

Fairfax County Government - Department of Human Resources

Guidance Relative to COVID-19

TELEWORK

1. **What are my telework options in response to COVID-19?**
 - a. Additional flexibility is being accommodated concerning telework. The focus is on a balance of providing services to the community and meeting the needs of employees.
 - b. Employees should consult with their agencies concerning any telework options, which may be a set schedule or telework on an ad hoc basis. Departments should make every effort to maximize telework by evaluating all employees' eligibility and getting signed telework agreement done as soon as possible. Ad hoc telework agreements may be used to promote social distancing.
 - c. Departments may choose to allow an exception for employees to telework when there are young children or other persons requiring care and supervision present during the workday. However, employees are still expected to be productive and accurately account for work and non-work hours. Employees who telework are required to remain available and responsive. If a telework participant becomes ill or needs to care for a sick family member who is ill, then the employee is expected to take leave (sick, annual, compensatory, some of the 2 weeks being provided specific to COVID-19, leave without pay) if teleworking is not feasible
2. **I've been approved to telework. My typical schedule is 8:00 – 4:30. I would like to work from 6:00 – 2:30 during this time. Am I able to alter my standard work hours during this time?**
 - a. With department approval, employees will be eligible to work alternative hours that extend beyond our typical hours of operation.
3. **How do I start a conversation about telework?**
 - a. Go to the [Fairfax County Service Portal](#) and search "telework". Then, go to "Telework Enrollment" to complete the application. If your job is conducive to telework, this application will be used to determine the specifics of your telework approach that works for both you and the services that need to be delivered.
4. **Am I required to telework if my facility is closed?**
 - a. If your location is closed to the public but open for employees, you will be expected to work (including telework) unless you are specifically told not to.
5. **Am I required to telework if the County is closed?**
 - a. We are not currently anticipating a Countywide closure.

ABSENCES RELATED TO COVID-19

Note: At this time, County employees are being granted up to two weeks of pay (administrative leave) for any COVID-19 related absences. This includes: needing to be home due to lack of childcare, inability to work due to being quarantined, sickness due to exposure to COVID-19 virus, anyone with a compromised immune system, older adults, employees with serious health conditions, care for an elderly person who resides in the same household as the employee, or lack of work for non-essential employees when a facility is closed.

1. **What happens if an employee comes to work with COVID-19 symptoms?**
 - a. Employees in the workplace who exhibit symptoms should be promptly separated from other employees and advised to go home and stay at home until they have been fever-free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medicine.

2. **Should a supervisor keep documentation of the symptoms and signs exhibited by an employee?**
 - a. DHR does not recommend that supervisors or managers document and keep track of symptoms or signs of illness for any employee, because once that record is created it may potentially be treated as a HIPAA document, with protected health information. It would also qualify as an employee medical record, and per Chapter 14 would be required to be kept in confidential, secured files. The agency HR would need to manage the security and retention of such records and follow all federal and/or state record retention rules or guidelines. Additionally, no information gathered about an employee shall be discussed with any other employees or unauthorized individuals. Given the nature of the sensitive information that could be gathered and that it could end up in the wrong person's hands, this would be fraught with potential misuse and abuse. You can request a doctor's note that indicates the employee is able to return to full duties and is not contagious.
3. **I'm a non-merit employee and my work location is closed. Will I be paid?**
 - a. Employees may be temporarily transferred or reassigned to assure the continuity of County services. Temporary transfers and reassignments may be made without regard to the employee's class or pay grade. For example, a Library employee is being reassigned to assist the Department of Human Resources on a temporary basis.
 - b. Teleworking is also an option. Please check with your agency HR representatives for eligibility.
 - c. Non-Merit benefits eligible (status E) employees are eligible to receive up to two weeks paid time off (administrative leave) based on their regular work schedule. Temporary employees (status G) employees are eligible to receive up to two weeks paid time off based on their regular work schedule.
 - d. If your location is closed to the public but open for employees, you will be expected to work unless you are specifically told not to.
4. **I'm a merit employee and my work location is closed. Will I be paid?**
 - a. Employees may be temporarily transferred or reassigned to assure the continuity of County services. Temporary transfers and reassignments may be made without regard to the employee's class or pay grade. For example, a Library Information Assistant may be assigned to another agency with an information desk that is short staffed.
 - b. Teleworking is also an option. Please check with your agency HR representatives for eligibility.
 - c. Merit employees are eligible to receive up to two weeks paid time off (administrative leave) based on their regular work schedule.
 - d. If your location is closed to the public but open for employees, you will be expected to work unless you are specifically told not to.
5. **My child's school is closed due to a COVID-19. Am I expected to work? If so, can I bring my child to work?**
 - a. One of the reasons for closing schools is to limit exposure; therefore, you are not permitted to bring your child to work. However, you may be authorized to telework during this time. You are also eligible to receive up to two weeks of pay (administrative leave). Please consult with your manager or agency HR representative.

