

COVID-19 GUIDELINES FOR CITY EMPLOYEES

The City of Irvine (City) values its employees and understands that the COVID-19 pandemic may be creating difficult and stressful situations for employees. The City is committed to providing employees with as much information as possible to help navigate a variety of uncertainties, and has developed guidelines, procedures, and responses to frequently asked questions below.

If questions arise that are not addressed below, please contact your Department's Human Resources (HR) Liaison. Given the fluidity of the situation, the procedures described below are subject to change. This guidance will be updated as additional information becomes available.

Please note that the City is following County, State, and Federal guidelines to promote a safe workplace during the COVID-19 crisis. Just as we are committed to our employees, as a city government, we are also committed to protecting the health, safety, and preservation of our City.

1. *What are symptoms of COVID-19?*

Flu-like symptoms, fever (100.4° F or greater using an oral thermometer), cough, and/or shortness of breath. Employees who have symptoms are recommended to stay home and not come to work until they are free of fever (100.4° F [37.8° C] or greater using an oral thermometer is a symptom of the virus), and any other symptoms for at least 24 hours (such as a cough), without the use of fever-reducing or other symptom-altering medicines (e.g. cough suppressants). Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/symptoms.html>.

2. *If an employee is concerned that they may have symptoms consistent with COVID-19, what should they do?*

The employee should stay home and follow normal call-out procedures. If an employee begins to feel sick while at work, they should contact a supervisor about the possible need to go home as they would with any other illness.

3. *During a pandemic, how much information may a supervisor or manager request from employees who display or report symptoms?*

Employers may ask employees if they are experiencing symptoms such as coughing, fever, or shortness of breath. Employers must treat all information about employee illness as confidential. In general, supervisors and managers are advised not to ask employees if they have COVID-19, although an employee may volunteer it. If there are specific concerns that an employee has a diagnosis of COVID-19 and has not disclosed it, the Department HR Liaison should be contacted.

Employers may also ask employees about potential exposure and/or recent travel to countries with widespread or sustained community transmission of COVID-19.

4. *If an employee has symptoms consistent with COVID-19, can management ask the employee to leave work?*

Yes. If an employee is displaying symptoms consistent with COVID-19, they may be asked to leave work. Employers must provide employees with a workplace that is safe and free

from recognized hazards. Employers should require an employee to leave work if the employee displays or discloses symptoms consistent with COVID-19.

Importantly, managers and supervisors must be consistent in their approach and apply objective criteria to their decision when sending employees home. In other words, departments should take care not to make decisions that are, or appear to be, discriminatory based on illegitimate or non-relevant considerations.

Employees asked to leave work due to symptoms should telecommute, if possible. If telecommuting is not an option, employees may use accrued sick leave or other accrued leaves, or take unpaid leave. Please note that employees on unpaid leave may be responsible for the full cost of health benefit premiums, depending on the duration of unpaid leave.

5. *If an employee has COVID-19, can they be required to leave work?*

Yes. If an employee has a medical diagnosis of COVID-19, the employee must be required to leave the workplace. In light of the health risks posed by COVID-19, permitting an employee with the virus to be at work could threaten the health and safety of other employees.

6. *What if an employee is considered at high risk of COVID-19 infection because of age or serious chronic medical conditions as identified by the CDC?*

Guidance from the State of California recommends that people who are age 65 and over self-isolate in order to avoid exposure to COVID-19. For that reason, employees 65 and over or those having serious chronic medical conditions as identified by the CDC will telecommute. CDC guidance: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/high-risk-complications.html>

7. *What if an employee refuses to come to work because of a generalized fear of infection?*

If operationally feasible, the employee may be allowed to telecommute. The CDC is recommending social distancing as an effective and critical means to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. However, an employee can be required to attend work, and the refusal to do so may be grounds for discipline.

8. *What if an employee is unable to come to work as a result of a school or daycare closure for their child?*

If operationally feasible, the employee may be allowed to telecommute. If telecommuting is not an option, employees may use accrued sick leave or other accrued leaves, or take unpaid leave. Please note that employees on unpaid leave may be responsible for the full cost of health benefit premiums, depending on the duration of unpaid leave.

