



**2019 Novel Coronavirus Guidance**  
**Frequently Asked Questions for State of Idaho Employees**  
Updated: October 27, 2020

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## **1. GENERAL COVID-19 QUESTIONS**

### **What is novel coronavirus?**

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses, some of which cause illness in people and some that are found in animals that can spread to humans. The novel coronavirus that causes COVID-19 has not been seen in people before, so it is called new (novel). There are other known human coronaviruses that cause mild respiratory illnesses like the common cold, which more frequently occur in fall and winter.

Coronaviruses are thought to spread from person to person, like other respiratory viruses such as through coughing, sneezing or talking. They might also be spread by touching a contaminated surface then touching your eyes, nose, or mouth.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) updates its website, [cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus), daily with the latest information. The [World Health Organization](https://www.who.int) is also a trusted source of information about COVID-19. For information on COVID-19 in Idaho, see Idaho’s novel coronavirus page, [coronavirus.idaho.gov](https://coronavirus.idaho.gov).

### **Where can I go for up-to-date information about coronavirus/COVID-19 in Idaho?**

Visit [coronavirus.idaho.gov](https://coronavirus.idaho.gov) and [rebound.idaho.gov](https://rebound.idaho.gov) for updates, resources, and guidance for Idaho. For most current workforce guidance, visit <https://dhr.idaho.gov/covid-19-workforce-guidance/>

### **UPDATED What can I do to protect myself?**

The [CDC recommends the following](https://www.cdc.gov) to protect yourself and others from COVID-19:

- **Wash your hands** often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds especially after you have been in a public place, or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. (For information about handwashing, see [CDC's Handwashing website](#). For information specific to healthcare, see [CDC's Hand Hygiene in Healthcare Settings](#).)
  - If soap and water are not readily available, **use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol**. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry.
  - **Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth** with unwashed hands.
  
- **Avoid close contact**
  - Inside your home: Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
    - If possible, maintain 6 feet between the person who is sick and other household members.
  - Outside your home: Put 6 feet of distance between yourself and people who do not live in your household.
    - Remember that some people without symptoms may be able to spread virus.
    - Stay at least 6 feet (about 2 arms' length) from other people.
    - Keeping distance from others is especially important for people who are at higher risk of getting very sick.
  
- **Cover your mouth and nose with a mask when around others**
  - You could spread COVID-19 to others even if you do not feel sick.
    - The mask is meant to protect other people in case you are infected.
  - Everyone should wear a mask in public settings and when around people who don't live in your household, especially when other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain.
  - Cloth face coverings should not be placed on young children under age 2, anyone who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance.
  - Do **NOT** use a facemask meant for a healthcare worker.
  - Continue to **keep about 6 feet between yourself and others**.
    - The cloth face cover is not a substitute for social distancing.
  - State employees and state facilities are expected to follow current local authority orders and guidelines as noted in the [State Expectations for Masks memo](#).
  
- **Cover coughs and sneezes**
  - **Always cover your mouth and nose** with a tissue when you cough or sneeze or use the inside of your elbow and do not spit.
  - **Throw used tissues** in the trash.
  - Immediately **wash your hands** with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
    - If soap and water are not readily available, clean your hands with a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
  
- **Clean AND disinfect.**
- Clean AND disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily.
  - This includes tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks,

phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, and sinks.

- If surfaces are dirty, clean them. Use detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection.
- Then, use a household disinfectant.
  - Most common [EPA-registered household disinfectants](#) will work.

### **UPDATED** What can I do to protect my co-workers if I may have been exposed?

Refer to the question above regarding general precautions to take, when to stay home and [guidance provided by the CDC](#). If you are sick with COVID-19 or suspect you are infected with the virus that causes COVID-19, you should take steps to help prevent the disease from spreading to people in

If you have not been in **close contact** with someone who has COVID-19, please refer to the question above on how to protect yourself and others from spreading and contracting the virus.

[Per CDC guidance](#), people who need to quarantine are those who have been in **close contact** with someone who has COVID-19.

What counts as **close contact**?

