

# PLANNED PROTOCOLS

## How a Parsippany company helps commercial and residential building owners with the reopening process

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Reentering a facility amid the COVID-19 outbreak requires more than basic cleaning or janitorial services. It requires a company with the knowledge and skill of knowing how to handle all types of adversities. Executives at Planned Companies believe they can handle the task. Parsippany-based janitorial, maintenance, concierge/front desk and security services provider boasts 100 years and four generations of experience and more than 4,000 team members nationwide.

The COVID-19 pandemic is unprecedented and has affected businesses and their employees deeply and in ways that no one could have anticipated. Planned Companies President and CEO Robert Francis and his 1,400 New Jersey employees serve businesses from top to bottom and verify that every job is done according to state and federal guidelines. These strict protocols are designed to ensure that each job is done correctly while keeping workers safe.



Francis

“It’s amazing to know just how selfless and courageous the group has been. It’s been a challenging time that we’re trying to meet head-on,” Francis said. “I am very appreciative of our front-line work force who get out there every day and deliver service to our clients during this unprecedented time.”

Planned provides high-quality personal protective equipment to all employees and the company continues to secure additional PPE from domestic and international sources throughout the pandemic. Francis said he obtains much of the equipment from Imperial Dade, a Jersey City-based supplier, and he has always had enough for his local staff.

Another way Planned stood behind its essential workers was by initiating a COVID-19 Immediate Response Program to provide financial support to its employees during the public health emergency. Planned contributed \$500,000 to the fund, which will allow current employees to apply for one-time, tax-free grants of up to \$300.

“This program will provide our team members with direct financial assistance during this period by offering some relief to those with related financial distress,” said Francis. “We wanted to do what I consider just our small part of really trying to help in



Planned Companies provides its staff with proper personal protective equipment. - PLANNED COMPANIES.



Electrostatic sprayer in use. - PLANNED COMPANIES

any way we could. That was why I thought it was an important step from our company and our values to show the team that we respect and care and are with them.”

Francis said right from the start his company implemented a health and wellness verifier that reminds each team member about healthy practices upon check-in. Workers are also asked a series of questions related to their health and social distancing habits, and follow a set protocol depending on the answers. Staff is highly trained, checks are done consistently and having the health and wellness verifiers from the start helps to make sure the group does not become complacent.



Employees of Planned Companies on the job. - PLANNED COMPANIES

Francis said he believes this system will instill confidence and peace of mind in his staff and his clients. In addition, the company will deploy QR code verifier toward the end of the summer, setting up stations at which an individual can scan and be shown exactly when the last time maintenance was performed in that area.

“We’re going touchless with all of this. It’s the individual’s own capability and their own equipment so they don’t have to worry about handling something.”

As Planned continued to operate and provide its service to clients while combating the public health emergency, the pandemic also created an opportunity for the company to diversify its business with new services to meet client needs in a post-COVID world.

For example, it implemented a new disinfecting service that current clients as well as public building and institutions can use to prepare their operations for reopening along with ongoing infection control and prevention. The service includes a number of reference documents designed to ensure the safety of employees, tenants, residents and the public. Planned also added additional disinfecting services using advanced technology and equipment, such as electrostatic sprayers. And that service line will be expanded, especially for commercial and corporate buildings as well as for schools and universities.

Planned has been speaking with school superintendents, officials and boards to go over their plans and make sure that all involved are following proper procedures.

Planned also launched a commercial and residential plan to help building owners reopen amenities and common spaces or congregation areas. The company has been working with Hartline Fitness, which has a “disinfect and protect” program as well as a methodology that Planned will adopt to dis-

infect the equipment and gym areas.

As for Planned’s own business, the company in March launched weekly hour-long online town halls that feature a different speaker every week. These events have brought leaders together from throughout the industry covering topics related to COVID-19 response and facility reopening. They are geared to help Planned Companies’ clients and industry partners modify existing policies and procedures and function in

what is and will continue to be a “new normal” for essential real estate operations.

“I think that a lot of people know their input makes a difference, and to be able to share what each company is doing is very collaborative,” Francis said. “Just having that forum to communicate and share best practices really helps because this has been a very fluid situation. New ideas and practices get discussed constantly.”

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