Coronavirus FAQs
What Employees Should Know

Coronavirus (COVID-19) is an illness that was first detected in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China. Montgomery County Government (MCG) is working closely with County agencies, schools and healthcare providers to ensure that preparations are in place to respond to this evolving situation, and that the public is informed of current events relating to the disease.

As an MCG employee, you may have questions about how this will affect you and your workplace. Please read the following FAQs carefully to stay informed about the most current workplace policies regarding COVID-19. This is a rapidly evolving situation, and guidance may change without notice. The Office of Human Resources (OHR) is developing an employee webpage dedicated to workplace-related news regarding COVID-19. Please stay tuned for a future email announcing the availability of this webpage.

Workplace Safety

How often are surfaces in MCG offices cleaned?
Every night, cleaning services staff disinfect surfaces. Janitorial staff will only wipe down surfaces that are clear of obstacles. Employees are encouraged to regularly move items (computer monitors, phones, desk calendars, etc.) from surfaces so that the entire surface can be accessed. Employees should continue to clean keyboards, mice, laptops, phones. The Department of General Services has also established "wipe down teams" who are providing enhanced surface cleaning to front facing offices throughout the workday.

How often should I wipe down surfaces in my work area?
That depends on how many members of the public and employees use a workspace. On average, employees should clean high traffic surfaces two to three times a day. If you do not work in a high traffic area, please use your best judgment and common sense in determining how often to clean. Please remember that cleaning resources will be harder to acquire during this period, so use resources appropriately.

Should I wear a medical mask and/or gloves to work?
No, unless your current job classification requires the use of masks and/or gloves. County employees will continue to be provided and use the standard safety equipment required for their job classification by federal, state, and County occupational health and safety regulations. Employees should only use personal protective equipment (PPE) if it is:
- required to perform the essential functions of a position,
- in accordance with an accommodation approved by Occupational Medical Services (OMS) and with appropriate fit testing, or
- due to subsequent direction from the County.

Will in-person workplace meetings still be held?
Yes, but meeting leaders are highly encouraged to set up conference call lines and utilize Skype or Teams to hold virtual meetings. For technology assistance, please call the IT Help Desk at 240-777-2828.

Will County-sponsored events and classes still be held?
Yes, however, as the situation warrants, events and classes will be reviewed and possibly cancelled at the discretion of the Chief Administrative Office (CAO) and the County Health Officer. Based on the current situation, the County is operating as usual.

Work-related Travel

Is work-related travel cancelled?
Yes. Effective immediately, all future work-related out of state travel is cancelled – except for emergency preparedness related travel or as approved by the CAO. This does not include travel within Maryland, DC, or the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (see **https://www.mwcog.org/about-us/cog-and-our-region/local-governments/** for a map of excluded areas). Employees who are currently on approved work-related travel may complete the travel.

Employees planning personal travel are encouraged to review the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) travel guidance for COVID-19 to determine the associated risk based on destination: **https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html**.

If You, a Family Member or Coworker Become Sick

I came in contact with someone infected with COVID-19; what should I do?
If it is a medical emergency, call 911 and let the 911 Call Taker know that you believe you have symptoms consistent with COVID-19. If it is not an emergency, you should call your primary care physician (PCP). If you do not have a PCP, you can go to an urgent care facility, but you should call ahead to provide them with advance notice so that they can take the necessary precautions to receive you.

I recently attended an event that was found to be exposed to COVID-19 what should I do?
Contact your physician or the public health office where the event occurred (a list of local health authorities is below in the "Your Resources" section) and then notify your Supervisor. Supervisory guidelines regarding COVID-19 are currently being developed and will be issued as soon as possible.

I was diagnosed with COVID-19; what should I do?
Stay home and notify your Supervisor. Supervisory guidelines regarding COVID-19 are currently being developed and will be issued as soon as possible.

I care for family members who are immunocompromised and cannot be exposed to COVID-19; can I telework or take leave?
Employees who, because of the current COVID-19 situation, are seeking to telework or other work-related accommodations due to being immunosuppressed or because they care for immunosuppressed family members will be directed to OMS to confirm that the individual is in fact immunosuppressed/cares for an immunosuppressed family member (as well as FMLA status).

