



COUNTY OF MERCER


OFFICE OF PERSONNEL
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Brian M. Hughes
County Executive

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Raissa L. Walker
Personnel Director

Date: March 13, 2020
To: All County Employees
From: Raissa L. Walker 
Director of Personnel
Re: **Temporary Time & Attendance Provisions: COVID-19**

In an effort to ensure the continuous delivery of essential services during the rapidly evolving outbreak of the novel coronavirus, COVID-19, we are implementing changes to our Time and Attendance policies to address the public health hazard pursuant to Executive Order 103, issued by Governor Phil Murphy on March 10, 2020 and Executive Order 2020-01, issued by County Executive Brian M. Hughes on March 12, 2020. The modifications outlined below will remain in full force and effect until further notice.

For questions regarding the modifications outlined in this memorandum, please contact the Office of Personnel at (609) 989-6676. For all other questions or concerns related to the COVID-19, please visit the CDC page on the Mercer County website at <http://www.mercercounty.org>.

Modified Working Conditions

Alternative Work Schedules

Employees may be eligible to work modified work schedules when it is necessary to accommodate operational needs. Modified work schedules will only be granted at the discretion and approval of the Department Director.

Remote Work

Requests to work from home may be accommodated for both essential and non-essential employees during periods of closure on a case-by-case basis. Such requests will only be granted with the approval of the Department Director and the Director of Personnel and are subject to equipment availability.

Employees working modified work schedules or working remotely will be expected to be present during “core hours” which will be determined by the Department Director. The Department Director may also allow “flex

hours” for times of arrival and departure and employees will be afforded a meal period which may be flexible in duration and scheduling. Employees will be required to work a total of 5 days within a 7-day period and meet the standard workweek predetermined by their collective bargaining agreement (ex: AFSCME 2287 White Collar – 35 hours a week).

Leaves of Absence

If you have been (i) diagnosed with COVID-19, (ii) directed by a medical professional or government agency to self-isolate or quarantine due to suspicion of exposure to or diagnosed with the COVID-19 virus, and/or (iii) undergoing a period of self-quarantine or isolation pursuant to public health assessment recommendations, then you will not be required to utilize accumulated leave time if you provide documentation verifying the same within three (3) work days of the initial absence. As with any medical documentation of an illness, the documentation shall be provided to the Mercer County Department of Personnel. Please email all medical documentation to Alejandra Silva (amsilva@mercercounty.org) in the Mercer County Department of Personnel. If you do not provide such documentation, then you will be required to utilize your own accumulated leave time.

Mercer County reserves the right to immediately prohibit entrance into county buildings and/or send home any employee suspected of having symptoms associated with COVID-19. Said employee will not be permitted to enter the workplace until medically cleared. If an employee is sent home, they will not be required to use their accumulated leave time.

If you have been exposed to or diagnosed with the COVID-19 virus, you will not be permitted to enter the workplace until you are either medically cleared (regarding those with COVID-19) or until the expiration of the recommended 14-day period of quarantine from the point of last exposure (regarding those who were exposed).

Until further notice, employees who had previously been subjected to documentation requirements under Mercer County’s Table of Offenses due to excessive absenteeism or abuse of sick leave shall not be disciplined for future absences that occur as a result of their being suspected of or diagnosed with the COVID-19 virus or having to be absent to care for a family member impacted by the virus.

Until further notice, you will not be required to provide a Certification of Health Care Provider nor will you be obligated to submit for a Return to Work Physical as required by Mercer County’s Leave Policy for absences that occur as a result of your being suspected of or diagnosed with the COVID-19 virus or due to being absent to care for a family member impacted by the virus.

Personal Leave

If you are diagnosed with COVID-19, are directed by a medical professional or government agency to self-isolate or quarantine due to suspicion of exposure to or diagnosis with COVID-19, and/or are undergoing a period of self-quarantine or isolation pursuant to public health assessment recommendations, you will not be required to use accumulated leave time if **you provide medical documentation to the Office of Personnel verifying the same within three (3) days of the initial absence.** If such medical documentation is not provided, you will be required to utilize accrued leave time.

Family Leave

If the absence is caused by your need to care for an immediate family member who has been diagnosed with COVID-19, was directed by a medical professional or government agency to self-isolate or quarantine due to suspicion of exposure to or diagnosis with COVID-19, and/or is undergoing a period of self-quarantine or isolation pursuant to public health assessment recommendations, **you must submit medical documentation verifying the family member's COVID-19-related illness, exposure, and/or quarantine period to the Office of Personnel within three (3) days of your initial absence.** If such medical documentation is not provided, you will be required to utilize accrued leave time.

School Closures

If you are not under suspicion of having been exposed to the virus or diagnosed with the virus but wish to stay home with a child due to the closure of a preschool program, elementary or secondary school, or child care center related to COVID-19, **you will be required to provide documentation verifying the closing.** Requests to work from home will be determined on a case-by-case basis for both essential and non-essential employees during the period of the closure. You will not be required to use accrued leave time during the period of the COVID-19-related closure if a work from home arrangement cannot be accommodated.

If you are staying home to care for a child who is under suspicion of having the virus or has been diagnosed with COVID-19, you will be required to provide documentation from a medical professional in order for the leave time procedures outlined above to apply.

For the purposes of custody staff in correctional facilities, and any other employee deemed essential, such employees are excluded from the school closure regulation.

Protect Yourself

If you are sick, stay home. Take preventative measures to protect yourself by wiping down workspaces, frequently washing your hands with soap and water, using hand sanitizer that contains 60%-90% alcohol, and avoid touching your eyes, ears, nose, and mouth. As a reminder, if you display symptoms of acute respiratory illness, such as cough or shortness of breath, you will be separated from other employees and sent home immediately.

I thank you for your anticipated cooperation. These measures are Mercer County's attempt to deal with an emergent public health situation. Our combined efforts will serve to protect the health and welfare of not only our Mercer County employees but our County residents as well. For this reason, compliance with these temporary measures is mandatory. Any failure to follow these guidelines may result in disciplinary action.