



State of New Jersey

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

CONSUMER, ENVIRONMENTAL AND OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE
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TRENTON, N.J. 08625-0369

PHILIP D. MURPHY
Governor

www.nj.gov/health

JUDITH M. PERSICILLI, RN, BSN, MA
Commissioner

SHEILA Y. OLIVER
Lt. Governor

April 22, 2020

Mackey Pendergrast, Superintendent
Morris School District
31 Hazel Street
Morristown NJ 07960

Re: Morristown High School
50 Early Street
Morristown NJ 07960
UPA No.: 1576349
Inspection No.: 1472887
Letter sent by email only

Dear Dr. Pendergrast:

The Public Employees Occupational Safety and Health (PEOSH) Program received information regarding a fatality of an individual who is employed at your worksite listed above.

The specific nature of the fatality is as follows:

Possible COVID-19 virus related death of an employee at the Morristown High School.

The fatality is possibly related to COVID-19. At this time PEOSH cannot make a determination whether this employee may have been exposed to the COVID-19 virus as part of their work duties. As COVID-19 has been defined by the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) as a reportable illness, PEOSH has the regulatory obligation to investigate public employee fatalities which may be the result of exposure to the virus as part of their work duties.

Based on the information obtained by PEOSH, we are conducting a worker fatality investigation. We do not intend to initiate an on-site inspection at this time. As part of our investigation, you are requested to perform a self-audit of the alleged hazardous conditions and make any necessary corrections or modifications to protect employee health within **five work days** of the date of this letter.

Also, within **five work days**, please provide me in writing the results of your self-audit and attach any supporting documentation of your findings. There is no penalty for finding deficiencies; you must however correct those deficiencies to ensure employee health and compliance with our regulations. Please include a description of any corrective action you have taken or are in the process of taking. Attached any supporting documents such as written policies, equipment receipts, training records, photographs, and written programs.

In particular, we will need to see:

- Illness report/investigation regarding the employee fatality.

If you provide the requested information, we will make a determination if an on-site investigation will be required. If we do not receive a response from you within **five work days** indicating that appropriate action has been taken or that no uncontrolled hazard exists and why, an on-site inspection may be conducted.

Please note that PEOSH will conduct an on-site inspection based on a random sample of the off-site investigations where we have received responses in which employers have indicated satisfactory corrective action. This policy has been established to ensure that employers have taken the action asserted in their responses.

You are requested to post a copy of this letter and your response where they will be readily accessible for review by all of your employees until PEOSH deems the case closed.

Information about coronavirus; coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), which is the illness caused by coronavirus; and measures you can take to prevent your employees from contracting coronavirus can be found at the following locations:

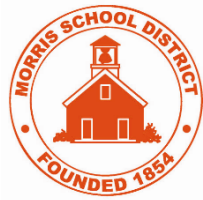
- State of NJ COVID-19 website – <https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/topics/ncov.shtml>
- OSHA COVID-19 website – <https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/covid-19/>
- CDC COVID-19 website – <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

If you have any questions concerning this matter, please contact me via e-mail at Glenn.Pulliam@doh.nj.gov and copy Peosh@doh.nj.gov. Your personal support and interest in the safety and health of your employees is appreciated.

Sincerely,

Glenn Pulliam, Program Manager
Environmental and Occupational Health Assessment Program

c: Glenn Pulliam



*Anthony Lo Franco, CPA
Business Administrator /
Board Secretary*

*Michelle Ferraro
Administrative Assistant*

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*Joan Frederick, CPA
Assistant Business
Administrator / Assistant
Board Secretary*

April 27, 2020

Glenn Pulliam
Environmental and Occupational Health Assessment Program
Department of Health
Letter sent by email only

Re: Morristown High School
50 Early Street
Morristown NJ, 07960
UPA No: 1576349
Inspection No: 1472887

Overview of our initial COVID response

The District's initial response to COVID-19 was identifying a school nurse, Paula Mendez, who collected and maintained information for families of students and staff that may have traveled to the CDC tier 1 regions. This was needed to identify those individuals who had to self-quarantine to prevent any spread in our buildings and have 1 database for the 10 District buildings. Then, in February 2020, the District began modifying its cleaning procedures, in accordance with CDC guidelines and to utilize a new electrostatic disinfecting device. (Attached is the email and letter provided to all buildings, sent on March 4, 2020.)



Research of Employee's co-workers:

The employee [REDACTED] Morristown High School. We spoke to the Director of the office and we learned that there were no other employees that he worked closely with that has tested positive for COVID-19. The week of March 16, there was one other employee who identified having some stuffiness and a cough, referred to seasonal allergies, it lasted 2 days and that employee did not seek medical treatment.

Working [REDACTED] would also be in contact with students. On March 20th we were notified by our local Health Department that a member of the household of one of our Morristown High School students has tested positive for coronavirus and that this student is assumed to be positive as well because they developed symptoms of COVID-19. This was communicated to our families via the superintendent, available at:

<https://www.morri schooldistrict.org/quicklinks/update-on-flu-and-coronavirus>

We have received no other reports of staff or students testing positive for COVID-19 at Morristown High School. Paula Mendez works closely with the representative from the local Health department and we do not believe a workplace hazard exists.

Reporting:

An illness report was not completed since there was no knowledge of the injury taking place while he worked for the District.

Regards,



Anthony Lo Franco
Business Administrator/Board Secretary

Attachments