

**COVID-19 Guidance****1.3.8****PURPOSE**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is closely monitoring an epidemic of respiratory illness (COVID-19) caused by a coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2). Cases of COVID-19 are being reported in a growing number of international locations, several of which are experiencing sustained community-level or widespread person-to-person transmission.

The purpose of this document is to consolidate information relevant to COVID-19 and to provide guidance to City employees. It is recognized that this is a rapidly evolving situation and this guidance will be updated as needed.

**SCOPE OF APPLICATION**

This guidance is applicable to all City employees with the exception of employees of the Police and Fire Departments for whom other guidelines apply.

**AUTHORITIES AND RELEVANT POLICIES**

- Santa Clara County Public Health Office: <https://www.sccgov.org/sites/phd/Pages/phd.aspx>
- Discrimination and Harassment Policy: <https://www.sanjoseca.gov/home/showdocument?id=17863>
- Code of Ethics: <https://www.sanjoseca.gov/home/showdocument?id=17849>
- Flexible Workplace Policy: <https://www.sanjoseca.gov/home/showdocument?id=17901>

**GUIDELINES****1. Maintaining a Respectful Workplace**

A person's risk for COVID-19 depends on a variety of factors that do not relate to race, ethnicity, country of origin, or culture. City employees must adhere to the City's [Discrimination and Harassment Policy](#) and the [City's Code of Ethics Policy](#), and shall treat all colleagues and members of the public with courtesy and respect. Discrimination and/or harassment of any kind will not be tolerated.

**2. Recognizing the Signs and Symptoms of COVID-19**

Like the flu and the common cold, COVID-19 is a respiratory illness. Typical symptoms include a fever, cough, and/or difficulty breathing. Symptoms can range from very mild to severe depending on the individual and other factors.

**3. Employees who Develop Symptoms Consistent with COVID-19**

Employees who develop symptoms consistent with COVID-19 should not report to work and should follow the appropriate call-in procedures established within their respective workgroups. Employees who are symptomatic should use their available sick leave, and then other available leaves thereafter if sick leave is exhausted.

Employees who report for work and are symptomatic during the course of their work shift will be asked to go home and use sick leave, then other available leaves thereafter will be used.

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Employees who are symptomatic and sent home, but believe they are fine to remain in the workplace will be required to provide medical clearance before returning to work.

If an employee is well enough to telecommute, see section 6c below for additional information.

Departments should contact the Office of Employee Relations at (408) 535-8150 or [employee.relations@sanjoseca.gov](mailto:employee.relations@sanjoseca.gov) for additional guidance.

**4. Employees who Have Been Exposed to COVID-19**

Should an employee learn that someone they have associated with has tested positive for COVID-19, employees should not report to work and should notify their departments of this information. Departments should in turn notify the Office of Employee Relations at (408) 535-8150 or [employee.relations@sanjoseca.gov](mailto:employee.relations@sanjoseca.gov) for additional guidance.

**5. Family Medical Leave (FMLA)/California Family Rights Act (CFRA)**

Employees who are ill with the flu, COVID-19, or another serious medical condition, or who care for ill family members, may be covered under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) and/or California Family Rights Act (CFRA). Under these regulations, the City must provide employees with job-protected, unpaid leave for specified family and medical reasons that a medical professional has deemed a “serious medical condition.” Employees on FMLA leave are entitled to the continuation of group health insurance coverage under the same terms as existed before they took leave for up to 12 work weeks. Leave taken by an employee for the purpose of avoiding exposure to the flu or to accommodate child care/school closures would not be protected under the FMLA/CFRA.

The City’s [Leaves of Absence Policy](#), an [FAQ](#) and the [related forms](#), including the [Leave of Absence Application](#) are available on Human Resources [internet page](#).

**6. Workplace Safety Measures****a. Social Distancing**

Employees should be able to maintain social distancing in the workplace, allowing for at least three to six feet between persons (e.g. two employees should be able to put their arms out horizontally without touching each other). If this is not possible in the workplace, try to find alternate locations for people to work (e.g. conference rooms). This includes the use of [elevators](#) where occupancy should be limited to three to four occupants at a time, recognizing that this will create delays traveling between floors.

