



March 14, 2020 Coronavirus Update For Employees, Contractors, and Supervisors

► www.montgomerycountymd.gov/EmployeeNewsCOVID19

The guidance in this communication applies only for the duration of the coronavirus (COVID-19) event and is subject to change.



In order to protect and maintain the health of the Montgomery County Government (MCG) workforce and continue providing services to the maximum extent possible, MCG is escalating its preparedness regarding COVID-19. What does this mean for you as an employee, contractor or supervisor? The following information below provides the most current guidance.

Supervisors: If your staff does not have ready access to County email, please print and share this information with them as soon as possible. Thank you.

Situational Telework

The following Situational Telework policy is effective immediately for employees whose positions are Telework eligible ("eligible employees"), meaning employees whose work can be effectively performed remotely:

- Eligible employees may Telework up to five (5) days a week with supervisory approval.
- Probationary employees in Telework-eligible positions are allowed to Telework with supervisory approval.
- Eligible employees who do not have an approved Telework agreement must review the Telework training videos on the Telework website and complete the attached one-page [Situational Telework Application](#); there is no need to complete the online packet or take the online test.
- Employees who engage in Situational Telework must use the Telework Reason Code when submitting timesheets in Mctime: **TELECOVD**. (This includes employees who are already approved for the formal Telework Program and are working remotely due to COVID-19.) For guidance on how to enter the code, see the Resources tab on the [Telework website](#).
- Employees should work with their Supervisors to ensure that they have access to 1) Outlook, 2) all the documents they need on OneDrive and SharePoint, i.e., Office365, 3) agency IT systems and networks as may be necessary, and 4) VPN (if needed). For technology assistance, contact the IT Help Desk at 240-777-2828.

Here are further details:

- If you have a work-issued laptop, you may take it home.
- The Department of Technology Services (DTS) has a limited number of laptops they can make available to employees who need them for Teleworking.
- If your department is unable to provide you with a laptop, or you have specialized software on your desktop PC, you will be permitted to take your desktop PC home with you for purposes of Telework.
- You are also permitted to use your personal computers for Telework.

Contractors: To help with continuity of operations, Department hiring managers may make a determination if your assignment is appropriate for a temporary Telework arrangement.

For Telework Program details:

<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HR/Telework/TeleworkProgram.html>

School Closings

On March 12, 2020, County Executive Marc Elrich announced that the Governor had ordered all public schools, including those in Montgomery County, would be closed March 16 to March 27, 2020. If you are approved to Telework you may do so, despite the presence of young children or other persons requiring care and supervision at your Telework location. Also, you may adjust your work hours so that they occur around child/family care responsibilities.

If your position is not eligible for Telework and you are impacted by school/child/family care closures, you may, with supervisory approval, remain home to care for your young children or other persons requiring care and supervision. You must utilize your earned leave (annual, compensatory, sick, personal or PTO) during the time that you are home. **Employees who have less than 80 hours of total leave balance will be advanced 10 days of sick leave.** This policy will be reviewed if school closures extend beyond March 27, 2020.

At-risk Employees and Family Members / Employees with Disabilities

Many questions have been received regarding “at-risk” individuals and employees with disabilities. At-risk employees are defined as individuals who:

- Are over 60 years of age;
- Have a severe underlying chronic medical condition like heart or lung disease or diabetes;
 - Employees must receive OMS verification that they are at risk.
- Live with a person who has a severe underlying chronic medical condition like heart or lung disease or diabetes.
 - Employees must receive OMS verification that the person they are caring for is at risk.

If you are an at-risk employee and wish to Telework you *may* do so, subject to supervisory approval. If your position is not eligible for Telework, then you can ask your supervisor to:

- Move you to a less-forward facing position or otherwise ensure adequate social distancing; or
- If accommodation is not possible, you may stay home and use your earned leave (annual, compensatory, sick, personal or PTO) during the time that you are home. **Employees who have less than 80 hours of total leave balance will be advanced 10 days of sick leave.**

Important: Management/supervisory personnel should take measures to assist “at-risk” employees and employees with disabilities if the employee self-identifies or if such measures are consistent with an ADA accommodation. This employee population includes, but is not limited to, employees over the age of 60, employees with chronic, serious or underlying medical issues, and individuals with cognitive or mental disabilities. Those employees should self-identify, and not be involuntarily removed from the worksite or subject to treatment unlike other employees unless for reasons cited in OHR guidance/FAQs. Further existing ADA accommodation should be utilized unless OMS guidance provides alternate accommodations to meet changing operational issues.

