



Office of the City Manager
P O Box 2970
Edmond, OK 73083-2970
Larry.Stevens@edmondok.com

TO: Department Heads
FROM: Larry Stevens, City Manager
DATE: March 19, 2020
SUBJECT: Workplace guidelines and Travel Restrictions concerning Novel Coronavirus COVID-19 ("COVID-19")

Please distribute this guidance to all Supervisors to help address employees' workplace questions and concerns about COVID-19 (the coronavirus):

Due to the recent situation regarding the COVID-19 virus, and the fact that the Governor has issued a declaration of emergency and the City Council has issued a declaration of emergency, the need for the following special measures is required at this time. These measures will be in place until the state of emergency is lifted by both the Governor and the City Council, or until further notice by the City Manager's Office. It is likely that these measures will be modified as this situation is rapidly evolving. Please make sure your employees are advised of these guidelines and restrictions.
COMMUNICATION IS ESSENTIAL.

SICK EMPLOYEES

The symptoms of COVID-19 are fever, cough and shortness of breath. Any employee exhibiting these symptoms while at work shall be:

- sent home immediately by their supervisor
- encouraged to contact their health care provider
- not allowed to return to work until medically cleared by their health care provider to resume normal duties. ***

Any employee who calls in sick indicating symptoms of COVID-19 shall not be allowed to return to work until medically cleared by their healthcare provider *** to resume normal duties. If an employee does not volunteer the reason for calling in sick, the supervisor shall ask if the employee has COVID-19

symptoms. Do not ask if they have COVID-19, you may only ask employees if they're experiencing COVID-19 symptoms.

The President signed the Families First Coronavirus Response Act last night which may possibly make additional sick leave and family medical leave available. Until the new law is in effect employees must use sick and/or vacation leave accruals during any absence related to their suspected or confirmed COVID-19 infection. As soon as we receive additional information and guidance on this new law we will advise.

If an employee is sent home or calls in sick because of COVID-19 symptoms, the employee's Department shall notify HR either by phone or e-mail of the employee's name, contact date/time, and contact information.

We must continue to emphasize basic hygiene and remind our employees of the importance of handwashing. Facility maintenance will continue to disinfect our offices.

SOCIAL DISTANCING

You may have heard the term social distancing which is defined as a set of infection control actions intended to stop or slow down the spread of a contagious disease. The objective of social distancing is to reduce the probability of contact between persons carrying an infection, and others who are not infected, so as to minimize disease transmission. We must encourage all employees to practice thoughtful and practical social distancing practices. Examples include:

- a. No congregation in the break rooms
- b. No in-office meetings of more than 10 persons (or a ban altogether)
- c. No staff luncheons
- d. Staggered clock in/out times to avoid crowded areas
- e. No handshakes or high fives
- f. Utilize technology to lessen the personal contact among employees

The above are not specific directives at this time but are examples of actions that can be taken to hopefully stop or slow down the spread of COVID-19.

MODIFICATION OF WORK LOCATION AND WORK HOURS

Discussions are ongoing related to the possibility of modifying work locations, work hours, remote work, work rotation and may be implemented as appropriate for certain departments but only on a temporary basis during this time of emergency. Additional information will be forthcoming.

TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS AND GUIDANCE

Business Travel - All City business travel is prohibited effective immediately until April 19, 2020. Exceptions must be approved by your City Manager. Exceptions generally will only be considered for in state travel or travel involving meetings of

less than 50 people. Employees should seek to get refunds or credit where possible for travel that has already been booked.

Personal Travel — After the date of this memo, any employee taking a personal trip to a country with a COVID-19 related CDC Warning Level 3 (including layovers through the same) may not return to any City worksite until they have completed a 14-day isolation period and have been released by their medical provider. countries are listed at <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices> and currently include all of Europe (including the UK and Ireland), Iran, South Korea, and China. During this period, employees will be required to use sick, vacation, FMLA (if eligible), Leave Without Pay, until medically cleared by their healthcare provider *** to return to work.

Employees taking other out of state travel (both domestic and international) must disclose the destination of their travel (including layovers) to their supervisor and department head prior to departure. Depending on the location of the travel, employees may be asked to self-quarantine for up to 14 days. This will be addressed on a case-by-case basis.

Q. What is COVID-19 (the coronavirus)?

A. It's a new respiratory infection. More information from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is here:
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

Q. What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

A. Fever, cough, and shortness of breath. But please refer to your health care provider and this guide from the CDC: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/symptoms.html>

Q. What are the OKC-County Health Department (OCCHD) and Oklahoma State Department of Health (OSDH) doing to prepare for COVID-19?

A. OCCHD and OSDH are working with their federal partners at CDC to monitor the developing outbreak. OSDH is providing information to local health departments and health care providers across Oklahoma on how to safely and effectively evaluate ill people who might have been infected. They will continue to monitor the situation to ensure possible cases are managed safely, support laboratory testing and implement recommendations from the CDC.

Q. What is the City doing to keep employees safe at work?

A. The City is following guidelines and recommendations from OCCHD, OSDH, the CDC and the World Health Organization (WHO) to maintain a healthy workplace for everyone.