I am sick but do not have any sick leave left, what should I do?
Stay home and notify your Supervisor. Supervisory guidelines regarding COVID-19 are currently being developed and will be issued as soon as possible.

What should I do if I encounter a sick coworker or client?
Report concerns to your immediate Supervisor. Generally speaking, non-clinical personnel are not expected to work with sick clients. However, this may require some departmental flexibility for sick clients seeking services.

How do I know if someone who seems sick has COVID-19 or allergies?
As we are approaching allergy season, the best way to distinguish between allergies and illness is the presence of a fever. If you feel uncomfortable assisting a customer or working with a colleague who appears to be ill, notify your Supervisor. Supervisory guidelines regarding COVID-19 are currently being developed and will be issued as soon as possible.

Do I need to provide a doctor's note to be allowed to return to work after having contracted and recovered from COVID-19?
Yes; you will need to provide OMS with a statement from your doctor that indicates you are medically cleared to return to work.

Staffing Concerns

What kinds of staffing changes could we see in the future due to coronavirus-related issues?
MCG is not implementing any staffing changes at this time. However, there is a range of staffing changes that could take place depending on specific circumstances:

- Telework (see Telework section of this document)
- Spilt scheduling (e.g., some staff working Monday, Wednesday, Friday and other staff working Tuesday and Thursday, or some staff working morning shifts and others working afternoon shifts)
- Closure of specific facilities/worksites

The ultimate goal of modified staffing is to reduce the number of employees in a workspace and enable social distancing. The ability and success of these changes will vary widely between different worksites, job classifications, and work conditions. (As a Supervisor, you should consider whether staggered shifts and/or telework arrangements will help minimize the potential of illness within your department.)

Will County buildings be closed for COVID-19?
At this time, all County buildings will stay open and operate during business hours under normal conditions. MCG cleaning services staff are supplying additional surface cleanings and providing employees with cleaning supplies for use during normal operations.

How will I be notified if my work schedule or worksite changes?
You will be notified by Supervisors and/or Managers, as directed by the CAO, with guidance from the County Health Officer.

Telework

Will emergency telework be implemented?
We are currently in the emergency telework preparedness phase. Currently, telework is authorized with an agreement approved by the employee's Supervisor. If needed, emergency telework will be authorized by the CAO in consultation with the County Health Officer based on the community transmission risk. Emergency telework will not be appropriate for all job classifications. Please discuss with your Supervisor options for emergency telework and the potential for alternate shift scheduling, etc. If needed, OHR will distribute a COVID-19 telework update in the future.

How can you prepare to telework in an emergency?
Employees who are not currently approved to telework should submit telework agreements to their Managers as soon as possible. Ensure that all your needed documents are on OneDrive and SharePoint (i.e., Office365) and that you have Outlook access. If you have other secure County systems you need to access, you may need VPN software. Please check with your Department's IT Manager / Liaison to determine if you will require VPN. You do not need VPN software for access to systems on the County ePortal, such as MCTime. Contact the IT Help Desk at 240-777-2828 for assistance. For Telework Program details, please visit:
https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HR/Telework/TeleworkProgram.html.

Can MCG employees transfer their office/desk phoneline to a non-County line (e.g., home or cell)?
Not at this point, employees should check their County voicemails frequently throughout the day.

Your Resources

Organization	Resource
Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)	**https://montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS/RightNav/Coronavirus.html**
DHHS, Public Health - Communicable Disease and Epidemiology Office	240-777-1755 Call volume is high despite an increase in staffing to cover the lines; you may need to leave a voicemail for a return call.
Maryland Department of Health	**https://phpa.health.maryland.gov/Pages/Novel-coronavirus.aspx**
Centers for Disease Control	**https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html** Note: This is not intended to be a general COVID-19 information line. MC311 has basic information. Disease Control is intended for specific infectious disease reporting and assessment.
OHR Telework	**https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HR/Telework/TeleworkProgram.html** Note: Contact the IT Help Desk for technology assistance: 240-777-2828.
OHR OMS	**https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HR/OccupationalMedicalServices/OMS.html#1**