Where possible, employees should conduct meetings by telephone or using available teleconferencing technology if proper social distancing cannot be otherwise maintained.

Employees who primarily work in the field and/or have contact with members of the public should also maintain social distancing from whomever they may come into contact with. For example, employees needing to enter someone’s home and/or

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facilities in performance of their job duties should maintain a safe distance and proactively communicate to members of the public the reasons for doing so.

Any City employee who believes a member of the public they come into contact with is exhibiting flu-like symptoms, they should stop the interaction and ask the individual to call or email for additional follow up, if applicable. A [notice to this effect](#) shall be displayed in public spaces such as front desks and customer service counters.

b. Staggered Start Times

Where possible, departments are encouraged to alternate schedules to stagger the presence of staff if social distancing measures are insufficient. For instance, allowing employees who otherwise begin at 8:00 a.m. to start at 6:00 a.m. or 10:00 a.m.

c. Telecommuting

Telecommuting may be an option to reduce density in the workplace, assuming work can effectively be continued from home. Additionally, it may be an option for [high risk individuals](#) or for employees who are symptomatic but may still be able to work, provided specific considerations are met and departments authorize working from home. In addition, this may be an option where an employee's children are not able to attend school because of school closures.

Departments are to consider first whether a person can perform their duties from home. Managers and supervisors of staff who will remain in the workplace should not be permitted to telecommute full-time, unless they are considered high risk, are exhibiting symptoms of illness but are still able to work, and/or where an employee's children are not able to attend school because of a school closure.

Where this is feasible, and the employee already possesses the necessary equipment to telecommute, i.e., computers and phones, departments are encouraged to authorize telecommuting for a three-week period (through April 3, 2020). The City will issue additional guidance should telecommuting be extended beyond April 3, 2020. If equipment must be procured to enable the employee to telecommute, priority should be given to those who perform essential services. The IT Department is doing everything it can to procure additional City devices to accommodate access through Virtual Private Network (VPN) and/or Remote Desktop Protocol (RDP) – where appropriate. Due recent security events nationally, access through VPN or RDP on personal devices is not advisable. Departments should work with the IT Department if exceptional situations arise. In these exceptional situations, contact [cybersecurityoffice@sanjoseca.gov](mailto:cybersecurityoffice@sanjoseca.gov).

Employees can be approved to telecommute full-time, or departments may consider rotating schedules. For example, employees work from home on alternating days, some employees work from home in the mornings and some in the afternoons, or the like.

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Employees approved to telecommute can be required to report to their regularly assigned work location at any time and telecommuting can be cancelled at any time and without advance notice to the employee.

Hourly employees who are authorized to telecommute are required to keep accurate records of time spent working and tasks accomplished and supervisors are required to monitor this. Employees and supervisors must adhere to the [Flexible Workplace Policy](#); however, the requirement that an employee has passed probation and the flexible workplace schedule form requirements may be waived at the department's discretion.

d. Asymptomatic Employees Who Remain Concerned

Employees who are asymptomatic, but who wish to take a leave of absence may request to do so pursuant to the City's [Leaves of Absence Policy](#).

## 6. Meetings

Departments should cancel any mass gatherings or meetings where employees and/or members of the public would not be able to maintain appropriate social distancing.

If social distancing can be maintained during mass gatherings or meetings, a [script](#) has been developed to inform attendees of the social distancing requirement.

## 7. Mass Gatherings

The County Health Officer issued an [order](#) that, effective March 14, 2020, prohibiting public or private gatherings of more than 100 people. Moreover, gatherings of 35 to 100 people are also banned unless the following conditions are met:

- Stop anyone who is sick with fever or respiratory symptoms from attending.
- Ensure that those who are at higher risk for serious illness do not attend.
- Provide people enough physical space so that they can stay more than arm's length apart from others.
- Ensure that there are adequate supplies for hand washing including soap, paper towels, and waste receptacles and urge attendees to wash their hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, alcohol-based hand sanitizer can be used.
- Direct attendees to:
  - Avoid close contact with other people.
  - Avoid touching their eyes, nose, and mouth.
  - Cover their cough or sneeze with a tissue - if available - or into their elbow.
- Clean surfaces with disinfecting wipes or other standard cleaners before, during, and after the event.

