

## May 28, 2020 All-Employee COVID 19 Live Event Questions and Answers

The County Executive and Chief Administrative Officer, in conjunction with the County's Public Health Officer, conducted an all-employee live event on May 28, 2020. There was not sufficient time to answer all of the questions that came up during the event. We have attempted to provide answers below to as many of the questions as possible. The information provided below is current as of June 10, 2020. For some areas of questions, final decisions have not been made and information will be provided at a later date.

### Telework

*Q What will the County's policy be on telework as the County worksite re-open?*

**Answer:** During the initial response to the COVID-19 crisis, the County Government significantly ramped up its use of situational telework. The County is developing plans to move the County towards a "Telework First" approach. A workgroup has been formed to work on both short-term efforts to address some of the challenges related to teleworking, while also working with employees, departments, and unions on longer-term policies to promote further teleworking. During Phase A and B of the Reconstituting County Worksites, the expectation is that situational telework will continue to the maximum extent possible and practicable. Teleworking staff should return to the office during Phases A and B only on an exception basis. Viable reasons for returning to the office could include:

- The nature of the work requires "in person" services – e.g., dental services, some library and recreation programs, etc.
- State or other mandates to provide "in person" services
- Significant productivity impairments when working from home (e.g. inadequate access to State databases, limited workspace at home, difficulty functioning with other family members home, etc.)

*Q How are you going to ensure that management allows telework to continue going forward if staff are able? In my department, we are fully able to telework, but management has made it very clear that they are not willing to approve it prior to the pandemic nor will be willing to approve after the pandemic. Currently, telework is going very well for my program and my clients are thriving.*

**Answer:** Telework is strongly supported by both the County Executive and the CAO. This message will continue to be conveyed to department directors and managers/supervisors as the benefits of telework are being realized by the County.

*Q Is the county going to provide more reliable equipment in order to continue telework?*

**Answer:** That question is being reviewed now because there is an awareness that it is important for meeting operational needs.

*Q Will MLS managers be allowed to continue teleworking beyond COVID-19?*

**Answer:** Yes. Telework will be available to MLS managers after COVID-19.

*Q Can managers force staff to work in the buildings face to face when their jobs are 100% able to be done remotely? Especially if staff have underlying health issues?*

**Answer:** An employee with a health issue should contact Occupational Medical Services for an assessment of their health issues when they are concerned about worksite safety issues.

*Q Does the redress of the telework policy include having telework options for contractors?*

**Answer:** While the County Telework Policies cover employees, the use of County contractors can be reviewed in light of safety concerns related to the current situation.

*Q What is the maximum amount of telework that will be allowed for office workers? Will that be determined by each department, or at a higher level?*

**Answer:** Yes, the determination regarding the amount of telework for individual employees should be made at the department level by managers based on operational needs. Currently, if their work can be done remotely, they can continue to telework – there is no min/max amount.

*Q Will county employees who have children or members of their family who have compromised immune systems, will they be able to continue to telework to care for their family to avoid contracting the virus and exposing family members?*

**Answer:** Occupational Medical Services should continue to be involved in any decision moving forward regarding the continuation of telework where an employee raises health issues.

*Q As telework is being planned what is their plan for IT security vulnerability management?*

**Answer:** DTS is continually updating its approach to assessing IT security vulnerability issues. This is recognized as a serious issue on an hourly basis.

*Q Will employees that live out of state be first priority for telework in the future?*

**Answer:** No priority has been established for out of state employees. Managers have to continue to assess operational needs when making these decisions.

*Q Regarding Reconstituting the Workplace and given COVID-19, what technology improvements will the County explore to facilitate teleworking? For example, will the County intentionally and strategically move to strongly recommend (and perhaps require) Departments to have critical applications in the cloud so that teleworking can be easily scalable? This would be such applications listed in the DTS' IT Applications Portfolio.*

**Answer:** DTS is continually updating its processes and approaches for utilizing the best technology platforms and programs. Your comment will be reviewed by DTS in that process.

