



State of Idaho
DIVISION OF HUMAN RESOURCES
Executive Office of the Governor

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March 6, 2020

TO: Directors and Agency Heads

CC: Agency Human Resource Contacts

FROM: Susan E. Buxton
DHR Administrator

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Susan E. Buxton".

SUBJECT: Workforce Guidance Regarding 2019 Novel Coronavirus

Idaho public health officials are monitoring the rapidly changing 2019 novel coronavirus (COVID-19) situation, on both domestic and international levels. Our goal is to reduce transmission among the state workforce, protect individuals who are at higher risk for adverse health complications, maintain agency operations, and minimize adverse effects on the State of Idaho.

At this time, **no confirmed cases of COVID-19 have been identified in Idaho.** To monitor the current status of coronavirus in Idaho, please visit: www.coronavirus.idaho.gov.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) states that for the general public, the immediate health risk from COVID-19 is low. In addition, most COVID-19 illnesses are mild. However, older adults and those with chronic health conditions are at higher risk of more severe illness. (www.CDC.gov/coronavirus).

While the immediate health risk from COVID-19 is currently low, we want to make sure our workforce is following recommended measures to prevent contracting and/or spreading COVID-19 and other communicable diseases. This is a time for us to plan and prepare.

We understand that this is a rapidly evolving situation and that new information will come over the next several weeks. Updates will be made as warranted.

Recommendations to prevent contracting/spreading communicable diseases:

- Regularly practice the same steps you would if you had influenza or another communicable disease, such as:
 - washing your hands thoroughly and often,
 - covering your cough and sneezes,
 - staying home if you are sick, and
 - regularly disinfecting surfaces (especially in common areas).

- Continue your current workplace practices and continue to report to work as usual. Should you become ill, follow your normal call-in procedure.
- Remind employees of telehealth options to reduce visits to their doctor's office (visit www.ogi.idaho.gov for more information) if they do not need to be seen in-person.
- If you have a respiratory illness and are going to see your medical provider, call ahead to let them know so that you reduce the risk of spreading illness to others in waiting rooms.

Additional recommendations specifically related to COVID-19:

- When considering travel, follow the [CDC guidance](#). CDC maintains a list of countries with U.S. travel restrictions based on community spread of COVID-19. www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html.
- Do not require employees to provide documentation from their medical provider prior to allowing them to take leave related to COVID-19 and respiratory illness at this time to avoid unnecessary stress on healthcare staff.
- Explore options with agency leadership and DHR to allow employees who are at increased risk of COVID-19, and who public health recommends to self-isolate, to work from home.
- Consult with DHR to determine if it is appropriate to provide paid administrative leave to employees.

Ensuring compliance with employment laws:

- Maintain privacy regarding medical conditions of employees (potential or actual).
- Do not treat employees differently because of their national origin or race (along with other protected categories).
- Ensure your workforce is healthy by notifying employees of potential exposure without identifying the specific employee.
- Consult DHR and your agency's human resource professionals with questions or concerns.

For persons not at increased risk of COVID-19, the policy remains that employees are only able to use sick leave when deemed medically necessary.

To assist with answering specific employee questions, DHR has added this information along with a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document on our [website](#).

Additional Information: The [2-1-1 CareLine](#) is available to field coronavirus questions by dialing 2-1-1 or 1-800-926-2588. Southwest District Health Department has established a hotline for coronavirus, (208) 455-5411, or call your local public health district Monday-Friday 8 a.m. – 8 p.m. Mountain Time.