- You were within 6 feet of someone who has COVID-19 for a total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period starting from 2 days before illness onset (or, for asymptomatic individuals, 2 days prior to test specimen collection) until the time of isolation;
- You provided care at home to someone who is sick with COVID-19;
- You had direct physical contact with the person (hugged or kissed them);
- You shared eating or drinking utensils;
- They sneezed, coughed, or somehow got respiratory droplets on you.

If you have been in **close contact**, stay home and monitor your health

- Stay home for 14 days after your last contact with a person who has COVID-19
- Watch for fever (100.4°F), cough, shortness of breath, or [other symptoms](#) of COVID-19
- If possible, stay away from others, especially people who are at [higher risk](#) for getting very sick from COVID-19

Additionally, you should discuss your telecommuting options with your supervisor to determine options available to you. You also may be eligible for the Emergency Paid Sick Leave Act (EPSLA) under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA). Please discuss eligibility with your supervisor and/or HR representative

### **I am having flu-like symptoms. What should I do?**

You should stay home when you are sick to help prevent the spread of illness to others. Do not leave your home, except to get medical care. Do not visit public areas.

If you need to seek medical care, [call your healthcare provider](#) and tell them your symptoms before you go. This will help the healthcare provider's office take steps to keep other people from getting infected or exposed.

If an employee feels they do not need to be seen in-person by their doctor for an illness or concern, they can use **telehealth** as an option. Visit [ogi.idaho.gov](http://ogi.idaho.gov) to learn more about telehealth benefits.

Using telehealth, when appropriate for your concern, can reduce your exposure to others, decrease wait times, and provide access to an additional number of healthcare providers. All state employees enrolled in the state's medical plan have access to telehealth through MD Live, as well as enrolled family members. Visit [ogi.idaho.gov](http://ogi.idaho.gov) to learn more about your telehealth options.

You may also be eligible for paid leave under the Emergency Paid Sick Leave Act (EPSLA). Please reach out to your supervisor and/or HR representative to discuss your eligibility.

**UPDATED Can an agency send an employee home if they display influenza-like symptoms?**

If an agency wishes to implement employee screening procedures, they need to develop a policy and process and have it reviewed and approved by DHR and their legal counsel prior to implementing. Depending on the policy, the agency may be able to send employees home.

**UPDATED Can an agency require employees to have their temperatures taken while at work?**

If an agency wishes to implement employee screening procedures, they need to develop a policy and process and have it reviewed and approved by DHR and their legal counsel prior to implementing. Depending on the policy, the agency may be able to send employees home.

**Can I wear a face covering at work to help prevent infection from coronavirus?**

Yes. The [CDC recommends covering your mouth and nose with a cloth face cover when around others](#) to prevent the spread of COVID-19. DHR issued a memo providing further guidance regarding facemasks, which is available at [COVID-19 Workforce Guidance](#).

Per their website, cloth face coverings should be worn when going out in public. Do NOT use a facemask meant for a healthcare worker. The use of facemasks is crucial for healthcare workers and people who are taking care of someone in close settings (at home or in a health care facility).

Continue to keep about 6 feet between yourself and others. The cloth face cover is not a substitute for social distancing.

**Will my agency provide face masks, hand sanitizer, tissues, and cleaning supplies for the office?**

Yes. Agencies may purchase face masks, hand sanitizer, tissues, and other cleaning supplies, such as disinfecting wipes, as needed.

**UPDATED What kinds of environmental precautions should employees take for conference rooms and shared equipment?**

The CDC recommends following [everyday preventive actions](#) such as:

- Wash your hands often
- Avoid close contact
- Cover your mouth and nose with a mask when around others
- Cover coughs and sneezes
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces

Agencies should use methods to physically separate employees in conference and meeting

rooms. Use videoconferencing or teleconferencing when possible for work-related meetings and gatherings. Cancel, adjust, or postpone large work-related meetings or gatherings that can only occur in-person in accordance with state and local regulations and guidance. When videoconferencing or teleconferencing is not possible, hold meetings in open, well-ventilated spaces continuing to maintain a distance of 6 feet apart and wear cloth face coverings.

Employees should also consider bringing in their own coffee, water, dishware, and utensils.

**UPDATED Does DHR have any guidance on starting new hires during this health crisis? Should they be allowed to start? What will training look like? What if agencies are shut down?**

Agencies should evaluate in accordance with their current staffing levels, workload demands, ability to onboard a new employee, Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP), etc. If further assistance is needed, consult with DHR, DFM and/or the Governor's Office.