6. What happens if I'm quarantined?

- a. An employee who is required to be quarantined (either self or otherwise) is eligible to receive up to two weeks paid time off (administrative leave) based on their regular work schedule. Personal leave (annual, sick, comp, LWOP) should be coded if additional time is needed. Employees might also be eligible for advanced sick leave (which must be requested and will require medical certification) or donated leave.

7. My facility is closed but I'm required to work. Am I entitled to additional compensation?

- a. No; additional compensation is only granted when the County Executive authorizes closure of the entire county, not individual facilities.

BENEFITS

1. Many employees in my Division are anxious or afraid what can I do to help?

- a. Communicate only accurate and vetted information to co-workers. The Employee Assistance Program is available to all active employees, no matter their status, and their household members. Ensure your employees know how to access these services. Those wishing to use the available services can call 1-877-622-4327 24-hours a day for a live, trained counselor. Callers should use the id *fairfaxcounty*, all one word.
- b. The following information is available on FairfaxNet:
 - i. [Coping with the Fear of Coronavirus](#)
 - ii. [General Employee EAP Overview](#)
 - iii. [Managers Guide to the EAP](#)

2. How will the county's medical plans handle COVID-19?

- a. **For CIGNA participants:** Cigna has eliminated the out-of-pocket costs for doctor-recommended COVID-19 diagnostic testing and is enhancing coverage to combat the spread of this virus. Effective immediately, Cigna will waive customers' out-of-pocket costs for COVID-19 testing-related visits with in-network providers, whether at a doctor's office, urgent care clinic, emergency room, or via telehealth through May 31, 2020.

Cigna is also making it easier for our participating in-network physicians with virtual care capabilities to help Cigna customers who are chronically ill or immunosuppressed to transition from in-person visits to virtual care through May 31, 2020 using the standard office benefit. For customer with chronic health conditions worried about access to the medications they need, they can already obtain 90-day supplies with free delivery directly to their home and have access to our pharmacists 24/7 through Express Scripts Pharmacy.

During times like these, many may experience feeling that can become overwhelming. That's why Cigna is providing resources free of charge for all customers, clients, and communities to help manage high stress and anxiety. Cigna has opened a 24-hour toll-free help line (1-866-912-1687) to connect people directly with qualified clinicians who can provide support and guidance. More information can be found on Cigna.com. For more information on the Cigna managed plans, visit the [Medical Insurance](#) page on FairfaxNet and select your plan of choice.

- b. **For Cigna MyChoice participants:** On March 22, 2020, the IRS issued Notice 2020-15, allowing us to provide coverage for testing and treatment of COVID-19 related services without an annual deductible requirement that would otherwise apply.