*Q For employees required to come to the worksite full time, they will face childcare issues since the summer camps most likely won't be open. Will employees in this situation still be allowed to telework some days?*

**Answer:** Continued telework should be possible as managers are being encouraged to utilize flexible approaches to getting the work done and meeting operational needs.

*Q I have a staff person with no computer or internet connection at home. I have followed the procurement process and IT will be unable to deliver the system until the last week of June. But I could walk into Best Buy and get something off the shelf that would make her productive again instead of on admin leave. Is there any chance that we can speed this up by doing so?*

**Answer:** While the recommendation can be made by the appropriate manager at the department level regarding this type of purchase and the manager must get approval from the department director, it is not the County telework policy to purchase equipment for teleworkers at this time.

### **Re-Opening Workplaces**

*Q What is the plan for County employees to return to the worksite? When can we go back to the office, even if it's only for a couple of days a week? When will the workplace guidance be coming to us? How much lead time will we have before we open? When will you post a timeline of when most county employees will return to offices? For planning, can we estimate or provide a "not before" date for reopening County bldgs. to the public?*

**Answer:** The County is approaching the reconstitution of its worksites and reduced or suspended programs in a phased manner that will take into account public health concerns – including employee and customer safety, state, court and other agency requirements, costs, and competing priorities. One of the key factors in reducing COVID-19 transmission is the ability to employ social or physical distancing. The County is implementing a number of approaches to reduce the risk of COVID-19 to employees, including use of facial coverings, use of hand-sanitizers and disinfection/cleaning of the worksite, continued use of situational telework, and increased physical “spacing” of employees in the worksite

*Q Are we considering only opening for appointments or limited hours for govt services like permits/licenses vs general public spaces like libraries?*

**Answer:** In the earliest phases of reconstituting our worksites, we will be limiting customers in our buildings to achieve social distancing requirements. That will likely include “by appointment” only arrangements. Staggered schedules may also be used for these purposes and to address employee scheduling needs.

*Q When will ADMIN COVID employees be returned to work?*

**Answer:** This is a policy question that has yet to be determined. Obviously, it will be difficult to maintain services and/or financially infeasible to cover shifts with overtime in the long-term if there is not significant federal aid available to cover these types of costs.

*Q If your workplace says it is time to come back, but if you personally don't feel safe will that be taking into consideration? Or will everyone need to come back when the office is back having people in it?*

**Answer:** Staff who are 1) not willing to come back to work and 2) do not have an allowable reason for not returning to work, may be granted leave but will need to use leave during the time they are not reporting to work. Employee counseling services will be available for employees who are experiencing concerns or anxiety about returning to the worksite.

*Q Could your panel please reinforce personal responsibility once coming came to work?*

**Answer:** There will be significant training for staff on the need for staff to stay home if sick and to practice social distancing, frequent hand hygiene, use personal protective equipment (Masks, etc.), clean up after themselves, etc. There will also be signage reminding people about the role they play in protecting themselves, their co-workers, and the public. Customers will also be asked not to enter County worksites if they are sick or may have had COVID exposure, to wear masks, etc.

*Q Do we have plans to stagger staff when opening offices?*

**Answer:** The first approach is to minimize the number of people in County offices as much as possible. Plans for each building will be developed to avoid arrival bottlenecks. There will have to be some flexibility since childcare and traffic/transit considerations may be beyond employees' control.

*Q What will be the procedure for at risk employees to return to work if their job function is with public contact?*

**Answer:** Plans to minimize the risk to employee safety are being developed, to include voluntary testing, use of PPE and frequent hand-washing, physical barriers (e.g., Plexiglas) where possible.

*Q What are county employees supposed to do in the fall if they have to report to work and schools continue distance learning?*

**Answer:** Should this occur, it is likely to be challenging for employees and department managers alike. While the County will attempt to creatively use telework, schedule modifications (e.g., compressed schedules, in office rotations, other changes in schedules), County services must still be delivered, and staff should consider what other childcare arrangements can be made. Employees should think creatively about what other options they may have for childcare, and should provide suggestions on how workplace modifications might allow them to cope with this situation while still continuing core services.