## **2. STATE OF IDAHO GOVERNOR'S OFFICE GUIDANCE**

**NEW How do I remain up to date on information from the Governor's Office?**

To stay up to date on recent Stay Healthy Orders visit [coronavirus.idaho.gov](https://coronavirus.idaho.gov) , [rebound.idaho.gov](https://rebound.idaho.gov) and DHR's COVID19 Workforce Guidance [webpage](#).

## **3. TELECOMMUTING**

**What are my telecommuting options if I would like to work from home?**

You should discuss this with your supervisor. Examples of information your supervisor may take into consideration is outlined in the Statewide COVID-19 Policy under the [COVID-19 Workforce Guidance](#) on the DHR website.

Telecommuting should be utilized wherever possible in lieu of taking leave related to COVID-19 and coded on the employee time sheet as CVR (including FLSA exempt employees). However, all hours must be coded based on actual work performed. If there is not enough work that can be performed in a telecommuting capacity, you may not be able to telecommute for all your regularly scheduled hours.

Unfortunately, not all positions and/or individuals are candidates for telecommuting. If you or your position are not a candidate for telecommuting, you should review other options with your supervisor or HR representative, such as taking leave and/or implementing measures recommended by the CDC, such as wearing a face covering and social distancing. Employees with medical conditions may also qualify for time off under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA), Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) or an accommodation under the American's with Disabilities Act (ADA).

All telecommuting arrangements are temporary and subject to change as the COVID-19 situation develops. Click [here](#) for *Temporary Telecommuting Agreement*.

**Am I required to work from home?**

Telecommuting may be a requirement for some employees based on their department/agency's

Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) and/or in response to the COVID-19 situation. However, agencies should work with employees to allow them to work in a capacity that is most effective while also ensuring the health and safety of other employees.

**NEW When should employees complete the Temporary Telecommuting Application versus the regular Telecommuting Application on the DHR website?**

If the telecommuting request is specifically due to COVID-19, then employees should use the temporary form.

If the request is unrelated to COVID-19, then employees should use the regularly telecommuting application.

**UPDATED Is an agency required to allow employees to telecommute?**

Agencies are not required to allow employees to telecommute. If an employee wishes to request a telecommuting arrangement, they should complete either the temporary telecommuting form or the regular telecommuting form, depending on whether the request is temporary due to COVID-19 or long term not related to COVID-19.

**UPDATE Can I work from home while caring for children or others?**

General restrictions related to caring for young children or other persons while telecommuting during the COVID-19 situation have been waived, as long as the employee is able to meet the performance requirements of their position. In addition, a telecommuting employee would be expected to account for work and non-work hours and take appropriate leave (paid or unpaid) to account for time spent away from normal work-related duties (e.g., to care for children or sick family members).

If an employee is required to provide care for their qualifying child(ren) and is unable to work, telecommute or be reassigned, they may be eligible for leave under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) and should contact their supervisor or HR representative for more information.

**What if I am eligible to telecommute but I do not have the tools needed to do so remotely?**

Your department/agency is not responsible to provide personal equipment, such as internet, to allow you to telecommute. However, your agency may be able to provide you with state equipment (such as a laptop, cell phone/reimbursement, VPN access, etc. ) needed to perform your essential duties at home, if what is needed is regarded as reasonable by your supervisor. If internet access is not possible based on where you live, and you must access the internet in order to perform your essential duties, you may not be authorized to telecommute.

**Who is not eligible to telecommute?**

This is identified on a case-by-case basis. Refer to the Statewide COVID-19 Policy under the [COVID-19 Workforce Guidance](#) page on the DHR website for information on what may be considered.

**What are my options if I am not eligible to telecommute?**

Employees whose job duties prevent them from telecommuting, may request to use accrued leave

if they are unable to report to their worksite due to prolonged school closures or other disruptions that may result from COVID-19. Please discuss with your supervisor and/or HR representative about eligibility to use EPSLA or FMLA under the FFCRA.

**What happens if my worksite closes and I am not eligible/authorized to telecommute?**

DHR will work with the Governor’s Office and DFM to evaluate options should this occur.

