

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS FOR EMPLOYEES STATE EMPLOYEE LEAVE TIME AND STAFFING – COVID-19

PLEASE THOROUGHLY REVIEW THESE FAQ'S

1. If I am diagnosed with COVID-19, what should I do?

The employee should notify their human resources office as soon as possible and forward medical documentation within three business days to the Appointing Authority's representative or office tasked with receiving sick or leave documentation. Diagnosed employees should stay home and follow medical direction regarding treatment and absence from work. In accordance with the Guidelines, employees can be absent from work for the time period specified in accordance with the provided documentation without using accumulated leave time.

2. If I have been diagnosed with or exposed to COVID-19, when can I return to work?

Employees who have been exposed to (as considered in guidance from the NJ Department of Health at https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/documents/topics/NCOV/Exposure_Categories_for_2019_Novel_Coronavirus_mar_10_2020.108113.pdf) or diagnosed with the COVID-19 virus will not be permitted to enter the workplace until they are either medically cleared (regarding those with COVID-19) or until the expiration of the recommended 14- day period of quarantine from the point of last exposure (regarding those who were exposed).

3. What if I am quarantined or otherwise unable to work due to exposure to COVID-19?

If an employee is directed by a medical professional or government agency to self-isolate or quarantine due to suspicion of exposure to or diagnosis with COVID-19, and/or is undergoing a period of self-quarantine or isolation pursuant to public health assessment recommendations, then the employee will not be required to utilize accumulated leave time if they provide documentation verifying the same within three work days of the initial absence.

4. What if I become ill during a work day and suspect I have symptoms consistent with COVID-19?

All possible cases of COVID-19 will be taken seriously. If you become ill while at the workplace and suspect your symptoms are consistent with COVID-19, you should immediately contact your human resources office, who will ensure that you are separated from other employees and sent home, consistent with guidance from

the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the New Jersey Department of Health (DOH). That guidance is available at https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/documents/topics/NCOV/Guide%20for%20business%20es_3-4-2020.pdf.

5. What happens if I am impacted by the COVID-19 virus through a school closing?

Employees who are not under suspicion of having been exposed to the virus or diagnosed with the virus but wish to stay home with a child of whom they are the parent or legal guardian due to the closure of a preschool program, elementary or secondary school, or child care center related to COVID-19, will be required to provide documentation verifying the closing. As explained more fully below, Appointing Authorities should review their current Continuity of Operations Plans (COOP) to determine if work from home arrangements can or should be accommodated for both essential and non-essential employees during the period of the closure. If a work from home arrangement cannot be accommodated, such employee will not be required to use accumulated leave during the period of the COVID-19-related closure.

For the purposes of direct care employees, custody staff in correctional facilities, and any other employee deemed essential in accordance with NJ.A.C. 4A:6-2.5 or the Appointing Authority's COOP, if their child's preschool program, elementary or secondary school, or child care center is closed due to such things as preparation to respond to a potential outbreak or cleanings, they may be required to report to work as if the curtailment of State operations and services had been implemented.

6. If I need to stay home to care with a family member diagnosed with COVID-19, what should I do?

If the employee's absence is caused by the employee's need to care for an immediate family member who (i) has been diagnosed with COVID-19, (ii) was directed by a medical professional or government agency to self-isolate or quarantine due to possible exposure to or diagnosis with COVID-19, and/or (iii) is undergoing a period of self-quarantine or isolation pursuant to public health assessment recommendations, the employee shall submit documentation verifying the family member's COVID-19-related illness, exposure, and/or quarantine period to the Appointing Authority's representative or office tasked with receiving sick or leave documentation within three days of the employee's initial absence. If no such documentation is received, the employee will need to use accumulated leave time.

7. If I am subject to documentation requirements due to excessive absenteeism or abuse of sick leave, will I be penalized for further COVID-19 related absences?

Employees who had previously been subjected to documentation requirements under their Appointing Authority's standard operating procedures due to excessive absenteeism or abuse of sick leave shall not be disciplined for future absences that occur as a result of their being suspected of or diagnosed with the COVID-19 virus or having to be absent to care for a family member impacted by the virus.

Appointing authorities have been advised that they should not use any absenteeism related to the COVID-19 virus to subject any employee to a documentation requirement for excessive absenteeism. However, if no documentation is received within a reasonable time to support an asserted COVID-19 related absence, an Appointing Authority may exercise its discretion in determining its response.

Example: Employee A, who is on a documentation requirement due to excessive absenteeism, calls out stating she has been exposed to COVID-19. Three days later, Employee A provides documentation from her medical provider that she was in contact with an individual diagnosed with COVID-19 and is required to self-quarantine. In this case, no disciplinary action should be considered. Employee A's e-Cats/TALRs/Timesheet should utilize the appropriate code to reflect that she will not be charged with her accumulated leave.

8. What type of documentation will I be required to submit?

For cases where individuals are undergoing a period of isolation or quarantine, documentation from a local, state or federal governmental agency, a medical professional, office, or hospital or proof that the employee was recently in a location where the recommendation by a governmental agency is to self-quarantine will satisfy the requirement to provide documentation. Additional forms of documentation may be permitted by the State agency, commission, or Appointing Authority following consultation with the Chair of the Civil Service Commission.

For cases where individuals are caring for an immediate family member sickened by or diagnosed with COVID-19, then the employee shall submit documentation verifying the family member's COVID-19-related illness to the Appointing Authority's Human Resources Office within three days of the employee's initial absence.