



STATE OF WASHINGTON
OFFICE OF FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

PO Box 47500 □ Olympia, Washington 98504-7500 □

March 10, 2020

TO: HR Directors, General Government & Higher Education Institutions

FROM: Franklin Plaistowe, Assistant Director
State Human Resources

RE: COVID-19 WORKFORCE GUIDELINES

Purpose

The purpose of this memorandum is to make you aware of a statewide policy document and forthcoming rules involving major operational HR matters involved in working with the COVID-19 situation. The attached policy document provides guidance for employees who are subject to self-quarantine requirements. This information is applicable to agencies but does not apply to higher education institutions at this time. .

Circumstances Involving Self-Quarantine

When evaluating circumstances of employee self-quarantine, agencies should review the Center for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines to determine when a self-quarantine is required.

- Click [here](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/risk-assessment.html) to see the risk assessment and guidelines document.
(<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/risk-assessment.html>)
- Click [here](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/public-health-management-decision-making.pdf) to see the CDC flowchart.
(<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/public-health-management-decision-making.pdf>)

Remote Working Opportunities

If an employee is required to self-quarantine and is otherwise healthy and able to work, all appropriate remote working opportunities should be explored where feasible. Agencies should explore options to the fullest extent possible. For example, if an employee is self-quarantined but the work does not ordinarily lend itself to remote work, the employer should consider whether the employee could assist with work projects from their home or work on other professional enrichment efforts.

Expansion of Paid Leave Status

In the rare instance where an employee is required to self-quarantine but is not able to work remotely in any capacity, the employer will be permitted to keep the employee in paid status while the employee is home in self-quarantine status. The attached guidelines provide additional details around the process and limitations. The OFM-SHR team will be working to assist with interpretive guidance.

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Emergency Rules to be Filed March 10, 2020

OFM is pursuing emergency rulemaking to align with the attached procedures. As mentioned in the guidelines, we will monitor the implementation of these guidelines and adjust as necessary.

Thank you and Next Steps

Thank you for your leadership as we work together through these important public health issues for our workforce. Our team will be working on interpretative assistance and tools for agencies. I realize that this is a unique situation and we will work to support and assist you as much as possible.

Points of Contact

Below are our main points of contact:

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Attachment



Purpose

On February 29, 2020, Governor Jay Inslee issued proclamation 20-05 declaring a State of Emergency exists in all counties in the state of Washington as a result of the outbreak of COVID-19. Our Governor further declared that State agencies and departments are directed to use state resources and to do everything reasonably possible to assist affected political subdivisions in an effort to respond to and recover from the outbreak. The outbreak of COVID-19 throughout the world, United States and Washington State significantly impacts the life and health of our people, as well as the economy of Washington State, and is a public disaster that affects life, health, property or the public peace. The following guidelines address work restrictions and pay provisions for employees who have been or may be exposed to COVID-19.

Public Health Guidance

Under current public health guidance, if an employee has symptoms of fever and cough or shortness of breath, and not had any known exposure to COVID-19 or tested positive for COVID-19, the employee is to stay home for seventy two (72) hours after their fever is gone and symptoms have improved.

Telework Guidance

As an initial step, state organizations shall creatively explore all possible options to expand telework for employees impacted by COVID-19. For employees with underlying high risk conditions making them susceptible to COVID-19, the employer and employee should work closely to explore telework options. These efforts are done with the recognition of current extenuating circumstances and will not create a past practice or expectation of continuation of telework arrangements made to accommodate this emergent situation.

Self-Quarantine Following Exposure Risk

If an employee is required by Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines to self-quarantine but is otherwise healthy (not testing positive for COVID-19) and the employer has determined there are no telework options for the employee, the employee will be released with no loss of pay for no longer than fourteen (14) days. The employee is not permitted to report to the worksite during the time they are in self-quarantine. An employee may be required to telework during the self-quarantine period. If the employee is directed to telework and declines to do so, the employee must use their own accrued leave or be in a leave without pay status for the time in self-quarantine. The employer retains the right to request written verification confirming the circumstances warranting the self-quarantine, which may include a signed affidavit from the employee.

Contracted Virus

If an employee contracts or tests positive for COVID-19, the employee is required to use accrued leave in accordance with state organization policies, procedures and any applicable collective bargaining agreement. Accrued paid leave shall not be unreasonably denied. The employee may qualify for additional paid benefits as a result of future Governor's emergency declarations.

Review of Policy

The State reserves the right to modify the policy in order to ensure that the components of this policy advance appropriate public health policy and are not disruptive to the operations of government. This entire policy shall be reviewed no later than thirty (30) days from its issuance.