**4. LEAVE**

**What options are available for State employees who need to be absent from work as a result of COVID-19 due to illness, self-isolation, or care for a family member?**

Effective April 1, 2020, employees may be eligible to receive paid leave in accordance with the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA). If eligible, employees can elect to use their accrued leave balances concurrently with EFMLA and EPSLA leave. Reference the FFCRA section of the Statewide COVID-19 Policy under the [COVID-19 Workforce Guidance](#) page on the DHR website for additional information.

In addition to FFCRA leave, employees may be eligible for: telecommuting, accrued leave, advanced sick leave, paid administrative leave for COVID-19, leave donations, Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), American’s with Disabilities Act (ADA) and unpaid leave.

For information to leave options reference the following:

- [Leave Donations Policy](#)
- [COVID-19 Workforce Guidance](#)
- [Vacation Leave Policy](#)
- [Statewide FMLA Policy](#)
- [Americans with Disabilities Act](#)

**Can you provide an example of when an agency would provide paid administrative leave related to COVID-19 (CVT) for employees?**

Refer to the “Use of Accrued Leaves” section of DHR’s Statewide COVID9 policy which can be found on the [DHR COVID-19 Workforce Guidance page](#).

**Are there any instances when an employee would not be required to exhaust all their leave balances to use paid administrative leave related to COVID-19 (CVT)?**

If the Governor or their designee declares a Department facility closed, DHR may elect to grant paid administrative leave to employees. Agencies will be notified should this occur.

**UPDATED What documentation should agencies request to support employee requests to take leave related to COVID-19?**

Agencies should not require a positive COVID-19 test result or a healthcare provider’s note for employees who are sick to validate their illness, qualify for sick leave, or to return to work. Healthcare provider offices and medical facilities may be extremely busy and not able to provide

such documentation in a timely manner.

Instead, employees should complete the FFCRA Leave Request Form on [DHR's website](#) and include details as appropriate on the form. If an agency has a concern with information submitted by an employee, they may request additional documentation to support the request; however, they should consult with DHR prior to doing so.

**Will the leave accrual maximums be waived for employees in position with current high need?**

Not at this time. Employees who are reaching maximum accruals are encouraged to take time off if possible and/or donate hours to employees who are requesting donated leave during this crisis.

**Am I entitled to use Family and Medical Leave (FMLA) for COVID-19?**

Effective April 1, 2020, congress enacted the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA). The FFCRA provides expansions to the FMLA, which includes an additional qualifying event, and establishes a new law, the Emergency Paid Sick Leave Act (EPSLA) for qualifying employees. The expansions of the FMLA and the EPSLA expire on December 31, 2020.

Additionally, employees may be eligible for regular FMLA if they or a qualifying family member have a serious health condition requiring their absence from work.

Refer to the Statewide FMLA and COVID-19 Policy on the [DHR website](#) and/or contact your supervisor or HR representative.

**Will I be covered under workers' compensation if I contract COVID-19 from a co-worker?**

Anytime you believe you have acquired an illness at work, either you or your supervisor should complete and submit the [First Report of Injury](#). The State Insurance Fund will review your claim and determine whether workers' compensation applies.

**Can an employee request donated leave?**

Yes, an employee may request donated leave accordance to the Leave Donation Policy on [DHR's website](#)

**UPDATED Many employees are working remotely. How do they sign the leave donation form?**

Please visit [SCO's Donate Leave page](#) for more information.

Reminders:

- You must donate a minimum of four (4) hours
- When donating vacation hours, you must have at least 80 hours of accrued vacation **after** the donation
- When donating sick hours (see DHR Donated Leave Policy for justification), you must have at least 80 hours of accrued sick **after** the donation
- You cannot donate more than a maximum of eighty (80) hours accrued vacation and/or sick leave per fiscal year
- DHR Donated Leave Policy  
<http://dhr.idaho.gov/PDF%20documents/Policies/Section%206%20Donation.pdf>

- Donate Leave Resources in the SCO Payroll Guide  
<https://www.sco.idaho.gov/LivePages/donate-leave.aspx>

**UPDATED When should donated leave forms be submitted to the Division of Statewide Payroll (DSP)?**

Whether using the IPOPS web application or donated leave forms, agencies must submit to DSP after they have entered that payroll for processing. For example, DSP will be processing donated leave forms for the 8/07/20 pay date starting Friday, 7/17/20. DSP will accept these forms through the deadline of Wednesday 7/22/20.

