

**135.144 Additional duties of the department related to a public health disaster.**

If a public health disaster exists, the department, in conjunction with the governor, may do any of the following:

1. Decontaminate or cause to be decontaminated, to the extent reasonable and necessary to address the public health disaster, any facility or material if there is cause to believe the contaminated facility or material may endanger the public health.

2. Adopt and enforce measures to provide for the identification and safe disposal of human remains, including performance of postmortem examinations, transportation, embalming, burial, cremation, interment, disinterment, and other disposal of human remains. To the extent possible, religious, cultural, family, and individual beliefs of the deceased person or the deceased person's family shall be considered when disposing of any human remains.

3. Take reasonable measures as necessary to prevent the transmission of infectious disease and to ensure that all cases of communicable disease are properly identified, controlled, and treated.

4. Take reasonable measures as necessary to ensure that all cases of chemical, biological, and radiological contamination are properly identified, controlled, and treated.

5. Order physical examinations and tests and collect specimens as necessary for the diagnosis or treatment of individuals, to be performed by any qualified person authorized to do so by the department. An examination or test shall not be performed or ordered if the examination or test is reasonably likely to lead to serious harm to the affected individual. The department may isolate or quarantine, pursuant to [chapter 139A](#) and the rules implementing [chapter 139A](#) and [this subchapter](#), any individual whose refusal of medical examination or testing results in uncertainty regarding whether the individual has been exposed to or is infected with a communicable or potentially communicable disease or otherwise poses a danger to public health.

6. Vaccinate or order that individuals be vaccinated against an infectious disease and to prevent the spread of communicable or potentially communicable disease. Vaccinations shall be administered by any qualified person authorized to do so by the department. The vaccination shall not be provided or ordered if it is reasonably likely to lead to serious harm to the affected individual. To prevent the spread of communicable or potentially communicable disease, the department may isolate or quarantine, pursuant to [chapter 139A](#) and the rules implementing [chapter 139A](#) and [this subchapter](#), any person who is unable or unwilling to undergo vaccination pursuant to [this subsection](#).

7. Treat or order that individuals exposed to or infected with disease receive treatment or prophylaxis. Treatment or prophylaxis shall be administered by any qualified person authorized to do so by the department. Treatment or prophylaxis shall not be provided or ordered if the treatment or prophylaxis is reasonably likely to lead to serious harm to the affected individual. To prevent the spread of communicable or potentially communicable disease, the department may isolate or quarantine, pursuant to [chapter 139A](#) and the rules implementing [chapter 139A](#) and [this subchapter](#), any individual who is unable or unwilling to undergo treatment or prophylaxis pursuant to [this section](#).

8. Isolate or quarantine individuals or groups of individuals pursuant to [chapter 139A](#) and the rules implementing [chapter 139A](#) and [this subchapter](#).

9. Inform the public when a public health disaster has been declared or terminated, about protective measures to take during the disaster, and about actions being taken to control the disaster.

10. Accept grants and loans from the federal government pursuant to [section 29C.6](#) or available provisions of federal law.

11. If a public health disaster or other public health emergency situation exists which poses an imminent threat to the public health, safety, and welfare, the department, in conjunction with the governor, may provide financial assistance, from funds appropriated to the department that are not otherwise encumbered, to political subdivisions as needed to alleviate the disaster or the emergency. If the department does not have sufficient unencumbered funds, the governor may request the executive council to authorize the payment of up to one million dollars as an expense from the appropriations addressed in

[section 7D.29](#) to alleviate the disaster or the emergency. If additional financial assistance is required in excess of one million dollars, approval by the legislative council is also required.

12. Temporarily reassign department employees for purposes of response and recovery efforts, to the extent such employees consent to the reassignments.

13. Order, in conjunction with the department of education, temporary closure of any public school or nonpublic school, as defined in [section 280.2](#), to prevent or control the transmission of a communicable disease as defined in [section 139A.2](#).

[2003 Acts, ch 33, §5, 11; 2003 Acts, ch 179, §65; 2004 Acts, ch 1097, §1; 2005 Acts, ch 19, §32; 2009 Acts, ch 37, §9; 2010 Acts, ch 1088, §1; 2011 Acts, ch 131, §26, 158; 2019 Acts, ch 24, §102](#)