



State of Delaware Department of Human Resources

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Frequently Asked Questions

As the State of Delaware prepares for potential impacts of coronavirus, also known as COVID-19, Executive Branch employees are encouraged to review the following Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs). Questions or concerns should be discussed with your supervisor in consultation with your Human Resources Representative.

This guidance is provided given the circumstances relating to the coronavirus (COVID-19) and is not applicable to any past events and does not create an expectation that these guidelines will continue beyond the COVID-19 situation.

In the FAQs below, **Paid Emergency Leave** is defined as paid leave available to all employees whose absences are due to COVID-19.

1. What is coronavirus (COVID-19)?

A novel coronavirus is a new coronavirus that has not been previously identified. The virus causing coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is not the same as the coronaviruses that commonly circulate among humans and cause mild illness, like the common cold.

2. I am worried about being exposed to COVID-19 at work. How can I reduce my risk?

Employees are always encouraged to use general precautions (at work, in public, or at home). Precautions include:

- Wash your hands with warm soapy water for at least 20 seconds each time.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are ill.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze.
- Refrain from reusing tissues after coughing, sneezing, or blowing your nose.
- Clean and disinfect surfaces that are frequently touched (cell phones, desk phones, keyboards, remote controls, countertops, refrigerator and door handles, etc.).
- Stay home from work if you are sick.
- Minimize your direct contact with others who may be unwell or who are vulnerable to illness.
- Get your flu vaccine if you have not already done so.

3. What should I do if I think I am sick, but I don't know if I have been exposed to COVID-19?

If you have symptoms of fever and cough or shortness of breath and have not had any known exposure to or tested positive for COVID-19, you should contact your health care provider for further guidance. Anyone with a fever should stay home until at least 24 hours after their fever is gone and symptoms have improved.

4. What should I do if I have been exposed to COVID-19 but do not have symptoms associated with the virus?

If you have reason to believe you have been exposed to the virus, **you should contact your health care provider or the Delaware Division of Public Health (DPH) at (866) 408-1899. Notify your supervisor**



State of Delaware Department of Human Resources

that you have taken this step. Employees may be required to remain under quarantine due to exposure to COVID-19 even if they are not symptomatic. If you are told by a health care provider or public health official that you should be under quarantine due to potential exposure, you should not report to work and will be eligible for Paid Emergency Leave. Under these circumstances, you will be required to provide a letter from DPH indicating that you have completed the required monitoring, isolation or quarantine period. You may also be required to provide medical documentation releasing you to full duty prior to returning to work.

5. **What should I do if I have been exposed to COVID-19 and believe I am developing symptoms associated with the virus?**

If you think you are developing symptoms associated with COVID-19 and have reason to believe you have been exposed to the virus, **you should contact your health care provider or the Delaware Division of Public Health (DPH) at (866) 408-1899. Notify your supervisor that you have taken this step.** If you are told by a health care provider or public health official that you should be under isolation due to illness, you should not report to work and will be eligible for Paid Emergency Leave. You will be required to provide a letter from DPH indicating that you have completed the required monitoring, isolation or quarantine period. You may also be required to provide medical documentation releasing you to full duty prior to returning to work.

6. **Where do I seek care?**

Employees, pensioners and their covered dependents who are covered under a State of Delaware Health Plan (either Highmark Delaware or Aetna) **should first contact their primary health care provider to report symptoms and seek medical guidance.**

If you do not have a primary health care provider or cannot reach your provider, you may seek medical guidance through telemedicine services. Telemedicine is a service that allows you to have an online video consultation with a doctor to receive a diagnosis and get recommended treatment wherever you are, by using your computer, tablet or smartphone. The doctor can even prescribe medications when appropriate.

Amwell and Doctor on Demand are the telemedicine vendors for Highmark Delaware members, and Teladoc is the telemedicine vendor for Aetna members. There is little to no cost to members for using these services depending on your health plan.