**UPDATED Are there any considerations being made to allow employees to donate sick leave rather than just vacation leave?**

During COVID-19, employees may also donate sick leave in accordance with the rule waiver and updated policy published by DHR and the State Controller's Office. Please reference the [COVID-19 Workforce Guidance](#) for updated Leave Donations policy.

This new policy will allow state employees to donate their sick leave hours to another eligible state employee's sick leave balance, in addition to still being able to donate vacation hours through the same process. [Ref. DHR Rule Waiver 15.04.01.240.06 (effective until Dec 31, 2020 pending further guidance from DHR)].

Going forward, please use the IPOPS web application for all sick or vacation to sick leave donation requests.

With appointing authority approval, an employee may donate accrued vacation or sick leave to an employee to be used as sick leave, in accordance with DHR's Donated Leave Policy. To receive donated leave, employees must first exhaust all their accrued leave balances.

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**When will the new COVID-19 specific time codes be available?**

All leave codes are available on page 16 of the Statewide COVID-19 Policy under the [COVID-19 Workforce Guidance](#) page on the DHR website.

HR and Payroll contacts have access within I-Time to the new Earning and Leave Codes. In order to enable these new codes, I-Time CPOs will need to make these codes available in Time Code Maintenance in I-Time. The agency can decide if they want all employees to have access to these codes or if they want to limit access to just the I-Time CPOs. For assistance in I-Time application, please contact the DSP Help Desk. For questions on applicability of each time code, contact DHR.

**Can employees use leave without pay (LWOP) instead of requesting advanced sick leave?**

There are two scenarios in which the employee may qualify for leave without pay:

1. In accordance with DHR rule 15.04.01.250.01(s), the agency appointing authority may grant an employee leave without pay for a specified length of time when such leave would not have an adverse effect upon the agency.

The request for leave must be in writing and must establish reasonable justification for approval. Requests for leave without pay which exceed one workweek and are not covered by FMLA, require prior approval by the DHR administrator, and consultation with the Office of Group Insurance.

2. If the employee is on approved Emergency Paid Sick Leave, Emergency FMLA, regular FMLA or as a part of an approved accommodation under the American's with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Agencies should consult with DHR for further guidance.

**Can we give employees paid administrative leave (CVT) before granting advanced sick leave?**

For most situations, advanced sick leave is required to be used first. Administrative leave is only granted based on specific situations and with prior approval of DHR.

**After 80 hours of paid administrative leave related to COVID19 (CVT), can the agency give an employee ADT per the rule waiver 250.08?**

No, the agency needs to consult with DHR/DFM for approval to provide administrative leave.

**If an employee is experiencing a limitation with their VPN access during telework, can they code paid administrative leave during that time?**

Employees should code work time (REG) for IT issues outside of their control (i.e., not related to their own WIFI) while they are working with IT to resolve those issues. If the issue lasts longer than 15 minutes, the employee should notify their supervisor to determine if there is any other work that can be completed while they await resolution. If the issue persists, paid administrative leave may be applicable; however, DHR/DFM approval is required prior to granting.

**If an employee does not have enough work to telecommute for eight hours and has a child to care for at home. Would the employee be eligible for FFCRA leave or would they have to use their paid leave?**

The employee should complete the FFCRA Leave Request Form on the DHR website so that a determination can be made regarding their eligibility.

**If an employee usually has a family member care for the children, but the family member's medical provider told them to limit time spent around children to limit their chance of exposure to COVID-19. Would the employee be eligible for FFCRA leave?**

The employee should complete the FFCRA Leave Request Form on the DHR website so that a determination can be made regarding their eligibility.

**NEW An employee was tested for COVID-19 due to symptoms and their test result came back negative, but the medical provider stated that they are "presumed positive" or that they believe it was a "false negative." Is the employee eligible to take FFCRA leave?**

Yes, the employee would be eligible for FFCRA leave and should complete the request form on the DHR website.

