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COVID-19

Frequently Asked Questions in the Workplace

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I. Health-Related Questions

- A. **What should I do if I have a temperature at or above 100.4 degrees?** Stay home! Continue to monitor your temperature by checking twice daily. Call your physician if you believe it is appropriate.
- B. **What symptoms should I watch for if I think I am sick?** Watch for a fever at or above 100.4, coughing, and shortness of breath. For more information, visit www.health.mo.gov.
- C. **If you are concerned that you might have COVID-19, should you call your doctor or should you go to the doctor's office?** Call your doctor for guidance before going to the doctor's office so that measures may be taken to reduce the risk of infecting others.
- D. **If I do not know if I have been in contact with someone with COVID-19, but I have all the symptoms. Should I still call my doctor?** You should call your doctor if you believe it is appropriate. Do not go to the doctor's office for COVID-19 symptoms without calling first.
- E. **Should I be wearing a mask?** You should follow your doctor's advice on this issue. The Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services notes that the current recommendations regarding masks are that if you yourself are sick with fever and cough, you can wear a surgical mask to prevent transmission to other people. If you are healthy, there is not thought to be any additional benefit to wearing a mask yourself because the mask is not airtight and does not necessarily prevent breathing in of these viral particles, which are very tiny. It's important to note masks are to prevent particles from leaving the person's nose or mouth; the mask protects the environment from the user. They do nothing to protect the user from particles in the environment.

II. Management-Related Questions (See Leave Guidance memo.)

- A. **What is "borrowed leave?"** Borrowed leave is leave made available for people who do not have accumulated sick leave. Borrowed leave is only available for

COVID-19 consistent with Revision 1 of the COVID-19 Leave Guidance memo issued by the Office of Administration.

- B. **How much borrowed leave can I take?** While there is no cap on borrowed leave, documentation requirements have been added for the different purposes that a team member can take borrowed leave. Again, borrowed leave is only available for COVID-19 related absences, consistent with the Leave Guidance Memo and is not available in any other situation.
- C. **Can hourly, non-benefit eligible employees who do not accrue leave use borrowed leave?** No
- D. **What happens if I run out of an authorized amount of paid leave?** Contact your HR representative.
- E. **If I have accumulated annual leave or comp time, should I use it before using borrowed leave?** Yes, it is recommended to use your accumulated annual leave or comp time rather than using borrowed leave.
- F. **Can I use comp time instead of sick leave if I need to stay home?** Yes. However, it is not mandatory to do so.
- G. **Do I have to take borrowed leave?** No. You can choose to take leave without pay, or if you have annual leave or comp time, you may use it.
- H. **If I feel fine but a member of my household has a temperature at or above 100.4 degrees or a situation described in categories 2 – 4, may I come to work?** No.
- I. **Will I have to repay borrowed leave?** Yes. Accruing sick leave (at your normal accrual rate) will be applied to your borrowed leave balance each pay period, starting from when you are back to work. At your option, you may also repay borrowed leave using annual leave or comp time.
- J. **Can I use annual leave if I don't have sick leave and I don't want to borrow leave?** Yes. However, it is not mandatory to do so.
- K. **Can I take sick or borrowed leave if someone in my household has a temperature at or above 100.4 degrees or a situation described in categories 2 -4?** Yes, if the household member requires your care and attention. See numbers 1 – 5 and 7 of the Leave Guidance memo for details.
- L. **A member of my family or household has an illness not related to COVID-19. Can I take borrowed leave for this?** No. Borrowed leave can only be taken for situations described in the Leave Guidance memo.
- M. **When can a team member return to work if they tested positive for COVID-19?** A team member who tests positive for COVID-19 may not return to work until the team member has provided a note from a physician authorizing the team member's return to work. The note must state that the team member has had two negative tests for COVID-19 taken at least 24 hours apart. The physician's note shall be provided to Human Resources.
- N. **Should I be canceling meetings?** Rather than holding meetings in person, hold teleconferences or online meetings if possible.

O. I've heard about "social distancing." How does this apply to the workplace?

Within the workplace, social distancing can include:

- Avoiding in-person meetings, utilizing email, phone, and teleconferences.
- Meetings that are unavoidable should be short, in large rooms allowing space (3+ feet); no handshakes.
- Define and postpone nonessential gatherings and trainings.
- Limit social congregating in the workplace. (Copiers, water coolers, etc.)
- Prop open doors that are not essential for privacy or access restriction to minimize contact with door handles.
- Provide access to hand sanitizer and disinfecting wipes as possible.
- Encourage team members to keep work areas clean, and to routinely disinfect frequently touched surfaces.
- Encourage/require staff to clean dishes/utensils and not leave anything in break rooms/ kitchenettes.

III. Facilities Questions

- A. **What is being done in regard to disinfectant in the workplace?** Freestanding disinfection stations for all state-owned office buildings have been ordered and are expected to arrive around March 26, 2020, due to severe shortages.
- B. **What can team members do to keep the workplace clean?** We all have a role to play in keeping our workplace clean. Team members are encouraged to work together to wipe down hard surfaces such as door handles, countertops, etc. See guidance from the CDC [here](#).
- C. **What is being done in regard to cleaning workplace restrooms?** Janitorial contractors are being directed to take extra measures when cleaning restrooms in all state-owned office buildings. This includes making sure all soap dispensers are working and stocked with soap, as well as wiping down handles and similar surfaces.

IV. School, child or adult daycare, and nursing facility closings

- A. **What kind of leave is available if I need to stay home to care for a child or adult dependent because their care facility has closed due to COVID-19?** Work with your supervisor on flexible work options to avoid the need to take leave. These options include expansion of work hours, flexible schedules, teleworking, or job-sharing. If these are not viable options, you may take annual leave, sick leave, or comp time. If you have no sick leave you are eligible for borrowed leave. In this situation, you may also use leave without pay.
- B. **What kind of documentation do I need to provide my Human Resources staff?**

The documentation should indicate the closing of the facility and that the purpose of the closing is due to COVID 19. Online notices on an official facility website or social media page, emails from facility management, or press announcements are sufficient. The documentation should indicate that the facility is closed during the specified timeframe you are requesting borrowed leave. This documentation needs to be provided to your supervisor every 14 days. Your Department's Human Resources staff will track and maintain this documentation.

- C. **Do I have to repay borrowed leave used for this purpose?** Yes, borrowed leave will be repaid from sick leave, beginning when you return to work, at your normal rate of accrual for sick leave. In addition, if you want to repay the borrowed leave more quickly, borrowed leave may also be repaid from annual leave or comp time.
- D. **What is the maximum amount of borrowed leave that can be used for this purpose?** The maximum amount of borrowed leave that can be used for these closings has not been established at this time.