**COVID-19 Guidance****1.3.8****8. Travel****a. Non-Essential Travel**

All non-essential business travel is cancelled through April 30, 2020. The Finance Department has issued [detailed guidance](#) regarding cancelled travel.

**b. Essential Travel**

Travel that is believed to be essential will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis by the City Manager's Office.

**c. Personal Travel**

An employee who has recently traveled, but is asymptomatic and has no reason to believe they were exposed to COVID-19 should maintain appropriate social distancing and is otherwise able to return to work. Employees returning home from specified countries in Europe must stay home for 14 days after returning from travel pursuant to [CDC travel warnings posted March 11, 2020](#). Employees returning home from other countries must verify prior to returning to work that any country they have visited has not been placed under a similar CDC travel warning.

An employee who has recently traveled and is symptomatic and/or believes they have been exposed to COVID-19 should contact the Office of Employee Relations at (408) 535-8150 or [employee.relations@sanjoseca.gov](mailto:employee.relations@sanjoseca.gov) for guidance prior to returning to work.

**ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE**

Employees are encouraged to do the following:

- Avoid customary handshaking
- Stay up to date on all required immunizations, including the flu shot
- Wash hands often with soap and hot water, particularly after coming into contact with someone who is sick
- If soap and water are not available, an alcohol-based hand rub that is at least 60% alcohol is a suitable alternative
- Cover your nose and mouth when you sneeze, or cough with a tissue or flexed elbow
- After using a tissue, throw it in the trash and wash your hands
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth
- Clean and disinfect surfaces and objects that may be contaminated
- Avoid close contact with anyone with cold or flu-like symptoms
- Limit contact with others as much as possible to keep from infecting them if sick
- Follow CDC recommendations if flu-like symptoms are present and stay home for at least 24 hours after a fever is gone, except to get medical care or for other necessities
- Complete an entire regimen if treatment is prescribed

**COVID-19 Guidance****1.3.8****ADDITIONAL RESOURCES****1. Employee Assistance Program**

Situations such as this can cause a variety of emotions. The [Employee Assistance Program](#) was established to offer free, confidential counseling and professional assistance to benefited employees and their eligible dependents.

**2. Workers' Compensation**

If an employee tests positive for COVID-19 and believes they have contracted the virus while at work performing their usual and customary job duties, then the employee should file a claim for Workers' Compensation benefits. Any such employee should report the claim immediately to their departmental supervisor and Workers' Compensation Liaison who will provide the employee with a Workers' Compensation Claim [Form DWC-1](#).

Please note that claims may be investigated for up to 90 days to determine work-relatedness. Any questions concerning Workers' Compensation benefits should be directed to the Health and Safety Division within the Human Resources Department.

**3. External Resources**a. Santa Clara County

- [Public Health Office](#)
- [COVID-19 Information](#)

b. Center for Disease Control

- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Website](#)
- [CDC Germ Prevention Flyer \(English\)](#)
- [CDC Germ Prevention Flyer \(Spanish\)](#)
- [CDC Germ Prevention Flyer \(Vietnamese\)](#)
- [CDC Germ Prevention Flyer \(Chinese\)](#)

c. World Health Organization

- [Coping with Stress](#)
- [Helping Children Cope with Stress](#)

Approved:

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/s/ Jennifer Schembri  
Director of Employee Relations  
Director of Human Resources

\_\_\_\_\_  
March 13, 2020  
Date

Approved for posting:

\_\_\_\_\_  
/s/ Jennifer Maguire  
Assistant City Manager

\_\_\_\_\_  
March 13, 2020  
Date