**NEW An employee was tested for COVID-19 due to symptoms and their test result came back negative. Is the employee eligible to take FFCRA leave?**

Yes, the employee would be eligible for FFCRA leave from the onset of symptoms through when they received a negative test result and should complete the request form on the [DHR website](#). Any time requested after that, would be regular sick leave (if needed) since the employee tested negative (and was not otherwise informed by their medical provider to self-isolate and/or that their symptoms were due to COVID-19).

**NEW How long is an employee required to self-quarantine if they were in close contact with an individual who tested positive for COVID-19?**

Employees are required to self-isolate in accordance with CDC guidance on [when to quarantine](#). Prior to returning to work, employees must complete the [Employee Attestation: Return to Work Requirements](#) form on the DHR website.

**Do employees still accrue leave while taking EPSLA or FMLA under the FFCRA?**

Yes. Leave accrues paid on hours paid, not hours worked.

**Is an employee eligible for ALL FMLA after 30 days or just the FFCRA related FMLA?**

Employees are only eligible for FFCRA-related FMLA, which is for childcare, after 30 days of employment.

**If an employee was tested for COVID-19 and is awaiting results. What time code should they use?**

The employee should complete the FFCRA Leave Request Form on the DHR website so that a determination can be made regarding their eligibility. If they are eligible, their HR representative will provide directions on the appropriate timesheet coding.

**NEW What documentation is an employee required to provide after having symptoms, exposed or testing positive for COVID-19 prior to returning to work?**

Employees must complete the self-attestation form available on the DHR [COVID-19 website](#) prior to returning to work.

**NEW Department of Labor FAQs state that an employee must use all of their Emergency Paid Sick Leave (EPSL) within 2 weeks from the first time they code the leave, is that correct?**

Yes, that is correct. However, the State of Idaho has opted not to restrict employee's use of EPSL to 2 weeks from the first time they take the leave, as it is disadvantageous to the employee and does not promote the encouragement of getting tested and staying home when ill. Instead, employees may use their full allotment of EPSL without the 2-week restriction.

## 5. SOCIAL DISTANCING

**Can I request to work in a position with less interpersonal contact until the concerns with COVID-19 are resolved?**

If you have a qualifying health condition under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), consult with your agency's HR representative to review your options.

**What if I do not have any symptoms but I am required to self-isolate under the direction of my local public health authorities?**

You should first request to telecommute or be reassigned. If you are unable to telecommute or be reassigned, you should complete the FFCRA Leave Request Form on the [DHR website](#) so that a determination can be made regarding your eligibility to take leave.

**What if I need to stay home to care for a family member who is required to self-isolate under the direction of local public health authorities?**

You should first request to telecommute. If you are unable to telecommute, you should complete the FFCRA Leave Request Form on the [DHR website](#) so that a determination can be made regarding your eligibility to take leave

**Am I required to help a customer or client who is showing signs of COVID-19 or another communicable disease?**

You should discuss your concerns with your supervisor as they may be able to provide additional equipment and/or social distancing measures to ensure you are safely performing your job duties.

Additional information is available through the U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration [website](#). Employees with a qualifying disability under the Americans with Disabilities Act may also have additional options available to them.

In some circumstances, employees have a right to refuse to perform their work if they believe it is not safe to do so. Employees should discuss their concerns with their supervisor and/or HR representative.

**What if a co-worker is showing signs of illness and is still coming to work?**

Employees should follow normal call-in procedures and stay home anytime they are sick to help prevent the spread of illness to others.

If you are concerned about a co-worker showing signs of illness and still coming to work, talk to your supervisor or HR representative. Nonetheless, employees need to be cautious to ensure that they are not violating their co-worker's rights, discriminating against them, and/or interfering with their privacy.

## **6. TRAVEL**

**UPDATED I recently traveled. What precautions must I take when I return to the worksite? Am I required to self-isolate after traveling?**

Refer to the State of Idaho's [Stages of Reopening](#) and current [CDC guidance](#) to determine travel recommendations and guidance.

