



TIPS AND GUIDELINES ON HANDLING COVID -19 EMPLOYMENT AND COMMUNITY CONCERNS

Like many of you, we have spent the last several weeks educating ourselves about Coronavirus (COVID-19). This public health emergency continues to evolve, requiring numerous changes in how we conduct our lives. This guidance document was prepared to assist you in understanding the recent changes to the extended Stay at Home Order and essential function assessment.

Though many businesses and public places across Ohio have had to close as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, Section 10 of Ohio's Stay at Home Order specifically exempts "Essential Governmental Functions" and "Essential Infrastructure" and authorizes all first responders and other government employees to continue to provide essential services to their communities.

Essential Government Functions are those services of government which are needed to ensure the continuing operation of the Public Entity or to provide for or support the health, safety and welfare of the public. Essential Infrastructure includes employees supporting or enabling transportation functions, including workers that maintain and inspect infrastructure.

Ohio's Stay at Home Order directs each government entity to determine its essential functions and identify employees and/or contractors necessary to the performance of those functions. This guide was prepared to assist our members with critical decisions in regards to social distancing efforts to combat the spread of the virus while still providing essential services to their communities.

Public Buildings and Facilities

- All public buildings, meeting and gathering facilities should be closed to discourage gatherings.
- All point of sale locations should have a physical protective barrier between the payee and the employee tasked with accepting the payment to reduce the spread of the virus. Point of sale locations that cannot be configured with a physical protective barrier should be immediately closed and have alternative transaction methods explored or activities suspended until the emergency is ended.
- All facilities and point of sale locations that remain open shall have a cleaning and disinfection process, consistent with the recommendations of the CDC and Department of Health, implemented to help contain the spread of the virus.





Parks & Playgrounds

- Playgrounds should be closed as social distancing cannot be adequately controlled.
- Gatherings of 2 or more people should be actively discouraged at all athletic courts and fields in compliance with social distancing recommendations.
- Walking paths, trails and other passive recreational opportunities that embrace social distancing should remain open unless distancing recommendations are be ignored and/or cannot be controlled.

Enabling Designated Employees to Work from Home

- At the discretion of Department Leaders, certain designated employees may be permitted to telework if most of the employee's job responsibilities can be effectively performed remotely.
- Employees scheduled for evening and early morning hours may be reassigned to normal business hours to facilitate communications with them. Work from home employees are permitted to leave their homes during their scheduled or reassigned hours to attend doctors' appointments as well as other appointments for which they receive prior approval from their Supervisor or Department Leader.
- Employees must use sick, vacation, compensatory, holiday, or personal leave while they are teleworking in the same manner as they would utilize leave while on regular duty.

Self-Health Screenings by ALL Employees

- During the period of the Stay at Home Order, ALL employees are required to take their temperatures immediately before leaving to report to duty. Employees who have symptoms of respiratory illness and experience a fever of 100.4° F or greater MUST contact their Supervisor or Department Leader before reporting to duty and more than likely will be required to stay home.

Social Distancing Procedures

- Whenever possible, operations and shift schedules may be modified to limit or eliminate the need for employees to work in groups of 2 or more. If possible, work assignments shall be modified to enable employees to work autonomously and have limited or no contact with other employees.
- All employees working in an office environment shall, to the extent possible, communicate via telephone or email to limit face-to-face exposure in adherence of the CDC's social distancing guidelines.
- Employees shall practice social distancing at all breaks. Lunches should be staggered to limit gatherings of 2 or more people.





Use of Vacation/Compensatory Time Leave

- The use of vacation, compensatory time, or other forms of leave will be approved at the discretion of each Department Leader. However, employees are reminded that requests may be denied in the event of a workforce shortage, service necessity, or when the taking of the leave would be unduly disruptive to Public Entity operations. In addition, in the event of a workforce shortage, vacation, compensatory time, or other forms of leave which were previously-approved may be revoked.

Ban on Non-Essential Travel & Notification of Essential Travel

Pursuant to the Stay at Home Order, non-essential travel is prohibited in the State of Ohio. Due to the health risks associated with travel at this time, employees shall notify their Department Leader of any travel outside of Public Entity services. Such notification is necessary to ensure that exposure can be assessed to determine if self-quarantine is necessary prior to return to work.

Procedures Required Upon Return from Travel outside of normal Public Entity services: The following procedures may be required upon an employee's return to duty after travelling outside of normal Public Entity services.

1. ***Temporary Reassignment to Positions Where Isolation is Possible:*** Employees who return to duty after travelling to locations which are known to have significant COVID-19 exposures, illnesses, or deaths may be reassigned to a position where isolation is possible. Such reassignment can be to any Department where the employee can perform services separately and without risking exposure to other employees or the public, and may include duties from the employee's home. Public Entity Leadership shall determine the duration of each employee's reassignment.
2. ***Use of Leave if Employee Traveled In Violation of these Guidelines and/or the Ohio Department of Health's Stay at Home Order:*** If the employee has traveled outside the State in violation of these guidelines and/or the Ohio Department of Health's Stay at Home Order, the employee may not be permitted to return to duty for a period of fourteen (14) days.



Special Circumstances

There may be unique circumstances where staff may need to stay away from their place of employment for the protection of themselves or their families. The Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) was passed to allow for paid leave for these circumstances. Ohio Plan has created a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) guide to help answer some of the difficult questions surrounding the application of leave. Here are a sampling of special circumstances that you may encounter.

- Employees who have been diagnosed with a compromised immune system or an underlying health condition which puts them at more than normal risk of exposure and/or complication from contracting COVID-19 may, with proper documentation from a licensed health care professional, request alternate job assignment which reduces their exposure to COVID-19 during this time. If no alternate job assignment can be made which meets the employee's skills and the Public Entity's needs, the employee is eligible for paid sick leave during the period of the Stay at Home Order under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) so long as a health care professional has advised the employee to self-quarantine.
- Employees who reside with someone who has been diagnosed with a compromised immune system or an underlying health condition which puts that person at more than normal risk of exposure and/or complication from contracting COVID-19 may, with proper documentation from a licensed health care professional, request alternate job assignment which limits their exposure to COVID-19 during this time. If no alternate job assignment can be made which meets the employee's skills and the Public Entity's needs, the employee is eligible for paid sick leave during the period of the Stay at Home Order under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) so long as a health care professional has advised the person to self-quarantine.
- Employees who are caring for his/her child due to the closure of the school or place of child care due to COVID-19 may, request alternate job assignment during this time. If no alternate job assignment can be made which meets the employee's skills and the Public Entity's needs, the employee is eligible for paid sick leave and may be eligible for extended Family Medical Leave during the period of the Stay at Home Order under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA).
- Employees who have been advised to self-quarantine, diagnosed with or experiencing symptoms related to COVID-19 are eligible for paid sick leave during the period of the Stay at Home order under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA).

Your Ohio Plan team has the ability and knowledge to handle day-to-day member requests and questions. We are working remotely and constantly connected to email and our office phones. Please feel free to reach any of our staff or send your general questions to info@ohioplan.org.