*Q When we return to work, should we refrain from using office watercooler?*

**Answer:** The safest way to reduce risk in this situation is to avoid touching high touch surfaces such as a watercooler. However, if employees either washed off the button/handle before touching it and/or held a paper towel to touch the button, there would be no surface contact concern.

*Q Any sense of when Senior Centers may reopen?*

**Answer:** No. Because seniors are at a particularly high risk for negative COVID impacts, there is no plan to reopen the senior centers until at least the third phase of our efforts to reconstitute County functions and worksites. With that said, Recreation department staff have been providing services to seniors (I.e. nutrition programs) as able. Until senior programs can be reconstituted in a way that is safe, the senior center facilities will be used for other programs (such as summer camps) and COVID-response initiatives.

*Q Have there been any discussion with ag center about large events like the county fair?*

**Answer:** A final decision regarding the County fair has not been made and announced.

*Q If a person who is considered to have underlying conditions wants to return to work can they?*

**Answer:** Employees whose positions have been designated for telework, but the employee wants to return to the County worksite – either on an intermittent or continuous basis should discuss the scheduling of return with their supervisor. We recognize that an employee who is teleworking may periodically need to return to the worksite, but need to ensure that physical distancing standards are not compromised. They would be expected to follow the safety protocols in place at their worksite for their job function.

### **PPE/Face Coverings**

*Q What kind of PPE are frontline employees going to receive (not first responders)?*

**Answer:** Most County employees will receive two cloth masks, hand sanitizer, and will have access to disinfecting supplies for their workspace. They will also receive training on this issue so that they can use them properly. Higher levels of PPE will be provided as indicated by OSHA, MOSH, and CDC guidance.

*Q Will the PPE for employees be latex free?*

**Answer:** Both latex and nitrile gloves are available, if needed.

*Q Will the policy for cloth masks be mandated or voluntary?*

**Answer:** Face coverings will be mandatory for employees, contractors, and vendors with limited exceptions. The exceptions would be related to Police or Sheriffs employees who by the nature of work may not be able to wear a face covering at all times. Another example would be employees wearing other types of PPE such as employees in the Paint/Body Shop. These employees wear cartridge respiratory protection specifically designed for the work task and would limit their ability to wear a face covering.

*Q Will masks be made available to contractor employees working in County offices and facilities? How should masks be obtained?*

**Answer:** Yes. DGS will be providing return to work packages that include face coverings and hand sanitizer. DGS has established an on-line ordering system to obtain PPE as needed by Departments. All employee's will be required to review training from MCSP-23 and sign off on the on-line receipt form. This system will meet both the training requirement and the employee verification that they understand the requirement to wear the mask. Submit requests to DGS via the intranet Work Order request form at <http://portalapps01.mcgov.org/DGSservices/>.

*Q Will county employees be able to get N95 masks for work? Are the N-95 masks the county has acquired single-use or are they the reusable N-95 masks?*

**Answer:** Most non-public safety/non-medical County employees will not require N95 masks. All PPE will be distributed according to the job specific requirements established by Federal/State Occupational Safety and Health standards.

*Q Will face shields to protect eyes be included with PPE to be supplied by the County?*

**Answer:** Most County employees will not require face shields unless required by standard. All PPE will be distributed according to the job specific requirements established by Federal/State Occupational Safety and Health standards.

*Q I've purchased face shields. Will County allow employees to wear face shields as well?*

**Answer:** Employees whose job task would not require use of a face shield will not be allowed to wear their own face shields. If the job task requires face shields, PPE will be provided by the County and distributed according to the job specific requirements established by Federal/State Occupational Safety and Health standards. DGS will provided required PPE through the on-line ordering system. County provided face shields will be impact resistance and meet the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) requirement to be ANSI – Z87 approved.

*Q Who can we contact if we don't get the PPE in time when the unit is up and running? Who will be responsible for re-stocking/replenishing the PPE?*

**Answer:** Talk to your department administrator or worksite safety coordinator who will contact DGS to secure PPE. DGS has been procuring significant amounts of PPE (e.g., masks, disinfectant, etc.) with a goal to maintaining a minimum of a 30-day supply.

