

LASD - Department Operations Center



COVID-19

Workforce Guidelines

In the past few months, the coronavirus has spread throughout much of the world, including the United States and California. There has been an increasing number of confirmed cases in Los Angeles County, raising the risk of spread of disease from the new coronavirus in Los Angeles County. The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health is actively working with the Centers for Disease Control and State partners to prevent the spread of infection and respond to continued reports of the new coronavirus outbreak. All employees are reminded to practice good public health hygiene to reduce the spread of respiratory diseases; this includes staying home when sick, washing your hands frequently, covering coughs or sneezes with tissues or your elbow, and getting your flu immunization.

Federal Directives on Travel and Quarantine

On January 31, 2020, in response to the significant increase in the number of confirmed cases of coronavirus in mainland China, the United States (US) government issued a set of new directives that both restrict travel in to the US from mainland China and delineate quarantine orders for those who have recently traveled to mainland China. Department employees who returned from travel anywhere in mainland China after February 2, 2020, are subject to the new directives. This includes either being legally quarantined or asked to remain away from public spaces and not go to workplaces that are shared with others for up to 14 days from the last exposure (usually the last date a person was in mainland China).

If you travelled from mainland China, Italy, South Korean or Iran and develop a fever or respiratory symptoms within 14 days of your return, you should seek medical care right away. Before you go to a doctor's office or emergency room, call ahead and tell them about your symptoms and your recent travel.

Employees who are legally quarantined under the Federal directive will be covered by Paid Leave. Alternative telework schedules may also be considered when appropriate.

Infected Employees

Employees who exhibit symptoms common not only to COVID-19 (coronavirus), but also the common cold and/or influenza, may be asked to go home if the employee is showing symptoms of a communicable illness (such as fever, coughing and/or shortness of breath). The standard used to determine if an employee should be sent home shall be based on the following; (1) Exhibition of symptoms associated with COVID-19; (2) Severity of such symptoms; (3) Travel to or through areas with known

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community transmission; and (4) Known or suspected contact with affected individuals. Any other criteria used would be directly related to the risk of transmission.

When should you stay home from work?

You should stay at home if you are feeling ill, for the health and safety of yourself and your fellow employees. CDC guidelines show that symptoms for COVID-19 mirror those of influenza, with fever, coughing, and shortness of breath. You should err on the side of caution and stay at home until you are free of fever and any other symptoms for at least 24 hours, without the use of fever-reducing or other symptom-altering medicines (e.g. cough suppressants).

County employees who return from travel anywhere that is designated as an area of high risk in the world, are subject to the directives established by the federal government. Current directives include requesting travelers to 'socially distance' themselves by staying away from public spaces for up to 14 days from the last exposure or, in some instances, instigating formal quarantines.

What happens if you are medically diagnosed with COVID-19?

If you report to work, the Department must send you home immediately. You will remain home and follow any instructions/orders from the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health for isolation. You will qualify for FMLA/CFRA leave because the condition constitutes a "serious health condition."

You will receive up to 80 hours of paid sick leave, if you are a full-time employee. If you are a part-time employee, you will receive paid sick leave in the amount of the average hours you worked over a two-week period.

If you do not need to use the hours because you have returned to work, they do not carry over. The paid sick leave ends when you return to work or you have exhausted the 80 hours (or averaged hours for part-time employees).

Afterwards, if you have a sick leave balance, you have the option of using such leave for the duration of your isolation period, and then your accrued vacation. Or you may opt to be on unpaid leave status. If you are a Megaflex employee, you would exhaust all other benefit leave balances, prior to using elective leave.



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You may return to work the latter of: 7 days after the first onset of symptoms (cough, fever, headache, etc.), or 72 hours after being fever-free (under 100.4 degrees F.). A doctor's note clearing you is not needed.

What happens if you show symptoms of COVID-19, or common cold and/or influenza?

Your supervisor may require you to go home if you are showing mild symptoms such as fever, coughing and/or shortness of breath.

You will receive up to 80 hours of paid sick leave, if you are a full-time employee. If you are a part-time employee, you will receive paid sick leave in the amount of the average hours you worked over a two-week period.

If you do not need to use the hours because you have returned to work, they do not carry over. The paid sick leave ends when you return to work or you have exhausted the 80 hours (or averaged hours for part-time employees).

Afterwards, if you have a sick leave balance, you have the option of using such leave for the duration of your isolation period, and then your accrued vacation. Or you may opt to be on unpaid leave status. If you are a Megaflex employee, you would exhaust all other benefit leave balances, prior to using elective leave.

You may return to work the latter of: 7 days after the first onset of symptoms (cough, fever, headache, etc.), or 72 hours after being fever-free (under 100.4 degrees F.). A doctor's note clearing you is not needed.

What happens if I have no symptoms but recently returned from travels abroad from an area where there is widespread transmission of COVID-19 or I have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19?

You will be required to stay home and away from work for no less than 14 days after such travel, in accordance with the Department of Health guidelines.

If you are required to be in self-quarantine, you will receive up to 80 hours of paid sick leave, if you are a full-time employee. If you are a part-time employee, you will receive paid sick leave in the amount of the average hours you worked over a two-week period. If you do not need to use the hours because you have returned to work, they do not carry over. The paid sick leave ends when you return to work or you have exhausted the 80 hours (or averaged hours for part-time employees).

