



COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES

HEADQUARTERS
579 KENNETH HAHN HALL OF ADMINISTRATION • LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90012
(213) 974-2406 FAX (213) 621-0387

BRANCH OFFICE
3333 WILSHIRE BOULEVARD • LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90010
(213) 738-2211 FAX (213) 637-0820

LISA M. GARRETT
DIRECTOR OF PERSONNEL

February 13, 2020

To: All Department Heads

From: Lisa M. Garrett, J.D., M.B.A.
Director of Personnel

Barbara Ferrer, Ph.D., M.P.H., M.Ed.
Director of Public Health

CORONAVIRUS UPDATE

Both the Department of Human Resources (DHR) and Public Health (DPH) have received numerous inquiries about the potential threat of exposure to the novel (new) coronavirus, and about precautions we should take in the workplace to safeguard the health of our employees and those we serve. This is to provide you with information about the coronavirus outbreak and link you to resources that DPH has developed to share with employees, clients and the public.

DPH is actively working with the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and State partners to prevent the spread of infection and respond to recent reports of the novel coronavirus outbreak, including **one case** in Los Angeles County from a traveler who lives in Wuhan City. Coronavirus infections have also been confirmed in a small number of travelers in the United States who traveled to, or came from, mainland China. Currently, there is no community transmission of novel coronavirus in the United States.

In the United States, novel coronavirus poses no immediate threat to the general public, nor to our workforce, and no special precautions are required. However, all employees should practice good public health hygiene to reduce the spread of respiratory diseases; this includes staying home when sick, washing hands frequently, covering coughs or sneezes with tissues or your elbow, and getting your flu immunization. **The risk of spread of disease from the new coronavirus in Los Angeles County is deemed very low at this time.** Please see the Attachment I – Frequently Asked Questions - Novel Coronavirus, for more information on the virus and how you can protect yourself.

New Federal Directives on Travel and Quarantine

On January 31, 2020, in response to the significant increase in the number of confirmed cases of novel coronavirus in mainland China, the United States (US) government issued a set of new directives that both restrict travel into the US from mainland China and delineate quarantine orders for those who have recently traveled to mainland China. Please see Attachment II for specific information on the new federal directives and quarantine orders.

To Enrich Lives Through Effective and Caring Service

County employees who return from travel anywhere in mainland China after February 2, 2020 are subject to the new directives. These directives include 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 have a staff member at work who recently traveled to mainland China, who develops a fever or respiratory symptoms within 14 days of their return, they should leave work and seek medical care immediately. They should call their doctor's office or an emergency room to notify them of the symptoms and travel history. The employee should obtain a medical release from their healthcare provider before returning to work.

Employees that are legally quarantined under the Federal directive should be covered by Paid Leave. Alternative telework schedules may also be considered when appropriate, however, a release to work from their healthcare provider will still be required. We will provide you with an update if there are any changes to this information.

Additional Information

Information on the coronavirus, including fact sheets and regular updates, are available at the DPH website and at the CDC website:

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

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

The health and wellbeing of our workforce are paramount. We encourage you to share this memorandum with your staff, and to share the resources on the DPH website with your clients as you deem appropriate.

Should you have questions or want more information about the novel coronavirus, you may contact Jacquelyn Valenzuela, Chief Advisor to the Health Officer, at jvalenzuela@ph.lacounty.gov. Should you have questions about time coding related to quarantine, please contact Marisa Lopez, Senior Human Resources Manager at (213) 351-8945 or mlopez@hr.lacounty.gov.

LMG:BF:CH
ML:tdb

Attachments

c: Chief Deputies
Administrative Deputies
Department Human Resources Managers

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Novel Coronavirus (NCoV-2019)

1. What is a coronavirus?

Coronavirus is a type of virus that causes diseases of varying severities, ranging from the common cold to more serious respiratory disease. A novel (new) coronavirus is a new strain of coronavirus that hasn't been identified before in humans.

2. Who gets coronavirus?

Coronaviruses are normally found in animals but can be spread to humans. Some coronaviruses are also spread from person to person. Recently, thousands of cases of pneumonia associated with a novel coronavirus in Wuhan City have been identified. Dozens of counties have reported cases and there are cases in the United States, including LA County.

3. How is coronavirus spread?

Human coronaviruses most commonly spread from an infected person to others through:

- coughing and sneezing
- close personal contact, such as touching or shaking hands
- touching an object or surface with the virus on it, then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes before washing your hands
- rarely, fecal contamination
- **Novel coronavirus** is new, and we are learning more each day about transmission patterns and incubation periods. As information becomes available, we will keep you informed.