## **Workplace Safety**

*Q What is the County's plan to protect employees as we return to the office?*

**Answer:** The County has implemented return to work packages including face coverings and hand sanitizer. All employees will be required to review the PPE Policy for COVID-19 MCSP-23 and attached OHR documents. Employees must then sign the on-line receipt confirming they understand the training and have received their packet. Please consult your Worksite Safety Coordinator (WSC) if you have questions.

According to guidance from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), limiting face-to-face contact with others is the best way to reduce the spread of COVID-19. the following general principles are being applied to achieve this:

- **Telework** – Wherever possible, those employees who are currently teleworking will continue to do so, and technology will continue to be used to facilitate working from home, replacing in-person communication, while still providing services.
- **Staying home when sick** -- Employees who are not well or who have been in close contact with someone who is sick should stay home.
- **Employee self-screening for COVID-19 symptoms** – Employees will be required to self-assess prior to entering the worksite.

In addition, enhanced disinfection at worksites, and other steps that promote enhanced personal hygiene: e.g., providing tissues, no-touch trash cans, hand soap, alcohol-based hand sanitizers containing at least 60 percent alcohol, disinfectants, and disposable towels for workers to clean their work surfaces and hand-sanitizer stanchions for public spaces (hand sanitizer dispensers will be located in public areas of buildings – lobbies, waiting rooms, counters, etc.). Modifications in workspaces will also be made: installing plexiglass dividers where necessary; reconfigure space to enable people to be at least 6 feet apart in all directions throughout the day; in elevators, installing position stickers on the floor to indicate where individuals can/should stand.

*Q What is the plan for putting up plexiglass barriers at County offices & buildings where there is public access, including the libraries?*

**Answer:** DGS is working with all departments to install barriers at all transactional locations.

*Q What is the plan to install touch free, hand sanitizer units and who will refill and maintain them in County facilities?*

**Answer:** Hand sanitizer dispensers will be placed in public areas. Dispensers are not touch free. Each dispenser may be refilled upon notification to DGS (240-777-7777) of the need.

*Q Will we have UV light installed in our buildings to help with disinfection?*

**Answer:** While UV is effective, the application of it as a disinfectant is laborious and slow. Other means of disinfection, primarily the use of disinfecting wipes and sprays, have been and will continue to be employed in buildings.

*Q What about doors that require badge entry in offices? Will the doors remain open during office hours, so people don't touch the doors or the handles?*

**Answer:** Building security will remain a priority. Door handles should be wiped regularly by staff occupying the workspace. Supplies for this and related uses will be furnished to departments.

*Q What will you do to address indoor air quality in office buildings such as in Piccard and Wheaton offices that could increase the risk to infection, particularly for those employees who provide face to face counseling?*

**Answer:** DGS is installing high filtration Minimum Efficiency Reporting Value (MERV) filters in all buildings

*Q I work at a location that is not a County owned building, in other words there are several county agencies in the building. How will cleaning of these county offices in this location?*

**Answer:** DGS is working with all landlords to ensure that the same standards applied to County buildings are maintained at leased locations.

*Q Have you been flushing pipes at county office buildings to prevent the buildup of harmful bacteria?*

**Answer:** County buildings have been maintained throughout the closure. All systems are functioning and clean.

*Q Bathroom and workspace cleaning need to improve. Who is overseeing that workspaces and bathrooms are cleaned daily?*

**Answer:** County workspaces are cleaned twice daily, with a particular focus on disinfecting wipe downs of public areas. Wiping down high traffic areas in between these cleanings will be the responsibility of the occupant department.

*Q As offices will start opening up, is someone looking at the cleaning contract to have it expanded to do dusting and more thorough cleaning?*

**Answer:** The custodial service contracts have been amended to include an additional cleaning daily, with particular focus on disinfecting wipe downs of public areas.

