

COVID-19 (CORONAVIRUS)

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS FOR CITY OF SPRINGFIELD EMPLOYEES

Revised and updated March 27, 2020

As new information emerges, please remind your community that the risk of COVID-19 is not at all connected with race, ethnicity, or nationality. Stigma will not help to fight the illness. Do not make determinations of risk based on race or country of origin and be sure to maintain confidentiality of people with confirmed COVID-19 infection. Sharing accurate information during a time of heightened concern is one of the best things we can do to keep rumors and misinformation from spreading. The [CDC website](https://www.cdc.gov) is an excellent source of information.

I. COVID-19 (Coronavirus) General Questions

1.	<i>What is a coronavirus?</i>	Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that usually cause mild respiratory illnesses such as the common cold. COVID-19 is a novel (new) coronavirus that was not identified in humans before December 2019.
2.	<i>What is “Social Distancing”? How does this apply to the workplace?</i>	<p>Social distancing including avoiding large gatherings and maintaining a distance of 6 feet from other people. To the extent possible, avoid touching high-touch surfaces in public places such as elevator buttons, door handles, handrails, shaking hands, etc. At work, this can also include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoiding in-person meetings, utilizing email, phone and teleconferences. • Meetings that are unavoidable should be short, in large rooms allowing space and no handshakes. Disinfect all meeting rooms before and after use. • Define and postpone nonessential gatherings and trainings. • Limit social congregating in the workplace (copiers, water coolers, break rooms, 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. • Limit all non-essential work-related travel. <p>The services we provide to our community are critical. At this time, we encourage social distancing behaviors. You know your own situation best. If you are in one of the high risk populations (over age 60 or who have serious chronic medical conditions) please take extra precautions. City leadership values our employees and our community. We want to acknowledge the impact of the virus on those who are most vulnerable in our communities, and do our part in preventing, slowing and limiting its reach.</p>

II. Health-Related Questions

1.	<i>What should I do if I, or a family member, have a fever/symptoms of COVID-19?</i>	If you have symptoms like a cough, fever and/or breathing problems, you might have been exposed to COVID-19. Please contact your health care provider and/or the Wellness Center at (541) 242-2816. Your provider will ask about your symptoms and will decide whether you should be seen in the office. Call your provider's office for guidance before going in so that measures can be taken to reduce the risk of infecting others.
2.	<i>Is testing for COVID-19 covered by our health insurance?</i>	Yes, for 60 days from March 13 th , the plan will provide the following services: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coronavirus (COVID-19) testing and diagnosis related to visits will be covered at no cost. • This plan will allow a one-time early refill for prescription drugs, all applicable deductibles, co-pays and/or co-insurance will apply.
3.	<i>Should I be wearing a mask?</i>	You should follow your provider's advice. If an employee wants to wear their own face mask, they can, unless it is inconsistent with their job duties. The City will not pay for personal facemasks.

III. Accruals and Leave Related Questions

1.	<i>If I'm working remotely but don't have 40 hours of work in a week, do I have use my leave accruals?</i>	No, the City is not asking employees to use utilize leave banks when there is no available work to perform.
2.	<i>As a result of the COVID-19, the City does not have enough work available for me perform to meet my normal work scheduled, do I have to use my leave accruals?</i>	No, similar to the earlier question the City is not asking employees to utilize leave banks when there is no available work to perform but only for employees that are able to respond immediately to emails and phone calls and able to report to work within 60 minutes.
3.	<i>What if I have prescheduled vacation time during spring break? Am I expected to code that time as vacation or can I code it as regular time?</i>	Yes, if you have prescheduled vacation you should record the time as vacation/PTO time off.
4.	<i>Am I required to use my leave banks if I don't feel safe coming in to work and want to self-quarantine?</i>	<i>Most likely yes but there are some exceptions, which will be reviewed on a case by case basis. Contact HR at HR@springfield-or.gov</i>
5.	<i>What leave banks may I use if I am ill?</i>	Employees who are medically advised/required to self-quarantine due to suspected exposure may use all leave banks. The City offers several types of leave to eligible employees. If you expect to be out of work for 3 or more days due to illness, please refer to the City's Leave Benefits Website. You may be eligible for FMLA, OFLA, Oregon Sick Time, or Short Term Disability depending on your specific situation.

