

COVID-19 Policy

PURPOSE

On March 9, 2020, Governor Philip D. Murphy signed Executive Order No. 103 in response to the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) invoking “a State of Emergency pursuant to N.J.S.A. App. A:9-33 et seq. and a Public Health Emergency as contemplated by N.J.S.A. 26:13-1 et seq.” On March 10, 2020, the New Jersey Civil Service Commission (NJCSA) adopted “Guidelines for State Employee Leave Time and Staffing – COVID-19” (CSC Guidelines).

While the CSC Guidelines are not directly applicable to employees of Monmouth County (County), they offer guidance to other employers regarding effective steps to manage the shared responsibility to protect the health and well-being of New Jersey residents.

As such, Monmouth County will abide by the guidelines set forth by Executive Order No. 103 and the CSC Guidelines to protect the health and well-being of our employees, their families, and loved ones, while continuing to provide essential services to the residents of the County.

The County Administrator has already undertaken an evaluation of current contingencies plans for the continuation of operations, and is working together with the Board of Chosen Freeholders, Health Department, Constitutional Offices and County Departments in order to verify essential functions of each unit as well as essential employees. Those efforts are ongoing during this rapidly evolving COVID-19 situation.

Thus, in accordance with Executive Order No. 103, and guided by the CSC Guidelines, Monmouth County is issuing the following COVID-19 Policy (Policy), which is being implemented immediately and shall remain in effect until either the expiration of the declared New Jersey State of Emergency or it is revoked by the Monmouth County Administrator, whichever comes first.

SCOPE

This Policy applies to all non-essential employees at any workplace location of Monmouth County. This includes non-essential regular full and part-time employees, temporary or seasonal employees and paid or unpaid interns.

Essential employees will be determined by County Administration and governed by the scheduling policies of their Department Head.

Employees of Constitutional Offices will be governed by the policies set forth by their Constitutional Officer.

POLICY

Alternatives to Existing Work Arrangements:

All Monmouth County Departments may implement alternative workweek schedules (including weekends), and adjusted daily or shift hours with the express written approval of the County Administrator or their Designee. These flexible arrangements may include modifications regarding hours of work and break times.

COVID-19 Policy

Prior to implementing any new arrangements or a modification of an existing work schedule, Department Heads shall advise union representatives of any anticipated modifications to hours of work or leave times before implementation.

Applicable Leave Time Procedures:

Any employee who has a concern regarding their health in light of COVID-19 or is experiencing any health related symptoms should seek guidance from their health care professional. If you are feeling sick, it is recommended that you do not come to the workplace, but rather contact your health care professional for evaluation. Your health care professional will determine if you are ill and should remain at home under doctor's care.

In accordance with CSC Guidelines, if an employee is (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 diagnosis with COVID-19, and/or (iii) undergoing a period of self-quarantine or isolation pursuant to public health assessment recommendations, the employee shall immediately notify Human Resources, who will in turn notify County Administration or their Designee. **In such circumstances, the employee will not be required to utilize accumulated leave time if they provide documentation verifying the same within three work days of the employee's initial absence.** As with any documentation of an illness, the documentation should be provided to Human Resources. If an employee does not provide such documentation, then the employee will be required to utilize their own accumulated leave time.

If the absence is caused by the employee's need to care for an immediate family member who (i) has been diagnosed with COVID-19, (ii) 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 (iii) is undergoing a period of self-quarantine or isolation pursuant to public health assessment recommendations, the employee shall immediately notify Human Resources, who will in turn notify County Administration or their Designee. **In such circumstances, the employee will not be required to utilize accumulated leave time if they provide documentation verifying the same within three work days of the employee's initial absence.** If no such documentation is received, the employee will be required to use accumulated leave time in accordance with existing policies.

Any employee who has been diagnosed with or exposed to the COVID-19 virus will not be permitted to enter the workplace until they have been medically cleared. Medical clearance to return to work is required from the employee's health care professional. In certain circumstances, the County may send the employee for a fitness for duty examination prior to returning to the workplace.

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

COVID-19 Policy

School Closures:

Any employee who has not been diagnosed with or exposed to the COVID-19 virus but must stay home with a child due to the closure of a preschool program, elementary or secondary school, or child care center, may be required to provide documentation verifying the closing. Both essential and non-essential employees may be required to work from home during the period of school closure in order to ensure continued operation of County services. If a work from home arrangement cannot be accommodated, such employee will not be required to use accumulated leave during the period of the COVID-19-related closure. If an employee chooses not to work from home where a work from home arrangement is offered, the employee may be required to use accumulated leave time in accordance with existing policies.

Essential employees may be required to report to their designated workplace or other place as directed, regardless of a school closure, if necessary for public health and safety.

Required Medical Documentation:

Required medical documentation includes, but is not limited to, certification from a local, state or federal governmental agency; a medical professional, office, or hospital; or other form of proof that an employee (or their family member) was recently in a location where the recommendation to isolate or self-quarantine was issued. The County reserves the right to require additional forms of documentation.

If an employee is absent from work without sufficient documentation confirming diagnosis or quarantine or isolation due to exposure or potential exposure to COVID-19, standard leave rules apply.

Staffing:

In the event of staffing shortages that disrupt the usual delivery of County services due to diagnosis and/or necessity of quarantine, it may become necessary for County Administration or their Designee to reassign essential work duties to ensure continuity of operations. Prior to the reassignment of duties, Department/Division Heads shall take steps to ensure that (i) the employee is otherwise qualified for the out of title work, (ii) the assignment is temporary in nature, and (iii) the employee's normal job duties resume upon return of the absent employee(s).