



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

March 11, 2020

To: All Employees

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

CORONA VIRUS (COVID-19) UPDATE FOR COUNTY EMPLOYEES

This is to provide you with an update to the February 13, 2020 memorandum regarding the novel coronavirus, and the disease caused by this new virus, officially named COVID-19. In addition, we want to provide you with links to information about COVID-19 that are constantly updated both by the Department of Public Health (DPH) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

DPH continues to actively and closely work with the CDC and California State partners to mitigate the spread of infection and respond to the COVID-19 outbreak. As of this date, there are 20 positive cases of COVID-19 in Los Angeles County. The first case was a traveler who lives in Wuhan City, and has recovered and is no longer infectious. COVID-19 infections have also been confirmed across many states in the United States, with dozens of reported cases having no identified source of exposure, leading to a belief that there is extensive community transmission of COVID-19 in the United States.

In order to mitigate the spread of COVID-19, all employees should practice good public health hygiene, especially because we are still in the middle of the cold and flu season. This includes:

- Stay at home when sick even with mild illness, except to get medical care.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds; use alcohol-based hand sanitizers if soap and water are not available.
- Cover your cough and sneeze with your elbow or a tissue. If using a tissue, immediately throw away the tissue and wash your hands with soap and water.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Clean and disinfect frequently contacted objects and surfaces.
- Consider getting the flu vaccine if you have not yet received the vaccine for the current flu season.

To Enrich Lives Through Effective and Caring Service

- Seek medical care if you have symptoms of illness. Before you visit a doctor's office or emergency room, call ahead and tell them about your symptoms. All of the County's medical plan carriers offer tele-medicine services. These services are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and are accessible by computer, tablet, or phone.
- If you traveled outside of the United States to countries that have been identified as high risk (currently China, South Korea, Italy, and Iran), stay at home for 14 days; if you develop symptoms of illness, seek medical care. If you travelled to other areas with known outbreaks of COVID-19, please monitor yourself for symptoms of respiratory illness for 14 days from the time you left an outbreak area. If you develop illness, please contact your healthcare provider; call ahead to your provider, tell them about your recent travel.

We are encouraging our employees to prepare in the event an increased spread of the disease impacts normal activities in the workplace or at home. Employees should inspect and replenish their emergency preparedness kits at home and at the workplace and review their emergency communication plans with their family and friends.

Diseases, such as COVID-19, do not target a specific ethnic or racial group. COVID-19 is a new infectious disease presenting across the world and we recognize that people may be anxious, fearful and worried about the spread of this virus. 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 towards 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 DPH and CDC websites. Employees are also encouraged to support others by learning and sharing the facts about COVID-19 rather than engaging in gossip, rumors and myths. Please see the attached COVID-19 Equity Statement.

Visit the websites below to obtain more information on how to protect yourself and your family as well as current travel recommendations. You can also contact your Departmental Human Resources Manager (DHRM) for additional guidance.

LA County Department of Public Health

- Frequently Asked Questions
<http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/Coronavirus/FAQ.pdf>
- Hand Washing Hand-Out
<http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/acd/handwash.htm>

Center for Disease Control and Prevention Websites

- Information on Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Situation:
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/summary.html>
- Frequently Asked Questions and Answers
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html>

All Employees
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Your health and well-being are one of our highest priorities. We are continuing our partnership with all relevant members of our County of Los Angeles team to ensure that we maintain the highest level of safety for our employees and the general public. We are grateful to our County workforce across different departments for leading efforts to protect the health and well-being of all Angelinos.

LMG:BF:CH
MT:KC:tdb

Attachments

c: Departmental Human Resources Managers

S:\DHRSec\DHR and DPH Memo to All Employees re COVID-19 - 03-11-2020

ILL-AT-WORK EVALUATION
Updated March 11, 2020

The County of Los Angeles (County) strives to provide a safe and healthy work environment for its employees. As noted in the Chief Executive Office (CEO) memorandums dated October 9, 2009 and January 11, 2010, Department Management is expected to take an active role in preventing the spread of communicable diseases such as the flu in the workplace.

Because only a healthcare professional can diagnose a medical condition, the Ill-at-Work Evaluation was established to assist management in difficult cases by providing a professional assessment of potential illness.

Contagious Illness

The contagious period for a **typical** respiratory illness exists until all symptoms have disappeared for at least 24 hours. Some symptoms that may be easily apparent to management include frequent coughing, flushed skin, red and watery eyes, and/or reported fever. When these cases are suspected, it is important for Department Management to first talk to the employee. The employee should be encouraged to go home and not return to work until they have been symptom-free for at least 24 hours.

Employees should also be instructed to seek care from their personal physician immediately if they experience any of the following symptoms:

- Difficulty breathing for shortness of breath
- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Sudden dizziness
- Vomiting and diarrhea
- Fever and/or Chills
- Disorientation or confusion

Special Note Related to COVID-19

Symptoms for COVID-19 are similar to symptoms exhibited by the flu and other respiratory illnesses; these symptoms can include fever, coughing, shortness of breath, and severe illness. *Please keep in mind that an individual with a chronic non-contagious condition like asthma, chronic bronchitis, or allergies may exhibit similar symptoms.*

Employees who have these symptoms during this period of COVID-19 prevention/mitigation should remain at home until they have been free of fever and/or productive cough for at least 72 hours, without the use of fever-reducing medicine or cough suppressants.

