Workers who aren’t showing symptoms will be included.

By JAMIE MUNKS AND BRIAN NEIBERG

State officials on Friday announced a further expansion of COVID-19 testing in Illinois, with testing now open to a range of frontline workers and employees at essential businesses and new testing sites opening across the state over the next several weeks.

State health officials and front-line workers in Chicago and the suburbs have been overwhelmed by a deluge of sewage and runoff as heavy rains have pounded the area in recent days, leading to increased levels of wastewater and other contaminants.

The problem begins with the tributaries of the Des Plaines River, the Chicago River and other waterways that are saturated to the point of becoming an engineering nightmare.

As little as two-thirds of communities are now handling the amount of sewage and runoff as little as two-thirds of communities are now handling the amount of sewage and runoff as well as waste from homes and businesses.

In Chicago, the sewer system is only capable of handling an average of two-thirds of the runoff generated in a typical year, meaning that even a flood-control reservoir can be overwhelmed.

The nonprofit Center for Neighborhood Technology is working with the city and other local organizations to develop a long-term plan to address the issue.

The city’s history of sewage issues is extensive, with billions of gallons of wastewater spilled into rivers and lakes and at least 125 years of flooding and sewage issues.

In the past, the city was able to handle the overflow by releasing it into the Des Plaines River, but that is no longer an option.

The city has been working on a project to temporarily store sewage and runoff in a tunnel under the city’s Merchandise Mart, but it is not yet operational.

The city is also working on a project to build a new sewage treatment plant in the city’s North Side, but that is not expected to be completed for another decade.

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