*Q How about face to face contact with clients: how are we going to remain safe and using county cars are they going to be cleaned and disinfected between each use?*

**Answer:** Departments may arrange with DGS Fleet Management to have vehicle disinfected. However, under routine usage, departments will be supplied with supplies to wipe down the interior surfaces of vehicles before and after each use.

*Q Can we get touchless faucets, soaps and paper towels in County restrooms? Any way to improve the hygiene of public toilets?*

**Answer:** Hand washing with soap and water is critical to hygiene. Persons using restrooms should always wash their hands thoroughly and use a paper towel to open the restroom door upon exiting.

*Q Who will be doing the cleaning of high touch surfaces during the day? will it be cleaning staff or "other duties as assigned" for regular staff? and does this include bathrooms?*

**Answer:** County workspaces are cleaned twice daily by custodial services contractors, with a particular focus on disinfecting wipe downs of public areas. Wiping down high traffic areas in between these cleanings will be the responsibility of the occupant department.

### **Recreation/Camps/Pool**

*Q Regarding camps, is it correct that we are to wait until phase 2 to do indoor camps, whereas right now (Phase 1) only outdoor camps are okay?*

**Answer:** Yes, this is correct that currently only outdoor camps have been approved and we await further information and approvals from public health for other opportunities.

*Q Will County and private pools be able to open with phase 1? If not, why? Do we have guidance on private pools?*

**Answer:** All pools both public and private remain closed at this time.

*Q When will outdoor soccer fields open up?*

**Answer:** All Montgomery Parks and CUPF can answer regarding when they will open for permitted use. Outdoor space is available for small group classes and activities with safety protocols in place.

*Q Regarding summer camps, I know many camps, including Montgomery County Recreation Dept, have already been cancelled and refunded. Does that mean this decision, at least as it applies to MoCo rec dept will be revisited and changed? Without camps running it will be difficult for parents to return to work.*

**Answer:** We did cancel our “original” summer activities as we knew that they would not look and be the same as they were originally planned. Staff are working diligently to have scenarios for a wide variety of summer activities available in limited capacities due to space capacities.

*Q Will you be supplying masks to children attending camps?*

**Answer:** We will have PPE as a backup for young people and staff that arrive at summer activities without one.

*Q Children are being disproportionately impacted by this "Safe at Home" effort and almost all of the initial stages of reopening leave them continually confined. Even when the camps open, that will likely go quickly to higher income families who can afford to quickly pivot and pay for those coveted slots. Is there a clear dedicated effort to consider the impact on children and stand up efforts to make room for all children across the economic strata for access to increased activity and socialization?*

**Answer:** We will be working to ensure that our most vulnerable young people have opportunities that they might not otherwise have the chance to do so.

*Q What will the protocol be when a community member attends a camp/event but does not bring a mask? Do we have the right to turn people away?*

**Answer:** We do not plan to have public access to summer activities, so family members, guardians and or designee will drop off and pick up the young person at the entrance of the facility.

*Q Will they be doing regular testing of camp counselors and children in camps now that camps are allowed to open? Just because they are only allowing 10 people in a group, doesn't mean that children are capable of understanding or complying with physical distancing or that they won't come with or spread the virus.*

**Answer:** We are working closely with public health officials to make sure all safety protocols are in place. Staff will have small groups to oversee and will have extensive training on all safety protocols including social distancing.

*Q When will gyms in Rec centers be open?*

**Answer:** We are waiting on and working with public health to be sure when is the safest time and protocols in place for safe participation.

*Q Are camps only outside for now? When will indoor camps be able to begin (Phase 2)?*

**Answer:** Yes, this is correct that currently only outdoor camps have been approved and we await further information and approvals from public health for other opportunities.

### **Employee Benefits and Other Employee Issues**

*Q Where can I find more detailed information on the issues discussed today?*

**Answer:** The Office of Human Resources (OHR), in conjunction with public health officials and officials from the County's Department of Health and Human Services, and based on guidance from CDC, has developed an extensive set of frequently-asked questions containing guidance on a number of the issues discussed above. This guidance can be found on the County's intranet site at: <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HR/Benefits/EmpCoronavirus.html>. Please reference the information at this site for more detailed information.