Regardless of where you traveled or what you did during your trip, you should take these actions to protect others from getting sick:

- When around others, stay at least 6 feet (about 2 arms' length) from other people who are not from your household. It is important to do this everywhere, both indoors and outdoors.
- Wear a mask to keep your nose and mouth covered when you are outside of your home.
- Wash your hands often or use hand sanitizer.
- Watch your health: Look for [symptoms of COVID-19](#), and take your temperature if you feel sick.
- If you are in close contact with a person who tests positive for COVID-19, you should self-isolate in accordance with CDC guidance.

In addition, you should follow any [state](#), [territorial](#), [tribal](#) and local recommendations or requirements after travel.

**UPDATED Can I impose a self-isolation on myself after traveling even if I am not directed to do so by a public health official or health care provider?**

If an employee wishes to impose a self-isolation on themselves without direction from a medical provider or health official to do so, they would be required to utilize their accrued vacation or sick leave and receive approval from their supervisor to take time off and/or telecommute. Refer to the [Statewide DHR COVID19](#) policy for additional information.

**UPDATED I am scheduled to travel for work. Can I choose not to go due to COVID-19?**

Agency Directors, University Presidents and Agency Heads are responsible for determination Essential Travel.

When determining what is essential travel, several factors should be considered, but not limited to:

- Guidance issued by the Governor, Department of Health and Welfare and local health districts.
- If the travel related to the Agency Continuity Of Operations Plan (COOP).
- If the destination one where community spread of COVID-19 is believed to be occurring.
- The mission and if it takes the person into a higher exposure situation.
- If there are alternative methods that can still accomplish the mission (video conference, remote access, etc.).

Please visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html> for additional information on travel considerations.

The State Board of Examiners guidance is to use the most cost-effective and efficient mode but allows for additional travel costs if it is for a valid business reason such as airline travel insurance. The State Department of Insurance has a current list of authorized travel insurance providers.

If an employee expresses concern with required travel, the agency should discuss potential options with the employee such as FMLA and ADA.

## 7. OFFICE CLOSURES

**What if offices need to be closed due to a COVID-19 outbreak?**

Agencies should keep in mind we work in public service and must remain available to serve Idahoans. If agencies do not have an updated Continuity of Operations Plans (COOP), agencies are expected to update or develop theirs immediately and submit them to DHR and DFM.

If an agency is concerned that they are unable to continue operations and need to consider closing a facility or portion of the facility, please consult with the Governor’s Office, DHR, DFM, and legal in accordance with DHR Rule 15.04.01.250.08.

An example office closure template is available on DHR’s [website](#).

**UPDATED How should agencies communicate to their staff when an employee tests positive for COVID-19 and/or is required to self-isolate due to exposure? Should all employees be notified of this information?**

Agencies must utilize the COVID-19 Employee Exposure Questions template provided on the [DHR COVID-19](#) website to determine which employees were in close contact and who needs to be informed of this information. Agencies must protect confidential employee health information in accordance with the EEOC, HIPAA and other employment laws. For questions, please contact DHR prior to sending out any communications.

**What if there is a wide-spread COVID-19 outbreak in a State-operated facility like a State hospital, clinic, or correctional facility?**

If this occurs, then the appropriate public health officials and state authorities would determine the appropriate course of action and notify affected employees. Agencies must also consult with DHR and legal.

Agencies should ensure continuous consultation with public health officials, regulatory entities (such as HHS and CMS), and their legal counsel to protect our workforce.

**Does my agency have a Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP)?**

All State of Idaho agencies must have a COOP. Consult with your supervisor to obtain further information on the plan.

**How do I find out if the office I am assigned to work at is closed?**

Because we provide critical services to all Idaho citizens, we avoid closing offices whenever possible. However, in the rare event that an office is closed, the first place to check is your agency’s website and with your supervisor.

**8. MISCELLANEOUS QUESTIONS**

**Will DHR extend the due date for Cybersecurity Training?**

The cybersecurity training deadline of March 31, 2020 was not extended. There has been an increase threat of legitimate phishing attacks connected to COVID-19 and many employees will begin working from home, so it is critical that cyber-safety maintain a priority for all.

KnowBe4 offers short video vignettes (two minutes) to help remind users how to work safely from home. If your agency is interested in assigning this optional training module, please submit a request to [cybertraining@dhr.idaho.gov](mailto:cybertraining@dhr.idaho.gov).

