COVID-19 Update for Employees

Frequently Asked Questions on Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) and the Impact to Employees

What is coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)?
Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person. The virus that causes COVID-19 is a novel coronavirus that was first identified during an investigation into an outbreak in Wuhan, China.

How does COVID-19 spread?
The virus that causes COVID-19 probably emerged from an animal source, but is now spreading from person to person. The virus is thought to spread mainly between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet) through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. It also may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads. Learn what is known about the spread of newly emerged coronaviruses at https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/transmission.html.

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?
Symptoms can appear anywhere from two to 14 days after exposure. Patients with COVID-19 have had mild to severe respiratory illness with symptoms of:
- fever
- cough
- shortness of breath

If you think you have been exposed to COVID-19 and have developed a fever these symptoms, call your doctor for medical advice. You can learn more at the County Health Department: http://www.dupagehealth.org/590/Coronavirus-Information

How can I help protect myself?
People can help protect themselves from respiratory illness with everyday preventive actions:
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
• Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
• Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.

If you are sick, to keep from spreading respiratory illness to others, you should
• Stay home when you are sick.
• Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
• Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

**What should I do if I’m experiencing these symptoms?**
Please stay home for at least seven days after you first became ill, or 72 hours after your fever has resolved and symptoms are improving, whichever is longer. You should consult with your doctor if you have:
• Fever, cough, trouble breathing, or other flu-like symptoms that are not better or are worsening after 24-48 hours.
• Mild symptoms and are pregnant or immunosuppressed or are an older adult have chronic health conditions

If you need immediate medical attention, and you think you may have COVID-19, please call ahead to your health care provider before going in for care. This will allow them to take the right steps to protect themselves and other patients. If you think you are having a medical emergency, call 911; if you have been exposed to COVID-19, notify dispatch personnel so emergency medical services personnel.

**Will the building remain open to the public?**
The 421 Administration building will be closed to the general public starting March 23, 2020. There may be limited access allowable, by appointment only. All visitors with appointments will be pre-screened for symptoms or exposure to anyone who has exhibited symptoms.

**Will the building remain open for employees?**
The Administration building will remain open for employees to ensure essential duties necessary for County operations can continue. The County is practicing social distancing techniques and following best practices and guidance of the DuPage County Public Health Department, Illinois Department of Public Health and the Centers for Disease Control.

**What is the county doing to protect my health and safety as a county employee?**
The County has accelerated the cleaning of work and public entry spaces and limiting public access to all county facilities. We also ask county employees to self-assess their personal health daily and practice social distancing.
What can employees do if they cannot come to work because school districts, day care centers or elder care facilities close due to COVID-19?
Employees may have the option to work remotely from home. If this is not an option, employees may apply for a personal leave of absence but will be required to use any accrued time off.

What is the county’s work from home policy?
Every department has developed appropriate policies based on its responsibilities. Please note that county departments and the offices of our countywide elected officials have varied work responsibilities that do not always permit an individual to work from home. If telecommuting is not an option, flexible work hours, split and weekend shifts, and other arrangements may be offered. Please speak to your direct supervisor or manager to develop an appropriate schedule for you and your family.

If neither I nor a family member are sick or presenting symptoms, but I choose to self-isolate to avoid contact/proximity to others, may I use sick leave?
For employees concerned about the potential of exposure to COVID-19, they may apply for a personal leave of absence and use any available accrued time, including sick leave.

What will happen if one of my co-workers is diagnosed with COVID-19?
If an employee is diagnosed with COVID-19, DuPage County will work closely with the DuPage County Health Department investigation teams to provide information, receive guidance and protocols for the County and staff to follow.

What do I do if a fellow employee tells me that they came in contact with someone who has confirmed COVID-19? Do I have to report it, and if so, to who?
As this is a matter of public health and safety, you should urge your co-worker to immediately talk to their supervisor or speak to the supervisor yourself. The protocol mentioned in the previous answer will be initiated.

If a member of my household has been instructed to self-isolate, can I come to work?
Consult with your personal healthcare provider for instructions. Once you have instructions, contact your supervisor with your work status.

Can I take time off without pay (personal leave of absence) even if I have accrued vacation/personal time?
In accordance with DuPage County Board Policy 5.5 (Personal Leave) Procedure B, employees do not have the option to take time off without pay if they have accrued time off available.

If I have no available accrued time (sick, vacation, personal) but must be quarantined/am sick, what steps do I take?
Do not report to work, even if you have exhausted your accrued time. Talk to your supervisor to determine what leave options may be available to you. Your supervisor will contact the Human Resources Department for specific guidance on your individual needs. This will ensure all parties are informed as to your leave status.

**Prior to returning to work due to being quarantined and/or sick, must I present a doctor’s note?**
Depending on the circumstances a doctor’s note may be required. A verbal clearance given to the employee will also be acceptable.

**What leave is provided under the federal Families First Coronavirus Response Act (H.R. 6201)?**
On March 18, 2020, the President signed an emergency bill to expand family and medical leave and paid sick leave for public employees and those employed by businesses with fewer than 500 workers. The federal law takes effect April 2, 2020, and will sunset on Dec. 31, 2020. A specific list of criteria and qualifications must be met in order to qualify for this leave. Please see your manager or Human Resources for further information.

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**Protect Yourself**
How to wash your hands with soap and water:
- Use soap and warm, running water.
- Keep fingers pointing down.
- Rub hands vigorously for 20 seconds. Wash all surfaces:
  - Backs of hands
  - Wrists
  - Between fingers
  - Tips of fingers
  - Thumbs
  - Under fingernails
- Dry vigorously with paper or clean cloth towel.
- Turn off faucet with towel and open door with towel.

How it works:
- The soap suspends the dirt and soils.
- The friction motion helps pull dirt and greasy or oily soils free from the skin.
- Warm running water washes away suspended dirt and soils that trap germs.
- Final friction of wiping hands removes more germs.

Wash your hands with soap and water when your hands are visibly soiled. If soap and water is not available, use alcohol-based wipes or gel.
Resources for Employees
On March 18, the state launched a news COVID-19 website, coronavirus.illinois.gov. The website will feature news and announcements from the Governor’s Office, prevention tips, FAQs, resources, and information about coronavirus.

DuPage County residents and healthcare professionals with concerns about exposure or specific symptoms are encouraged to call the DCHD Communicable Disease and Epidemiology (CDE) program at (630) 221-7553 from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. or (630) 682-7400 after hours.

The DuPage County Health Department is also posting updates on their website, http://www.dupagehealth.org/590/Coronavirus-Information.

You can all call the Health Department’s Behavioral Health Crisis Hotline, (630) 627-1700, which is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

Additional information and resources can be found online at www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html or http://www.dph.illinois.gov/topics-services/diseases-and-conditions/diseases-a-z-list/coronavirus.

If you want to learn more about COVID-19, you can call the Illinois Department of Public Health’s COVID-19 Hotline at (800) 889-3931 or email DPH.SICK@ILLINOIS.GOV 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The hotline does not make decisions about who should be tested for COVID-19.

Please don’t call the Health Department about getting testing. Health departments do not collect specimens for COVID-19. Your health care provider will determine if you should be tested, and call the health department if needed.

If you have additional questions, you should contact your department head.