*Q Will any training be provided to County employees as they return to the worksite?*

**Answer:** A Return to Workplace (RTW) Training Plan is being developed and is expected to consist of training for:

- Onsite Workplace Safety Team which also includes Worksite Safety Coordinators
- General Re-Orientation and Department-Specific Training for all employees returning to work
- Managers, Human Resources Liaison, and Department Directors Virtual Learning
- Manager Guidance and Coaching to assist them with checking in with their staff once they are at their work locations, including virtual group mentoring for new supervisors and managers

Training for all employees will cover the response and changes made due to COVID-19, and will include such topics as what we know about COVID-19, workplace safety (including measures taken by the County and steps employees will be expected to follow before and as they return to the worksite), and health and well-being (including resources available to employees). The training will be available both in a virtual learning form, as well as in-person for employees who do not have access to computers. Employees will be required to complete general re-orientation and department-specific training at home before returning to work. Final details of the RTW Training Plan are still under development.

*Q Will employees be required to be tested for COVID-19 before returning to work?*

**Answer:** No, employees will not be required to be tested before returning to work. However, employees will likely be required to self-assess prior to returning to the worksite. Employees who are feeling sick or experiencing symptoms defined by the CDC as symptomatic of COVID-19 should not return to the worksite. More guidance is expected to be provided on this.

*Q Will there be employee testing for COVID-19?*

**Answer:** The County is developing a Montgomery County Employee Testing Plan designed to ensure the continuity of Montgomery County Government while offering protective actions that help to minimize exposure and risk to employees. The Testing Plan will outline the framework, policies, and procedures Montgomery County Government will follow to expand asymptomatic COVID-19 testing capabilities, initially to employees and then expanding to more vulnerable populations.

Employee testing will occur in a phased, expanded approach that prioritizes employees who, because of the nature of the work they perform, have potentially increased exposure to contracting the disease. Understanding that a COVID test is a snapshot in time, subsequent testing will likely be warranted. Employee testing will be voluntary but will be highly encouraged to protect employees and the public. The details of this Testing Plan are still under review and will include input from the County's unions.

*Q As we reconstitute our workplaces, will leniency be granted toward workers who have limited travel options for reaching our offices? I am vulnerable to COVID and hesitant about returning to the confined spaces of transit (which I hate to say, considering how supportive of transit I aim to be).*

**Answer:** If an employee is considered at-risk, they can be granted admin leave. This is subject to change.

*Q What is the policy if an employee tests positive and is asymptomatic?*

**Answer:** Please refer to Level 3 under this guidance:

[https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HR/Resources/Files/EmpFAQ/SupervisorGuideline\\_IfEmployeeSickOrExposed04052020.pdf](https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HR/Resources/Files/EmpFAQ/SupervisorGuideline_IfEmployeeSickOrExposed04052020.pdf)

**LEVEL 3: A staff person is diagnosed positive (either “presumed positive” through consultation with a health care provider, or by a confirmed positive test result).**

**STAFF PERSON:**

**If you receive confirmation of positive or negative diagnosis :**

- Follow the guidance given by your healthcare provider if positive.
- Contact your supervisor and provide him or her with an update.
- Follow your supervisor’s guidance regarding your work status and schedule.

**SUPERVISOR / MANAGER / DEPARTMENTAL COVID-19 POC:**

- If you had previously been notified of a potential exposure and have already addressed facilities and social distancing issues with other staff, contact your departmental COVID-19 POC and alert them of a status change and seek guidance on next steps.
- If the notice of the diagnosis from the employee is the first you are hearing of this situation, follow the steps outlined in Level 2 for Supervisor/Manager/Departmental COVID-19 POC. The COVID-19 POC will notify OMS of the status change and follow the direction of OMS.
- Employees who are presumptive positive or confirmed to be positive for COVID-19 will be placed on **administrative leave** for the duration of their period of quarantine/isolation.