Q. How can employees help protect themselves and their families?

- A. Avoid close contact with people who are sick, and avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands. Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that is at least 60% alcohol.
- Q. Should employees worry about coming to work and catching COVID-19?
- A. The CDC emphasizes that, while COVID-19 poses a potentially serious public health threat, your risk is dependent on exposure. For most people in the U.S., including most types of workers, the risk of COVID-19 infection is low.
- Q. How do people become infected with COVID-19?
- A. Public health officials are still investigating but say that person-to-person spread has mainly been from respiratory droplets from an infected person's coughs or sneezes.
- Q. What if an employee calls in sick indicating they are exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19?
- A. The CDC advises that employees with symptoms of acute respiratory illness and a fever should stay home. Employees who have such symptoms are typically required to stay home and not come to work until they are free of (1) fever (100.4° F [37.8° C] or greater using an oral thermometer), (2) signs of a fever, and (3) any other symptoms for at least 24 hours, without the use of fever-reducing or other symptom-altering medicines (e.g. cough suppressants). However, this may change and depends on the clearance by the employee's healthcare provider. Per Edmond Personnel Policies, employees who are out for three or more consecutive days under the circumstances, and/or whose leave qualifies under The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) may be required to present a physician's statement approving the employee's return to work and resumption of normal duties.***
- Q. What if an employee not suffering from COVID-19 symptoms (i.e., asymptomatic) calls in sick indicating that they have been exposed to someone with COVID-19 and is going to self isolate? _
- A. The employee is encouraged to contact their health care provider to assess their level of risk according to CDC guidance. If the employee has been in close contact (as defined by their health care provider) with someone who has received a laboratory-confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19, the employee will not be allowed to return to work until medically cleared by their health care provider*** to resume normal duties.
- Q. What if an employee not suffering from COVID-19 symptoms (i.e. asymptomatic) advises their supervisor that they have been informed that they have been exposed to someone with COVID-19?
- A. The employee will be sent home immediately by their supervisor and advised to contact their health care provider and the City-County Health Department for additional guidance. If it is determined that an employee has been in close contact (as defined by their health care provider) with someone who has received

a laboratory-confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19, the employee will not be allowed to return to work until medically cleared their health care provider *** to resume normal duties.

- Q. May the City send home an employee involuntarily who has or is exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19?
- A. Yes. Any employee exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms at work will be sent home immediately by their supervisor, and the Department/Division/Office shall report the circumstances to the Human Resources Department. If an employee exhibiting symptoms is unable to leave the work environment immediately upon being given the order, ask the employee to wait in an area that minimizes potential exposure to others.
- Q. What if an employee is concerned, they might contract COVID-19 at work?
- A. Employees should notify their supervisor or a manager of any concerns regarding specific instances of possible exposure in the work environment. Generally, however, employees should concentrate on keeping their hands clean and away from their faces. Employees should cough or sneeze into a tissue, and then throw the tissue away. Use the shoulder or elbow area when that's impossible.
- Q. What if an employee indicates they have a compromised immune system (or regular contact with a family member with a compromised immune system); and therefore, the employee requests special arrangements given the employee's heightened concern they might contract or transmit COVID-19?
- A. The employee should contact the Human Resources Department.
- Q. What if an employee asks for a respirator or mask to be available while he/she works?
- A. The CDC does not recommend respirators or masks for employees who do not show symptoms of a respiratory illness. The only people recommended to wear respirators or masks are people showing symptoms. If this changes, the City will notify everyone.
- Q. What if a City employee gets COVID-19?
- A. Any employee who has contracted COVID-19 (confirmed by a test) will not be allowed to return to work until medically cleared. Employees of the same Department/Division/Office will be notified of potential exposure without disclosing the infected co-worker's name.
- Q. How do I respond to an employee who asks about a rumor suggesting a City employee has been exposed to the COVID-19 and has been isolated or quarantined?
- A. Protect the identity of the exposed employee(s), if known. But, if it's true, acknowledge it without identifying the employee(s), and identify which

Department is affected. Reassure anyone who asks that the City is monitoring the situation.

- Q. Will the City temporarily shut down operations and close work facilities in the event of an outbreak?
- A. This will be evaluated on an ongoing case-by-case basis. We'll follow the recommendations of state, local, national and global public health authorities and consider operational requirements.
- Q. Can an employee work from home if they have been exposed to COVID-19 or are exhibiting any symptoms?
- A. There is no City-wide telecommuting plan that generally allows City employees to work from home. Telecommuting arrangements are approved at the department level on a case-by-case basis in light of operational requirements.
- Q. May the City disclose an employee's actual or probable COVID-19 diagnosis to others?
- A. The City will follow all relevant confidentiality requirements, which significantly limit the disclosure of information. The City can communicate to non-exposed employees that there has been a suspected or confirmed COVID-19 diagnosis without sharing the employee's name or other identifying information.
- Q. May an employee refuse to come to work due to a fear of becoming infected with COVID-19.
- A. A generalized fear of contracting COVID-19 is not likely to justify a work refusal in most cases. Such refusals will be evaluated by Human Resources Department on a case-by-case basis. Employees may have the right to refuse to work in conditions they believe to be unsafe if they have a "reasonable, good-faith belief" that working under certain conditions would not be safe.
- Q. If an employee says they are ready to return to work and has a doctor's return-to-work note, but the City is concerned the employee will not be able to safely perform their duties, may the City refuse to allow the employee to return to work?
- A. Yes, if the employee would create an unsafe or unhealthy work environment or is a direct threat to themselves or others. Often, having a one-on-one conversation with the employee will reveal the reason for their desire to return to work (e.g., they have exhausted all paid leave, have an important project to finish, etc.). It may result in a shared conclusion that they are or are not ready to return to work.
- *** With regard to the requirement for a health care provider's return to work note, this requirement may be waived by HR depending on the circumstances and the availability of reasonably being able to obtain a note on a timely basis.