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Afterwards, if you have a sick leave balance, you have the option of using such leave for the duration of your isolation period, and then your accrued vacation. Or you may opt to be on unpaid leave status. If you are a Megaflex employee, you would exhaust all other benefit leave balances, prior to using elective leave.

If you eventually test positive for COVID-19, refer to the above questions and answers above.

What if I am over 65 years of age and/or have a chronic or underlying health issue?

Except for First Responders, you are encouraged to self-isolate and work remotely if possible. If the Department is able to find you work from a remote location or home, you will continue to be paid your regular wages. If the Department is unable to find you work from a remote location or home, and you still want to self-isolate at home, you may use your benefit time, including vacation and sick pay during your absence. No doctor's note is required in order to be placed on a leave.

May I telework?

Except for First Responders, telework may be an option if you are experiencing mild symptoms of illness, need to be at home with an ill or vulnerable family member, have no alternative arrangements for dependents in the case of school closures, daycare or elder care, or those infected and feeling better, but under quarantine and not yet released to work. Unit Commanders will determine whether your specific job and assignment are: 1) conducive to working from home, 2) your work productivity is measurable, 3) your job can be modified in order to allow you to work from home, and 4) you have secure access to the technology necessary to perform your duties from home. The normal requirements for telework training and certification are waived during this emergency, and until further notice.

May I work a flexible schedule?

Unit Commanders will review whether your work schedule can be accommodated due to your need to be with dependents due to schools, day care, or elder care facility closures.

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Do I need a doctor's note in order to remain home?

For now, and until further notice, if you are ill and must remain home during this emergency, the Los Angeles County Department of Human Resources has waived the medical certification requirement. As much as possible, try to use telemedicine services to preserve in-person medical resources.

May I appeal the decision to place me on my own benefit time?

If you were sent home with no diagnosis of COVID-19 but had symptoms, and/or you travelled to an area with a widespread outbreak, you may request a post-deprivation Skelly hearing if you were placed on your own benefit time without a doctor's note upon your return to work. If you have a medical note from your physician taking you off work, there is no appeals process.

Who is considered a "First Responder?"

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) have defined "First Responders" for purposes of guidance on the COVID-19 emergency as law enforcement, fire services, emergency medical services, emergency management officials, 911 emergency call centers, and public safety answer points.

What is "social distancing"?

The California Department of Public Health has recommended social distancing. This includes gatherings of no more than 10 people for individuals who are at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19. This applies to all non-essential functions, meetings or gatherings. As of March 18, 2020, the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health is also urging everyone to immediately begin the practice of social distancing. It helps break the connection between the virus and its ability to spread. Social distancing of approximately six feet is advisable between individuals at this time.

The Department is actively working on use of phone conferences or Skype, and/or postponing or cancelling non-essential meetings for the month of March.



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What happens if I need to take a leave to care for a child whose school or daycare closed?

A new bill was signed into law on March 18, 2020, expanding FMLA's 12 weeks of protected leave for employees who must care for a child due to a school closing (including care facilities or child care programs) due to COVID-19 and due to a public health emergency designation.

What if I am Exposed to a Communicable Disease?

An employee who is exposed to any person who is a possible or known carrier of a communicable disease in the line of duty shall be responsible for the following:

Immediately notify their immediate supervisor of the exposure;

Complete a Hazardous Materials Injury/Toxic Substances/Communicable Disease Exposure Report (SH-R-426);

- o When multiple employees have been exposed to the same person, each individual employee shall complete a separate report unless medical treatment is required by the individual employee at the time of exposure; and

Submit the SH-R-426 form to their immediate supervisor without delay. (Refer to MPP Section 3-02/040.25 for further details)

County's Equity Statement

The County expects its employees to treat others with dignity, respect and professionalism as the County Policy of Equity states. A lack of knowledge and understanding of COVID-19 and the need to blame someone can lead to social stigma towards a specific group of people based on their nationality or ethnicity, or people who were in quarantine. In order to prevent social stigma towards a specific group of people, employees are encouraged to educate themselves using the available resources from the Department of Health and CDC websites.

Additional Information

The health and wellbeing of our personnel are of utmost importance. We are working in partnership with all relevant members of the County to ensure that we maintain the highest level of safety for our employees and the general public. If you have any questions regarding this information, please contact your unit Operations staff.

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You are encouraged to visit the following websites to obtain more information on how to protect yourself and your family:

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

<http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/coronavirus/FAQ.pdf>

Information on the coronavirus, including fact sheets, are available at DPH's website:

<http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/coronavirus/>

Information on the coronavirus is available at the CDC website:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

What Law Enforcement Personnel Need to Know about Coronavirus Disease:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/guidance-law-enforcement.pdf>

Employee Specific Resources on Telework, Paid Leave, and Other Information:

<https://employee.hr.lacounty.gov/directors-message-2/>

Department of Health Guidance:

<http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/acd/docs/HCWMonitoring.pdf>

California Department of Health Page:

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/Guidance.aspx>

DHR Frequently Asked Questions Link:

<https://employee.hr.lacounty.gov/faqs>

New "Employer Paid Sick Leave Act"/"The Families First Coronavirus Response Act":

<https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/6201/text>