*Q Will the county government provide flexibility to employees who are not comfortable to return to office during phase 1? Will employees with underlying health conditions still be able to work from home?*

**Answer:** If an employee is considered at-risk population, they can be granted admin leave. This is subject to change.

*Q Any plans to assist county employees with childcare as they return to work? Are you considering having Pre-K or childcare for County Employees so we can feel confident our children are safe at a worksite if we are not teleworking full-time? Childcare will be extremely difficult to secure at the required ratios.*

**Answer:** Under Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) employees will be able to take leave for care for a child due to a school or childcare closure. This is being negotiated with the unions. We’ll provide detailed information via Live Event when we have an agreement.

*Q With reconstitutions, with the spreading and transmissions of either asymptotic COVID-19 or asymptotic COVID-19, will employees be given medical accommodations when employees/family members in close contacts has a medical condition which causes immunosuppression?*

**Answer:** The CDC’s guidance for who is at higher risk for exposure and severe illness is constantly changing. Please refer to the [most recent CDC guidelines on who is at higher risk](#). If you are an employee who is in the at-risk population and wish to telework you may do so, subject to supervisory approval. If your position is not eligible for telework, then you will be placed on administrative leave with OMS approval of a high-risk condition. If the risk is related to a medical condition, you must submit documentation from your PCP. Medical documentation can be submitted to [medicalinfo.oms@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:medicalinfo.oms@montgomerycountymd.gov) or faxed to 240-777-5132. OMS will give you a Health Status Report (HSR) which you should share with

your supervisor. If the risk is related to age only, you do not need to get clearance from OMS. Instead, speak to your departmental supervisor

*Q Can employees still work on a compressed schedule (9- or 10-hour days) and telework? They are doing it now and seems to be working. Will this continue as MCG reopens?*

**Answer:** Yes, until further notice employees can work telework.

*Q Does the County have any policies on self-quarantining after personal travel to any other states?*

**Answer:** No, the County does not require self-quarantining after travel to any other states

*Q Can you please advise on 10 day of paid sick leave to those who were tested positive or were exposed, will you provide more than 10 paid sick leave if needed?*

**Answer:** This policy has been replaced with Admin Leave: there is no need for advanced sick leave

*Q How long will forward facing and back facing additional pay be provided?*

**Answer:** Currently it's tied to MOAs with the unions - June 20th

*Q When will the 40 hrs. of COMP time be reflected in our paychecks?*

**Answer:** June 5<sup>th</sup> Pay slip

*Q Why the differential pay during the COVID-19 crisis does not apply to contract employee? We risk our life to the county mission too.*

**Answer:** Contractual employees get paid by vendors. They are not employees of the County and are not subject to the same requirements as County employees.

*Q If an employee gets effected by COVID-19 then what county will do to support?*

**Answer:** Guidance on this can be found at

[https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HR/Resources/Files/EmpFAQ/SupervisorGuideline\\_IfEmployeeSickOrExposed04052020.pdf](https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HR/Resources/Files/EmpFAQ/SupervisorGuideline_IfEmployeeSickOrExposed04052020.pdf)

*Q Many employees, in particular first responders may go into an excess leave situation as we have been online throughout the pandemic, will considerations for excess leave carryover amounts be increased and or paid out in the future?*

**Answer:** This is currently under discussion.

*Q How about offering an early retirement buy-out option for eligible workers, which could save the county money?*

**Answer:** The County currently has no plans to offer an early-retirement or buy-out option.

**Q** *Will annual performance reviews be weighted based on the pandemic situation? [Moral has been an ever-present issue at HHS Piccard Drive. Currently we are overwhelmed with applications for services and the online processing systems continue lag and shut down frequently. I often fear of my job because the supervisors seem to be insensitive to the workload.]*

**Answer:** Managers should take COVID19 and its effects on employee workload into consideration while doing performance evaluations.

**Q** *Presently, I am using my own personal laptop and printer, purchasing my own paper, and buying printing cartridges. Will staff be compensated for using their own supplies, etc. while teleworking?*

**Answer:** Please refer to email sent to all employees on 5/29 re: Manager/Supervisor Guidance for Equipment and Supplies During COVID-19.