Employees Who Have Travelled Outside the United States

- You are advised to **use caution** when travelling to areas with high numbers of COVID-19.
- If you are returning to work from a CDC level 2 or level 3 risk country, you must self-quarantine for two weeks. If your position is eligible for Telework, and you feel that you can Telework, *and* you do not need to enter County property to obtain items/equipment needed for Telework, then you may Telework if you choose. If you are unable to Telework, either due to the absence of necessary items/equipment or because you hold a position that is not eligible for Telework, then you will receive Administrative Leave for the duration of the self-quarantine period. See the section below titled, “Self-Quarantine.”
- For information about when you may return to work, see the section below titled “Sick Employees and Return to Work.”

Self-Quarantine

If you are told to self-quarantine, **even if you are not symptomatic, stay home**. If your healthcare provider instructs you to self-quarantine, notify your supervisor. With regard to sick leave, MCG will ensure that all employees are able to stay at home during the required 14-day period of self-isolation or quarantine.

- If you have been directed by a healthcare provider or a state/local public health official to self-isolate or self-quarantine—due to your COVID-19 diagnosis, your symptoms, or your exposure to a known COVID-19 case—you should stay home. You will be provided COVID-19 administrative leave for the mandated self-isolation/self-quarantine period up to 14 calendar days. This means that you will be given up to 10 business days of COVID-19 administrative leave and the time will not be charged to you. Use the pay code ADMIN LEAVE - OTHER with the Reason Code ADMCOVID to record these hours.
- If you are not symptomatic during the period of self-isolation or self-quarantine, and Telework is feasible, you may coordinate with your supervisor to Telework during that period.

Note: Employees who are sick but **not** directed to self-quarantine and who have less than 80 hours of total leave balance will be advanced 10 days of sick leave.

Sick Employees and Return to Work

If you are sick, follow these guidelines before thinking of returning to work:

- **Stay home** until you are fully recovered.
- You can return to work at the conclusion of a non-COVID-19 illness or a self-quarantine period so long as you have no symptoms of acute respiratory illness and are free of fever (100.4 F [37.8 C] or greater using an oral thermometer), signs of a fever, and any other symptoms for at least 24 hours, without the use of fever-reducing or other symptom-altering medicines (e.g. cough suppressants).
- You can return to work if you were diagnosed with COVID-19 after you have two negative COVID-19 tests taken 24 hours apart after and have received clearance to return to work from OMS. You must provide the medical documentation from your medical provider indicating clearance to return to work.

MLS Time Reporting

MLS employees working on tasks directly related to COVID-19 should record time against the Project Task and Expenditure Org found on the [COVID-19 Special Event Crosswalk - March 06, 2020](#). Any Hours

Worked **beyond** an MLS employee regularly scheduled hours should be coded with the Project Task and Expenditure Org **and** the Reason Code MLSCOV1D.

Reporting Employee Exposures to or Diagnosis of COVID-19

Supervisors should report any employee exposures to or diagnosis of COVID-19 as part of County work to CorVel (the County's Third Party Claims Administrator) via the regular methodology. If an employee says they have flu-like symptoms, managers should not ask them to clarify to identify COVID-19, just take the information provided and report it. OSHA has defined the COVID-19 virus as a recordable illness, so this reporting is the methodology to start that process.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Although not required or considered clinically necessary by the Public Health Officer, you are now permitted to wear your own PPE (masks, gloves, etc.) without OMS approval. For employees whose position already entails the use of PPE, there is no alteration to the current guidelines.

Social Distancing

The CDC defines social distancing as "remaining out of congregate settings, avoiding mass gatherings and maintaining distance (approximately 6 feet) from others when possible." ([Source](#)) Social distancing is less drastic than quarantine or isolation, which are used for people who are suspected to be carrying COVID-19. For tips on social distancing in the workplace, visit the [Employee Coronavirus News](#) webpage (Workplace Safety section).

Trainings and Meetings

All County trainings have been cancelled. OHR's Training Department is currently developing virtual learning solutions. Non-essential meetings must be cancelled or conducted on a virtual basis.

Future Updates and Employee COVID-19 News

As this is a rapidly evolving situation, OHR will continue to assist and inform you regarding the potential impacts of and available responses to COVID-19. OHR will also update the new [Employee Coronavirus News](#) webpage on a frequent basis to provide the latest guidance and additional FAQs.

For the latest employee COVID-19 workplace-related information, visit:

www.montgomerycountymd.gov/EmployeeNewsCOVID19

Please note that the guidance in this email will be added to the online FAQs as soon as possible.

For event-related timekeeping guidance, visit:

<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/mctime/resources.html#Events>

Attachment: [Situational Telework Application](#)