#### **How Will Employees Complete Respectful Workplace?**

A recording is available for use. Agency's may request a copy of the recording and use it as a "Live Stream" option. Requests can be sent to [cybertraining@dhr.idaho.gov](mailto:cybertraining@dhr.idaho.gov).

#### **Can the 1385-hour cap for temporary employees be waived or amended?**

Effective Thursday, April 9, 2020, DHR waived statute 67-5302(35) lifting the limits on the number of hours or the number of months a temporary can work for an agency. Please review the Temporary Suspension of Specific Regulations Due to COVID-19 under Temporary Rules/Rule Waivers on the [COVID-19 Workforce Guidance](#) page. If an agency elects to allow temporary employees to work more than 20 hours/week for 5 or more months, the employee will become benefit-eligible.

#### **I understand that DHR issued a rule waiver to temporarily remove the 1,385 hour limit for temporary employees. What should I consider prior to allowing my temporary employee to work more hours?**

Increasing temporary employee hours may impact an employee's eligibility for benefits and PERSI. Agencies need to discuss this with OGI and PERSI before implementing.

#### **NEW What will happen once the temporary rule waiver eliminated the 1,385 hour limit is revoked?**

This is tied to the Governor's Declaration of Emergency; therefore, a decision has not been made as to what will happen once the Declaration of Emergency will end and the impact on exiting rule waivers. However, we will work with the Governor's Office and State Controller's Office to ensure the impact on state employees and state agencies is minimal.

## **9. EMPLOYEE RESOURCES FOR SUPPORT**

#### **Where can I go for support related to my stress, anxiety, and fears related to the coronavirus?**

The current coronavirus outbreak and constant media coverage can be anxiety-producing. While it is important to stay informed, there are things we can do to manage our mental well-being:

- Avoid speculation and get your information from reputable sources such as the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), the [World Health Organization](#), or the official [Idaho Coronavirus Website](#).
- Manage how you follow the outbreak in the media. If the news is causing you stress or anxiety, reduce your media intake and refer to the reputable information sources listed in the bullet point above.
- Talk about your fears, anxiety, and stress. The [Employee Assistance Program \(EAP\)](#) provides confidential, short-term counseling services for benefit eligible employees and their dependents. Visit <https://ogi.idaho.gov/counseling/> or call 1-877-427-2327. (TDD: 1-800-697-0353).
- [GuidanceResources®](#) is Idaho's online EAP platform that provides access to timely, expert information on thousands of topics, including the coronavirus. Use ID: SOIEAP, and type

“coronavirus” in the search bar.

### **Are there additional resources?**

The [2-1-1 CareLine](#) is available to field coronavirus questions by dialing 2-1-1 or 1-800-926-2588 , or contact your [local public health district](#) with questions.

### **What kind of resources are available for overall well-being during this stressful time?**

Health Matters has added a new section on their website dedicated to maintaining overall well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic. You’ll find resources, tips, and strategies to help you maintain your well-being during this challenging time at <https://healthmatters.idaho.gov/well-being-resources/>

The Office of Group Insurance is working diligently to ensure that the state health plan is complying with all federal guidelines for COVID-19 and addressing barriers to care to support social distancing and guidance from the Governor and Department of Health and Welfare for enrolled members.

#### *Compliance with Federal Coverage Requirements*

- COVID -19 testing covered at 100% for all plans.
- COVID-19 office visit, telemedicine, ER, doctors visit and urgent care visits are covered at 100%.
- COVID-19-related tele-visits, office visits by phone or video call, will be covered at 100%.
- These mandates apply to coverage for testing and diagnosis of COVID-19, not treatment.

#### *Telehealth with MDLive*

Telehealth is an option to address non-emergent healthcare needs without physically visiting a doctor’s office. Go to the OGI homepage for instructions on how to download the MDLive app on your mobile device or computer to get started.

- All MDLive copays and coinsurance will be waived for enrolled members for the remainder of the plan year for any health condition.

#### *Tele-Visits*

- COVID-19 related tele-visits, office visits by phone or video call, will be a covered service for all plan types for the remainder of the plan year. Non-COVID-related visits are subject to copay and coinsurance.

#### *The Idaho Department of Health and Welfare*

IDHW created a free hotline for anyone experiencing mental health distress: 1-888-330-3010.