Highmark Delaware members wanting to learn more about telemedicine should visit:

dhr.delaware.gov/benefits/medical/highmark/telemedicine.shtml

Aetna members wanting to learn more about telemedicine should visit:

dhr.delaware.gov/benefits/medical/aetna/telemedicine.shtml

Employees who are not covered under a State of Delaware Health Plan **should contact their primary health care provider or the Delaware Division of Public Health (DPH) at (866) 408-1899.**

7. **Will my insurance cover the cost of COVID-19 testing?**

Co-pays for diagnostic testing related to COVID-19 will be temporarily waived for State of Delaware Health Plan members who require testing per their health care provider or DPH.



State of Delaware Department of Human Resources

8. I am concerned about exposure from a coworker who seems sick. Can I insist that they be sent home?

If you have a concern about an employee who appears to be sick, speak to your supervisor. If agency management, in consultation with their Human Resources Office, believes that an employee has symptoms associated with COVID-19, the employee may be sent home or required to not report to work.

9. Will I be notified if someone I work with is confirmed to have COVID-19?

Employees known to be exposed to an individual diagnosed with COVID-19 will be notified that a case has been confirmed, but the Americans with Disabilities Act protects the identity and medical information of people with communicable diseases.

10. Should I cancel a planned business trip?

You should seek direction from your supervisor prior to making any decisions related to planned travel; however, all business travel to impacted areas on the [CDC list](#) Warning Levels 2 and 3 should be cancelled. Requests for exceptions to travel to CDC-restricted areas must be reviewed and approved by the Governor's Office. Non-essential business travel should be limited. Essential business travel is determined by Agency Directors.

11. What additional precautions can a State agency take for employees dealing with the public?

Agencies may consider the following precautions:

- Restrict how close the public may come to employees;
- Educate employees to wash hands often and use alcohol-based hand sanitizer frequently; and
- Maintain separate pens and other equipment for the public.

12. What options are available for State employees who may need to be absent from work as a result of illness from or exposure to COVID-19?

Telecommuting

The option to work from home (telecommute) for employees who need to be absent from work due to COVID-19 may depend on several factors including, but not limited to: job function, essential status, operational requirements of the agency, and ability to access required technology in accordance with the State's [Telecommuting Policy](#). You should seek approval from your supervisor if this is an option you are interested in utilizing.

Leave Options

The State may provide up to 30 calendar days of Paid Emergency Leave for employees who are directly impacted by COVID-19. You may be required to provide written documentation from your health care provider or a public health official of the requirement to be absent from work. You may also be required to provide a letter from DPH indicating that you have completed the required monitoring, isolation or quarantine period as well as provide medical documentation releasing you to full duty prior to returning to work.



State of Delaware Department of Human Resources

State employees, with the exception of casual/seasonal employees, who need to be absent from work beyond 30 calendar days, are entitled to utilize leave as provided for in [Merit Rule 5](#) and other leave policies.

13. What options are available for casual/seasonal employees who may need to be absent from work due to COVID-19?

Casual/seasonal employees who are directly impacted by COVID-19 may receive pay for up to 30 calendar days of their regularly scheduled hours. You may be required to provide written documentation from your health care provider or a public health official of the requirement to be absent from work. You may also be required to provide a letter from DPH indicating that you have completed the required monitoring, isolation or quarantine period as well as provide medical documentation releasing you to full duty prior to returning to work.

14. Am I entitled to use Family and Medical Leave (FMLA) for COVID-19?

You may be entitled to use FMLA for absence related to COVID-19 if you have a qualifying event as defined by the Family and Medical Leave Act. Your Human Resources Representative can assist you with questions related to FMLA eligibility. Additional information can be found here: dhr.delaware.gov/policies/documents/fmla-policy.pdf.

15. What should I do if I have a delayed return from personal travel?

If you have a delayed return from personal travel as a result of any state's or country's monitoring or management of COVID-19 or transportation disruptions associated with such monitoring or management, you should contact your supervisor. State employees, with the exception of casual/seasonal employees, may be eligible to utilize leave as provided for in [Merit Rule 5](#) and other leave policies to cover the absence.