People who have traveled to Wuhan, China since December 1, 2019, could have been exposed to the virus. Seek medical care if you traveled to Wuhan and develop a fever or respiratory symptoms within 14 days of your return. People who have been in close contact with a person who has a confirmed case of novel coronavirus should seek medical care if they develop fever or respiratory symptoms.

4. What are the symptoms of disease?

Symptoms include:

- Fever
- Cough
- Difficulty breathing.
- Severe illness

Complications and outcomes of this virus are still being investigated.



Key Points

- Novel coronavirus is a new virus that hasn't been identified before in humans
- Coronaviruses can be spread through close personal contact, or by touching an object of surface with the virus in it
- Use prevention measures that work to prevent other respiratory infections to prevent novel coronavirus
- Public Health is taking steps to prevent the spread of coronavirus in LA County.

For more information:

**Los Angeles County
Department of Public Health**

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

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

<http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/novel-coronavirus-2019.html>

World Health Organization

<https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus>

Novel Coronavirus (NCoV-2019)

5. How is novel coronavirus treated?

There is no specific treatment for illness caused by a novel coronavirus. However, many of the symptoms can be treated. Treatment will be based on the patient's condition. There is no vaccine for novel coronavirus.

6. What is contact tracing?

Contact tracing is finding people who were in direct contact with a patient with coronavirus. Contacts are watched for signs of illness for 14 days from the last day that they had contact with the ill person. If the contact develops a fever or other symptoms, they are immediately isolated, tested, and provided with care to prevent the virus being spread further.

7. How can I protect myself when I travel?

Novel coronavirus infection is rare. Activities that can prevent the spread of more common respiratory infections, like the flu, can be effective at preventing the spread of novel coronavirus.

Travelers to Wuhan should:

- Avoid animals (alive or dead), animal markets, and products that come from animals (such as uncooked meat).
- Avoid contact with sick people.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Limit close contact, like kissing and sharing cups or utensils, with people who are sick.
- Clean surfaces that are touched often, like toys and doorknobs.

If you traveled to Wuhan and feel sick, you should:

- Stay home and avoid contact with others, except for seeking medical care.
- Seek medical care right away. Before you go to a doctor's office or emergency room, call ahead and tell them about your recent travel and your symptoms.
- Don't travel while sick.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when coughing or sneezing. Throw the tissue in the trash.

8. Since there is a case in LA County, what can I do to protect myself?

Based on current information, even though there is a case in Los Angeles and there are likely to be additional cases, the risk of transmission of coronavirus within LA County remains low. People should continue to engage in their regular activities if they are not ill. As with other respiratory illnesses, there are steps that everyone can take to reduce the risk of getting sick from circulating viruses. **This includes remaining home when ill, washing hands with soap and water frequently, covering coughs and sneezes and, to prevent influenza.**

What do we need to know about managing travelers returning from China?

Because of the explosion in the number of new cases in China the past few days, the White House recently issued a set of new directives that became effective on February 3, 2020. The orders mandate the following:

- Restrict all foreign nationals who have traveled or been in China the last 14 days from entering the US. (*This order can be renewed by the President every 14 days.*)
- Require all US citizens, legal permanent residents, and their close family members returning from China to enter through one of eleven airports in the US (including LAX), where they will be screened by US Customs and Border Protection agents.
 - If travelers show signs of respiratory illness, they will be transported to a health care facility for further evaluation to determine whether they need further medical assessment and care.
 - All travelers who were in the Hubei Province at any time in the past 14 days are considered high risk and need to be quarantined and monitored at a safe location for 14 days from their last exposure.
 - Returning travelers from other places in China **who have been** in close contact with a confirmed case of novel coronavirus in the last 14 days are considered high risk and will be quarantined and monitored at a safe location for 14 days.
 - All other returning travelers from mainland China outside Hubei Province are considered medium risk and can travel to their final destination. Once they arrive, they are asked to practice social distancing, stay home, and monitor their health for 14 days. Public health departments will follow-up with all travelers designated medium risk.

Who do these updated directives apply to?

These orders apply only to travelers arriving in the United States after February 2. They do not apply for people who traveled in China and arrived in the United States before this date and these travelers should not be excluded from activities unless they are ill.

Please note that the risk of exposure to this new coronavirus in China is increasing over time. The recommendation to exclude travelers who have recently been in China from work is effective Monday, February 3, 2020. Persons who have arrived from China prior to February 3, 2020 are at lower risk and do not need to be excluded.

How is Public Health implementing the traveler directives?

Returning travelers who do not need quarantine, but are identified as being at medium risk, will be contacted by Public Health and provided guidance for social distancing and self-monitoring of their health status for up to 14 days. They will be instructed to contact Public Health should they become ill.