- c. **For KAISER participants:** Kaiser is committed to the health and safety of its members, patients, employees and doctors. Kaiser has been working on confronting highly infectious diseases for years, and they are confident they can safely treat patients who have been infected with this virus, with very little risk to other patients, members, and employees. Kaiser states they are prepared to have patients tested for the coronavirus (COVID-19). If testing is warranted, they will make the appropriate arrangements. Rest assured that your health is their top priority. For more information on the [Kaiser HMO](#), and how to access care, visit their page on FairfaxNet.
- 3. Where can I get tested?**
 - a. It is recommended that you call your Primary Care Physician if you think you have been exposed to COVID-19 and develop a fever and symptoms, such as cough or difficulty breathing. Seek medical attention immediately if you have difficulty breathing, shortness of breath, persistent pain or pressure in your chest, confusion or bluish lips or face. (This list is not all inclusive. Please consult your medical provider for any symptoms that are severe or concerning.) Your healthcare provider will decide whether you need to be tested, but keep in mind that there is no treatment for COVID-19 and people who are mildly ill may be able to isolate and are for themselves at home.
 - b. Kaiser Permanente has set up limited drive-up COVID-19 testing at five of its medical hub facilities in the mid-Atlantic region. They are offering drive-up testing for Kaiser Permanente members who have a doctor's order for the tests, in accordance with the latest Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines. Drive-up locations are in Gaithersburg and Largo Maryland as well as Woodbridge and Tyson's Corner in Virginia. Kaiser will also have an additional testing site at our Capital Hill Medical Center in a few days. At this time, Kaiser is only able to test Kaiser Permanente members. Kaiser will follow any national and state guidance on expanding testing as we see increased cases.
- 4. How do I access tele- or virtual health?**
 - a. Employees, retirees and their families that participate in one of the Cigna managed plans can access virtual health, at a discounted rate, through Amwell or MDLIVE. These services do count against your plan's deductible and are subject to any co-insurance or co-pay. Information on accessing [virtual care](#) can be found on FairfaxNet.
 - b. Those enrolled the Kaiser Permanente HMO can access free video visits through kp.org. [See our Doctors](#) on Call flyer or visit the [Kaiser page](#) on FairfaxNet for more ways to access care.
 - c. Both [Amwell](#) and [MDLIVE](#) offer virtual visits to the uninsured. These services are in high demand but can provide urgent care services conveniently and remotely, 24-hours a day. Prices vary for services.
- 5. Will the Benefits Division waive the 30-day qualifying event window as a result of work disruption or building closure?**
 - a. Currently, there is no plan to change any policies relating to benefit election deadlines. No changes to pre-tax benefit elections can be made outside of Open Enrollment without a [qualifying event](#). Employees and retirees experiencing a qualifying event are required to contact the Benefits Division directly to make notification of their event within 30 calendar days. Failure to notify the Benefits Division within 30 calendar days of a qualifying event, or to provide appropriate and timely documentation of the event, will result in no change to current benefits.

HEALTH

- 1. What guidance can you give me for not violating ADA rules when working with employees who might be sick?**
 - a. This document from the EEOC gives guidance to supervisors and managers on this topic: https://www.eeoc.gov/facts/pandemic_flu.html
- 2. My co-worker will be returning from international travel. Is he/she safe to be here at work?**
 - a. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) provides travel notices based on assessment of the potential health risks involved with traveling to a certain area. At this time, CDC and the U.S. State Department have issued travel advisories on China, Europe, United Kingdom and Ireland, Iran, and South Korea due to widespread transmission of COVID-19 in those countries. If the State Department has not issued a restriction on individuals returning from that country, they can return to work. The list is changing rapidly so keep checking the CDC website (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html>).
- 3. Should an employee returning from overseas be quarantined?**
 - a. An employee **should not** be advised to stay home for 14 days unless they have been identified by a health department as a contact to a laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 case or had travel from one of the travel advisory countries in the last 14 days. The list is changing rapidly so keep checking the CDC website (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html>). Assuming the employee has not had infectious contact and does not have any symptoms upon their return, official health guidance is that he or she can return to work without posing risk to others.
- 4. If I believe that I have contracted coronavirus through a contact while performing my work duties, will this be covered under workers' compensation?**
 - a. In Virginia, employees can receive workers' compensation benefits not only when they suffer an injury by accident but also when they contract an occupational disease caused by their employment. While workers' compensation law provides compensation for "occupational diseases" that arise out of and in the course of employment, Virginia excludes "ordinary diseases of life" (e.g., the common cold or flu). In order to be covered under workers compensation the employee must prove to the Virginia Workers' Compensation Commission that the illness arose out of the employment as defined by the Virginia Workers' Compensation Code. A finding of compensability would be unlikely for most employees whose employment places them in no higher risk of infection than the general public, and the more widespread the virus becomes, the less likely any singular incident would be found compensable.
- 5. What leave will be available to an employee who comes in contact with a coronavirus patient and is required to quarantined?**
 - a. If County employees are required to be quarantined by the Health Department, and proof of contact has determined that exposure occurred during the normal course of their work, they will be compensated. Employees in these incidences will be allowed to use up to 14 days of administrative leave. In cases where potential exposure may have occurred outside of work (e.g., the grocery store where they are no more at risk than