9. *If an employee believes a co-worker is displaying symptoms consistent with COVID-19, what should they do?*

The employee should notify a supervisor or manager.

10. When should an employee with COVID-19, or symptoms consistent with it, be allowed to return to work?

An employee who has tested positive for COVID-19 and is subsequently symptom free must obtain medical clearance from their doctor before returning to work.

An employee who has not been tested, but has experienced symptoms consistent with COVID-19, should contact their Department HR Liaison and determine what, if any, medical clearance is required.

11. What can you tell other employees about a coworker who has COVID-19?

Employee medical information is confidential, so the identity of the diagnosed employee should not be disclosed.

12. What are my job responsibilities while I am telecommuting?

Those employees assigned to telecommute are to perform the regular duties of their positions, or any other duties assigned to them by their Department Director. This includes being responsive to the public, supervision, and staff via email and phone.

13. If I am assigned to telecommute do I have to remain at home?

There is no requirement that you work at a particular location. You must, however, remain available throughout your regular scheduled shift.

14. If I am contacted by supervision by phone, how soon do I have to respond?

You are expected to respond within a reasonable time. Department Directors and their designees may establish their own response time requirements. That said, employees should respond within an hour of being called barring unforeseen circumstances.

15. Do I get breaks and lunches while I am telecommuting?

You may take care of personal business during unpaid breaks and lunches just as you would if you were on-site.

16. Am I guaranteed a telecommuting assignment?

No employee is guaranteed a telecommuting assignment. Given the evolving nature of the current situation we ask that staff remain flexible and be ready to report to their regularly assigned work location when directed to do so.

17. What procedures do I follow if I need to take a day off or am sick?

Just as you would if you were working on-site, you should seek pre-approval for a vacation day or day off. If you are sick you should notify your supervisor as you normally would.

18. Should I change my email/voicemail informing people I am telecommuting?

As employees will be working and continuing to be responsive to the public, supervision and staff via email and phone, there is no need to change outgoing emails or voicemails.

19. Are services available to help employees cope with concerns related to COVID-19?

Yes, the City has valuable resources available to you through our benefits program. If you have questions about these, or other benefit programs, please contact Nikki Rouse by email at nrouse@cityofirvine.org.

Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

The City of Irvine provides a valuable EAP benefit that can help you navigate through a variety of life’s challenges. All City employees have access to the EAP (provided by MHN) that offers consultation and resources on a variety of topics such as stress management, childcare and eldercare needs, financial services, marriage, family and relationship issues, legal services, substance abuse, and grief/loss.

Blue Shield Members – Teladoc

Teladoc’s U.S. board-certified doctors are available 24/7/365 to resolve many of your non-emergency medical issues through phone or video consults. Contact Teladoc online at www.teladoc.com/bsc or call 1-800-835-5362.

Kaiser Members – Phone or Video Visits

Kaiser offers a variety of care options including phone and online/video doctor visits. Please visit <https://healthy.kaiserpermanente.org/southern-california/get-care> for additional information or call 1-833-574-2273 to schedule an appointment.

20. Who is my department Human Resources Liaison?

Department	HR Liaison Name	Work Extension	Email
City Clerk	Debbie Tracy	6284	dtracy@cityofirvine.org
City Manager	Michelle Grettenberg	6252	mgrettenberg@cityofirvine.org
Community Development	Michelle Riske	6324	michelleriske@cityofirvine.org
Community Services	Emily Walker	6291	ewalker@cityofirvine.org
Financial Management & Strategic Planning	Melinda Neumann	6255	mneumann@cityofirvine.org
Human Resources & Innovation	Joe Angeles	6716	jangeles@cityofirvine.org
Public Safety	Jennifer Finch	7115	jfinch@cityofirvine.org
Public Works / Transportation	Anna Sanchez	7350	asanchez@cityofirvine.org