REFERRAL OF EMPLOYEE FOR ILL-AT-WORK EVALUATION

If an employee declines management's recommendation to go home or be evaluated by a personal medical provider despite exhibiting typical symptoms of a contagious illness, the Department should consider an Ill-at-Work Evaluation to be conducted by one of the

Department of Human Resources (DHR) Occupational Health Program (OHP)-contracted medical clinics. Departments are to contact the selected clinic by phone to obtain the appropriate instructions to provide to the employee for the service referral.

Departments may visit the DHR website at <https://employee.hr.lacounty.gov/flu-assessment/> to obtain:

- Copies of the CEO memos dated October 9, 2009 and January 11, 2010;
- A list of DHR OHP-contracted medical clinics that will conduct Ill-at-Work Evaluations, the clinics' contact information, and the pricing that will be billed to the referring Department (see "Table of Employee Medical Contractors"); and
- An Employee Examination Work Order to request the Ill-at-Work Evaluation.

To Initiate the Ill-at-Work Evaluation, Department Management:

1. Call the nearest DHR OHP-contracted medical clinic and inform clinic staff that an employee is being referred to the clinic for an ill-at-work evaluation. Obtain specific instructions from the clinic to provide the employee for the service referral (e.g., should employee go to the clinic or go home and contact the clinic by phone prior to going to the medical facility.)

If there is a concern about COVID-19 symptoms, please be sure to let the clinic know. Clinic staff will let you know whether a phone screening with the employee will be the first step before having an in-person assessment.

2. Fax the completed Employee Examination Work Order, requesting the Ill-at-Work Evaluation, to the clinic.
3. Inform the employee to immediately follow the instructions provided by the clinic to obtain services.

e.g., report directly to the clinic, go home and contact the clinic by phone prior to going to the clinic, etc. The employee may also decide to go home and see their own medical provider.

Conclusion of the Ill-at-Work Evaluation

If the DHR OHP-contracted physician concludes:

1. That the employee is ill and contagious, the employee may be ordered to not return to the work site and be placed off work for the remainder of the day.

For COVID-19, this will be for 72 hours after the resolution of symptoms without the use of fever-reducing medications and/or cough suppressants.

The contract physician will notify the Department that the employee has been placed off-duty. An employee placed off-duty by the clinic does not need to return to the clinic prior to returning to work.

Assuming that at least 24 hours have transpired since being ordered to not return to the work site and being placed off work, Department Management would handle their absence and return as they would for any employee who is returning from a medical leave.

For COVID-19, this will apply when the employee has been symptom-free (e.g. fever, productive cough) for at least 72 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications and/or cough suppressants.

Being directed back to the clinic for a second Ill-at-Work Evaluation would be contingent on repeated observations by Department Management of symptoms consistent with a contagious condition, such as the flu.

2. That the employee is not ill or contagious, the contract physician will notify the Department that the employee is able to return to the workplace.

ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE

Departments with additional questions or needing assistance with the medical evaluation process, may contact DHR OHP Hotline at (213) 738-2187, or Dr. Kenichi Carrigan at (213) 738-2186 or KCarrigan@hr.lacounty.gov.

**CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019 (COVID-19) EQUITY STATEMENT
FROM THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES**

The County of Los Angeles (County) recognizes the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) was first identified in Wuhan, China and, as of January 30, 2020, was declared a global health emergency by the World Health Organization (WHO). There have been over 100,000 cases of COVID-19 confirmed worldwide. It is important to keep in mind that COVID-19 is not tied to one particular group of individuals, and at this point, has affected many ethnicities, races, and nationalities.

Diseases, such as COVID-19, do not target a specific ethnic or racial group. COVID-19 is a new infectious disease presenting across the world and we recognize that people may be anxious, fearful and worried about the spread of this virus. 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 towards 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 Public Health (DPH) and CDC websites. Employees are also encouraged to support others by learning and sharing the facts about COVID-19 rather than engaging in gossip, rumors or myths.

As an employer, the County expects its employees to treat others, including co-workers and members of the public, with dignity, respect and professionalism as the County Policy of Equity (CPOE) states. Employee conduct is expected to be in accordance with the CPOE and applicable local, county, state, and federal laws.

EQUITY BEST PRACTICES

The County would like to remind all employees of some equity best practices in the workplace:

- Be sensitive to explicit and implicit biases towards others; for example:
 - Do not make assumptions based on a person's ethnicity, race, and/or nationality;
 - Do not make assumptions that a person has been exposed to COVID-19 based on ethnicity, race, and/or nationality;
 - Do not be fearful of a person because of the person's ethnicity, race, and/or nationality;
- Do not assume a person has COVID-19 because they are wearing a mask;
- Do not assume an employee has COVID-19 because they are sick, on a leave of absence or are working from home;
- Educate yourself by getting the facts about COVID-19 from a reliable source, such as the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health website <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/Coronavirus>; and
- Speak up when you hear false rumors or negative stereotypes that foster biases and potential racism.

COUNTY OPERATIONS

The County is taking active steps to stop the spread of COVID-19 and to protect the health and safety of our employees, their families, and all County constituents. The County will continue to operate under the guidance outlined by DPH, CDC and WHO. Decisions, actions, and plans will be taken for the betterment of all County employees with full consideration of the Americans with Disabilities Act and the CPOE.