the general public), employees would be required to use their sick, annual, compensatory leave, or leave without pay.

TRAINING

1. Are training classes being cancelled?

- a. We will hold NEO virtually beginning March 20, 2020 and probably for April. If you have new employees please have them [email](#) Robin Baker in OD&T to be added.
- b. All of our in-person leadership classes have been cancelled until April 10, 2020 where we will reassess at that time. In the meantime, OD&T is working to set up some virtual leadership classes on topics such as Resiliency, Emotional Intelligence in a time of FEAR, etc. to help people who are teleworking not feel so isolated. These will be held on Fridays from noon to 1:00 and will begin March 27, 2020. If you are interested in leading a topic, please [email](#) Robin Baker in OD&T. All topics will be put in Employee U early next week (week of March 23).
- c. All Desktop classes have been moved to virtual classroom. If anyone has registered, they will receive a notification with the link and call in number.
- d. All FOCUS classes are still on as of right now. We will continue to send notices through Newslink so please check daily for updates.
- e. We have been using TEAMS a lot! And will continue to do so. Please see attached for instructions.
- f. RFP updates-Everything has been in contracts and we are waiting on approval from them and for the contractors to be notified. Once that happens Robin will share the list.
- g. Reminder to cancel classrooms in resource scheduler if you are NOT using the rooms. If you are not able to sign in to the resource scheduler, please [email](#) Amber Corbin to let her know.

HIRING

1. What are the guidelines for interviewing candidates?

- a. Avoid shaking hands, abide by the recommendations from the Health Dept on personal distance (6 feet). Updated information says we should not gather more than 10 so interviewing should be fine.
- b. After each candidate leaves, wipe down the interview area.
- c. Use telephone interviews or Skype as an alternative to in person interviews.

EMERGENCY SERVICE PERSONNEL

1. What is the definition for Emergency Service Personnel?

Those employees who, due to the nature of their specific job duties or the nature of the emergency which has occurred, must report to work to ensure that public health and safety needs or critical county operational requirements are met. Specific examples for "Emergency Service Personnel" would be occupations identified in the Public Safety and DPWES agencies that would need to respond and be available for an emergency event. Please reference [procedural memorandum 31](#).

2. As an employee, how do I know if my position is designated as Emergency Service Personnel?

Department heads are responsible for clearly designating emergency service personnel and maintain an auditable list of designated employees. Another place where employees will know if their position is identified to be emergency service personnel will be on their position

description. On the position description, if the indicator for this category is selected as “Yes” then the position is emergency service personnel.

3. If designated to be Emergency Service Personnel and county offices are closed due to a COVID-19 event will there be additional compensation administered for this?

Employees designated to be emergency service personnel are required to report to or remain at their assigned work site or an alternative Fairfax County work site regardless of weather or other emergency conditions. Emergency service personnel employees are not eligible to telework during a declared state of emergency and/or unexpected office closure, unless they have been approved to do so by their supervisor.

Emergency service personnel employees are compensated at their regular rate of pay. There are specific criteria for employees who may be eligible for overtime or are on call-back time. Please reference [policy chapter 4.14](#).

4. What will the county do if an emergency service designated employee is demonstrating symptoms related to COVID-19?

The employee should be removed from the emergency personnel list and should follow the COVID-19 protocol for impacted employees. Please reference the section for **ABSENCES RELATED TO COVID-19**.