16. What happens if the Governor closes a state office or facility due to a COVID-19 outbreak?

If the Governor closes any state office or facility due to concerns related to COVID-19, the policy provided for in the Governor's Executive Order 28, [State Employee Obligations During Severe Weather Conditions and Emergencies](#), would apply. Under these circumstances, Paid Emergency Leave would not be applicable unless an employee is already being monitored by DPH for symptoms of or exposure to COVID-19.

17. If I am an essential employee, do I have to report to work if the Governor closes State offices due to a COVID-19 outbreak?

If the Governor closes any state office or facility due to concerns related to COVID-19, the policy provided for in the Governor's Executive Order 28, [State Employee Obligations During Severe Weather Conditions and Emergencies](#), would apply.

Per the provisions of Executive Order 28, essential employees are required to report to work for their regularly scheduled shift, unless instructed otherwise by their employing agency. An essential employee who is required to work but cannot report to work due to exposure or is showing symptoms of COVID-



State of Delaware Department of Human Resources

19 shall immediately notify his or her supervisor and follow the guidance provided in #4 or #5 of this FAQ.

Under these circumstances, the agency may excuse an essential employee from reporting to work; however, the employee may be required to provide written documentation from their health care provider or a public health official of the requirement to be absent from work. If the essential employee is unable to provide documentation upon request, he or she may be subject to disciplinary action. The employee may also be required to provide a letter from DPH indicating that he or she has completed the required monitoring, isolation or quarantine period as well as provide medical documentation releasing him or her to full duty prior to returning to work.

18. What if I need to miss work due to an immediate family member requiring quarantine as a result of COVID-19?

You may be eligible for up to 14 calendar days of Paid Emergency Leave to care for a member of your immediate family who is quarantined or is ill as a result of COVID-19. You may be required to provide a letter from DPH indicating that your immediate family member has completed the required monitoring, isolation or quarantine period.

State employees, with the exception of casual/seasonal employees, who need to be absent for more than 14 calendar days for this purpose, are entitled to utilize leave as provided for in [Merit Rule 5](#) and other leave policies.

Casual/seasonal employees may be eligible for up to 14 calendar days of Paid Emergency Leave to care for an immediate family member who is quarantined or is ill as a result of COVID-19. You may be required to provide a letter from DPH indicating that your immediate family member has completed the required monitoring, isolation or quarantine period. Agencies are encouraged, whenever operationally feasible, to allow casual/seasonal employees to rearrange their work hours within the pay period so that their paycheck is minimally impacted.

19. What if I need to miss work due to a school, dependent care or eldercare facility closure due to a COVID-19 outbreak?

Employees may be eligible for up to 14 calendar days of Paid Emergency Leave if they are required to stay home due to closure of a school, childcare or eldercare facility in connection with the monitoring or management of the coronavirus, or as a result of a declared public health emergency by the Governor.

State employees, with the exception of casual/seasonal employees, who need to be absent for more than 14 calendar days for this purpose, are entitled to utilize leave as provided for in [Merit Rule 5](#) and other leave policies.

Casual/seasonal employees may be eligible for up to 14 calendar days of Paid Emergency Leave if they are required to stay home due to closure of a school, childcare or eldercare facility in connection with the management of the coronavirus, or as a result of a declared public health emergency by the Governor. Agencies are encouraged, whenever operationally feasible, to allow casual/seasonal employees to rearrange their work hours within the pay period so that their paycheck is minimally impacted.



State of Delaware Department of Human Resources

20. Where will notifications of State office closures or other announcements for State employees be posted?

Notifications will be posted on the following websites:

Department of Human Resources: dhr.delaware.gov/closings

State of Delaware News: news.delaware.gov

Notifications will also be sent to local media including print, radio, and television. While every effort is made to provide this information to the media as quickly as possible and in an accurate format, we cannot guarantee or control when or how the media disseminates this information.

Executive Branch employees will also receive an email notification from the Severe Weather Conditions & Emergencies (SWCE) mailbox.

For any other personnel related questions not covered in the Frequently Asked Questions, please contact your Human Resources Representative.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

Division of Public Health Website: de.gov/coronavirus

Division of Public Health Call Center: 1-866-408-1899

Division of Public Health Email for inquiries and questions: dphcall@delaware.gov

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/