASON. If specific or urgent needs arise, these should be elevated to departmental senior management for attention.

Personal vehicle use will not be permitted for work related travel. I realize that this is a tempting solution to ensure we are able to get to on-site inspections, but we cannot allow it due to liability issues. Do not use your own vehicles for official travel during this period (or ever, for that matter).

#### LAST THOUGHTS

I realize this situation is bound to result in more than a few grey areas and confusion. Please feel free to reach out to me if there are any questions. We will work out any problems together as part of the Environment Department team.

This notice will remain in effect until such time as it is formally rescinded. I am truly sorry for any inconveniences and personal headaches the situation causes. We hope to have a longer-term solution in place shortly that stabilizes things and lets us all get back to more normal working conditions.

You all are amazing! If anyone has questions, please feel free to reach out.

Onward,

Bill

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