



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Marc Elrich  
*County Executive*

March 18, 2020

Dear Montgomery County Employees,

Over the last week, we have seen how this unprecedented public health emergency is rapidly changing our lives. Our primary job is to slow down the spread of COVID-19 and find ways to keep the people of Montgomery County safe and healthy.

Each of you play an important role in this effort and I want you to know that we are working to protect your health and safety while we continue to deliver essential services to the people of Montgomery County.

Although we have been preparing for this moment since January, trying to anticipate the worst possible scenarios, we can't anticipate everything, and I ask for your patience and understanding as departments scramble to implement new ways of doing business.

I know some of you have been feeling anxious and wanting more communication – going forward we are developing better ways to hear your questions and concerns and address them as quickly as possible. I will also be sure to communicate regularly about the latest on the COVID-19 threat and the status of our operations.

I realize that each of you has families and loved ones that you are concerned about. And it is that concern that is guiding us as we develop our plans for the next two weeks, and beyond if necessary.

We developed new policies specifically for this situation, and I have asked directors, managers and supervisors to work with their staff to accommodate your needs to ensure the safety of you and your family.

We are making use of telework as much as we possibly can. For employees who are not able to telework, we have taken steps to keep work areas cleaned and disinfected, reduce foot traffic and promote social distancing for our public-facing services, and delay the handling of materials from the public until they are no longer at risk of having live virus on them. Employees may wear personal protective equipment, such as gloves and masks, though County Government is only able to supply them to health workers and first responders because of limited supply.

We are providing flexible leave for employees who are in populations most vulnerable to the virus and those who need to care for young children while schools are closed.

Letter from County Executive Marc Elrich

March 18, 2020

Page 2 of 3

Please review the COVID-19 work and leave policies that we have developed and sent to each of you via email and posted online at

<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HR/Benefits/EmpCoronavirus.html> . The OHR site includes an extensive set of FAQs about personnel policy issues. If you have any additional questions, please talk to your supervisor. You can also send questions to [CountyEmployeeCovid19Info@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:CountyEmployeeCovid19Info@montgomerycountymd.gov). OHR will use these questions to make the FAQs as responsive as possible.

I know that employees who must report to work in County Government facilities and interact with the public are concerned about their potential exposure. Our Public Health Officer, Dr. Gayles, has advised that employees can work safely if they follow precautions: maintain social distancing; wash hands regularly; cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue (or elbow); avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth; and, stay at home when you are sick.

As I'm sure you've heard, Governor Hogan has ordered the closure of restaurants, bars, theaters, and fitness centers and prohibited gatherings of 50 or more people. He has allowed for state and local government buildings to continue to operate, as well as most retail businesses, so that people can get services and goods they need even in this time of restricted activity.

I can assure you that County Government leadership is continuously assessing our operating status. COVID-19 is very different from the kinds of emergencies we are used to dealing with. Unlike a weather event, which is over in days, this crisis is likely to go on for months. Local government cannot shut down for months – we are relied on to keep civil society functioning and ensure the welfare of our residents. The decisions we make today need to consider the long-term viability of County Government.

I want to again remind everyone to practice good social distancing and other protective measures while you are in direct contact with the public. Containing this virus is essential if we're going to beat it.

Thank you all for what you do for the people of Montgomery County. Dealing with this emergency situation will remain a challenge for the coming weeks at least – I know the uncertainty is difficult and the anxiety is high; while we can't know right now when our lives will resume a more normal routine, I do believe that we are taking appropriate measures for our employees and our residents.

I am confident that if we work together and take of ourselves and each other, we will demonstrate the very best of public service – coming through for our residents in a time of crisis.

Best,



Marc Elrich  
County Executive

Letter from County Executive Marc Elrich

March 18, 2020

Page 3 of 3

cc: Andrew Kleine, Chief Administrative Officer, Montgomery County Government  
Berke Attila, Director, Human Resources, Montgomery County Government  
Steve Sluchansky, Chief, Labor Relations, Montgomery County Government  
Jeffrey Buddle, President, Montgomery County Fire Fighters Association  
Marcine Goodloe, President, Montgomery County Volunteer Fire Rescue Association  
Torrie Cooke, President, Fraternal Order of Police  
Lee Holland, Corporation Vice President, Fraternal Order of Police  
Gino Renne, President, MCGEO  
Montgomery County Council  
Montgomery County Delegation, Maryland State Elected Officials  
Montgomery County Members, Maryland Municipal League Town and City Managers