**Q** *How will the County begin to transition out Administrative Leave for COVID individuals, who were compromised or had family members who were compromised, in quarantine or positive? Will they use sick leave/available leave after a defined date, if they can't/won't return to work?*

**Answer:** Admin leave will be in place for employees who are considered at-risk. The CDC's guidance for who is at higher risk for exposure and severe illness is constantly changing. Please refer to the [most recent CDC guidelines on who is at higher risk](#). If you are an employee who is in the at-risk population and wish to telework you may do so, subject to supervisory approval. If your position is not eligible for telework, then you will be placed on administrative leave with OMS approval of a high-risk condition. If the risk is related to a medical condition, you must submit documentation from your PCP. Medical documentation can be submitted to [medicalinfo.oms@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:medicalinfo.oms@montgomerycountymd.gov) or faxed to 240-777-5132. OMS will give you a Health Status Report (HSR) which you should share with your supervisor. If the risk is related to age only, you do not need to get clearance from OMS. Instead, speak to your departmental supervisor.

### **Operation-Specific Questions:**

**Q** *RIDE-ON: When will Ride On resume full operation? How long will Ride-on be fare free?*

**Answer:** Ride On bus services will be restored over time as various sectors of the County are reactivated and health and social distancing guidelines are revised. Reactivation of a few additional routes and some increases in service frequency on routes will occur on Sunday June 7. A specific schedule for full resumption of service is not established, and will be dependent on a variety of factors. At this time, there is no plan for schedule for resumption of fare collection.

**Q** *When will the highway services depots go back to full staff?*

**Answer:** There is no specific schedule at this time for resumption of all highway maintenance activities. Resumption of activities, and reactivation of staff to support those activities, will occur when safe to do so.

**Q** *When will the libraries reopen? Are we going to have security officer at the library? How will you protect staff from being harassed, spit on and assaulted from customers who come to pick up their materials or passerby's? Will libraries be provided extra masks for customers who may come in w/o a mask?*

**Answer:** The date for resumption of services from our physical buildings will be released soon. In the first step of resumption of services there will be no direct contact between staff and customers and customers will not be entering the buildings. Security for library buildings is under discussion. Provision of masks for library customers who arrive without one is under discussion with DGS.

### **Business Re-Openings**

**Q** *Regarding guidelines for businesses, are there limitations on the number of clients allowed in a barber shop/salon?*

**Answer:** Yes, one patron for every 200sf of service delivery space.

**Q** *What types of businesses are included in each phase? Is there a written document that includes different groups?*

**Answer:** Please see information on the web site, which will be updated upon entering each new

### **Other Questions:**

**Q** *Is there a plan to include COVID related treatment costs under workman's compensation if it is likely contracted from work? Is there a plan to include COVID under the presumption law for medical providers?*

**Answer:** No. The County's position is that claims for Workers' Compensation alleging a work-related exposure to COVID-19 will be denied. Because COVID-19 is a peril common to the public, to which the public at large is exposed, the Self Insurance Program is contesting COVID-19 related Workers' Compensation Claims. There is not a plan to include COVID-19 related cases under the Presumption law. That situation would be handled at the State government level.

**Q** *With people realizing the effectiveness of telework, a major office space glut is probably in our future. This seems like a great opportunity to address our affordable housing shortage by converting office space to residential housing. Does the County have any plans to promote this transition?*

**Answer:** During the current COVID-19 situation, the employers are being accustomed to telework opportunities for their employees, under the new normal, and it is likely that the employers may rethink their current office space requirements. In fact, some of the employers may actually decide to lease or own less space. While vacant office spaces may provide challenges in their

own way, there may be opportunities for alternative uses of those spaces. In the past, some of the vacant office spaces have been successfully converted into housing, including affordable housing, both locally and nationally. The County may look at these opportunities on a case-by-case basis, and also work with affordable housing developers as appropriate, to provide affordable housing including mixed-income housing. Not all vacant office spaces may lend themselves for housing options though.