		Additionally, all employees who are medically mandated to remain at home because they have been exposed to COVID-19 shall be encouraged to do homebased/remote project work if allowed by the medical provider, if their job is suitable, if resources are available, and if the City can accommodate it. If one or more of the above factors does not allow for homebased/remote project work, the employee shall receive up to 80 hours donated leave benefits from the City's SLRP program, as long as there are hours available. Employees may be asked for proof of medical mandate including the time period for which they are mandated to remain at home, however they will not need to be separately released to return work.
6.	<i>What if I run out of accrued leave?</i>	For this current COVID-19 situation, employees may take unpaid leave or may request to borrow against future leave accruals. If you choose to go unpaid during this time period, your benefit accruals will not be impacted; you will continue to accrue as normal. Please communicate with your immediate supervisor regarding coding your time.
7.	<i>What is "borrowed leave"?</i>	For this current COVID-19 situation, the City will allow employees to borrow against future leave bank accruals up to a max of eighty (80) hours after exhausting all other leave banks. Pay back of negative accounts will happen at your normal accrual rate and will be applied to your borrowed leave balance each pay period, starting from when you are back to work.
8.	<i>Can I take borrowed leave if someone in my household has an illness not related to COVID-19?</i>	No. Borrowed leave can only be taken for COVID-19 related reasons.
9.	<i>If I run out of leave, can I request leave donations?</i>	The rules for leave donations are set by IRS tax law and City policy for leave donation has not changed at this time.
10.	<i>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?</i>	At this time, all accrual banks are available for this situation. Additionally the President signed a new paid leave law that will take effect on April 1, 2020. In the meantime work with your supervisor on flexible work options to avoid the need to take leave. These options include homebased/remote project work, reduced work schedule, and flexible/staggered work hours. Review the COVID – Temporary Rules Changes Memo for more information about these options.

IV. Remote Work/Working from Home

1.	<i>Can I work from home in order to self-quarantine or keep myself healthy?</i>	<p>In response to the public health emergency related to COVID-19, the City is temporarily making homebased/remote project work telework available to eligible employees in non-essential positions. All temporary teleworking arrangements are made on a case-by-case basis at the sole discretion of the department, balancing emergency response needs with the health of our workforce.</p> <p>These temporary changes may differ from existing City policies, collective bargaining agreements and departmental policies and procedures.</p>
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V. Timecards

1.	<i>If I'm working from home (WFH), how should I code my time?</i>	To make things simple, please code the next few weeks as if you have worked them (i.e. regularly scheduled hours). If you experience illness of any kind or are unavailable for work during your regularly scheduled time, please let your supervisor know so that they can adjust your time card appropriately based on your condition (see leave questions above).
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VI. Other questions

1.	<i>I've been asked to work remotely but I need to pick something up at my work space is that okay?</i>	Yes, the City is not closed for business and employees are able to return to their work location to pick items up as needed. Review the Guidance Working in City Facilities document for the do's and don'ts.
2.	<i>Will I be asked to perform other duties within my department or outside of my department?</i>	It could happen that you might be asked to help provide essential services due to high absenteeism. In that case, you will receive the necessary training.
3.	<i>Would a COVID-19 infection be considered a work-related injury?</i>	A work claim requires a clear and obvious connection between the employees' duties and an exposure. The employee will be required to provide the date, time and source of the exposure.
4.	<i>What documentation might I need to provide when all is said and done?</i>	Maintain copies of documentation that indicates the closing of facilities 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. Maintain copies of any documentation that mandates you or family members to quarantine due to COVID-19.
5.	<i>What is being done in regards to cleaning the workplace?</i>	Disinfection stations are available in all work areas. Quads are encouraged to work together to wipe down hard surfaces such as door handles, countertops, etc. Custodial staff have been directed to take extra measures when cleaning to ensure that all soap dispensers are working and stocked.

VII. CDC definitions:

- **Isolation** – separates sick people with a contagious disease from people who are not sick.
- **Quarantine** – separates and restricts the movement of people who were exposed to a contagious disease to see if they become sick.

VIII. Resources

- City of Springfield – administrative resource for [Protected Leave](#)
- Governor [Executive Orders](#)
- www.lanecountyor.gov/coronavirus. They have local information in English and Spanish.
- www.healthoregon.org/coronavirus Oregon Health Authority
- www.211info.org/corona-virus

The Lane County Public Health non-emergency call center is open from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday–Friday at 541-682-1380. Questions can also be submitted via email to hr@springfield-or.gov.