

As of March 13, 2020 this is the most up to date publication; however, the situation continues to evolve. Please go to the Intranet site for updated documents. Please also check the main site at www.lanecounty.org/coronavirus for future updates

COVID-19 (CORONAVIRUS) FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS FOR LANE COUNTY EMPLOYEES

1. What is a coronavirus?

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that usually cause mild respiratory illnesses such as the common cold. COVID-19 is a novel (new) coronavirus that was not identified in humans before December 2019.

2. What are common symptoms of COVID-19 illness?

Reported illnesses have ranged from mild symptoms to severe illness and death for confirmed coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) cases.

The following symptoms may appear **2-14 days after exposure**.

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath

COVID-19 is new, and we are learning more each day about the symptoms it causes and how long it takes for people to become sick.

3. How does the virus spread?

COVID-19 is a new disease and **we are still learning how it spreads**, the severity of illness it causes, and to what extent it may spread in the United States.

The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person.

- Between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet).

- Through respiratory droplets in the air produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes.



It may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads.

4. What should I do if I suspect that I may have COVID-19?

If you have symptoms like a cough, fever, or breathing problems and you might have been exposed to COVID-19, please contact your health care provider. Your provider will ask you about your symptoms and will decide whether you should be seen in the office.

If the doctor asks you to come in to the office, they will likely create a plan for you to enter the facility in a way that

avoids being around others, to prevent the spread of illness.

Please note, the Live Well Center is **NOT** a primary care provider. This is not where you should go if you have COVID-19 symptoms.

Governor Brown has declared a public health emergency as a result of the COVID-19 virus. In response to this emergency Lane County is making temporary changes to County policy and procedures. These temporary changes may differ from existing County policies in the Administrative Procedures Manual (APM), collective bargaining agreements and departmental policies and procedures. They will only be in effect during this public health emergency.

5. Social Distancing

The services we provide to our community are critical. At this time, we encourage social distancing behaviors. You know your own situation best. If you are in one of the high risk populations (over age 60 or who have serious chronic medical conditions) please take extra precautions. Lane County Leadership values our employees and our community. We want to acknowledge the impact of the virus on those who are most vulnerable in our communities, and do our part in preventing, slowing, and limiting its reach.

To the extent possible, avoid touching high-touch surfaces in public places such as elevator buttons, door handles, handrails, handshaking with people, etc.

If you are sick, you should not be at work.

A. Internal Meetings

The intent of social distancing is to reduce opportunities to spread COVID-19 by simply reducing contact with others who might be sick. At this time, managers and supervisors are evaluating existing meetings to determine whether and where it makes sense to provide alternate options. Some meetings may be cancelled as a precaution; others may be conducted via alternate methods, and this may change over time, so please check in with your supervisor.

B. External Meetings

On March 12, 2020, Governor Brown enacted an Executive Order canceling gatherings of over 250 people throughout the state until April 8. A “gathering” is defined as any event in a space in which appropriate social distancing of a minimum of six feet cannot be maintained. If you are responsible for other meetings that involve multiple jurisdictions and or the general public, please limit non-essential meetings. Check for updates on the main Lane County Public Health COVID-19 Coronavirus website: www.lanecountyor.gov/coronavirus.

C. Travel & Conferences

At this time, we are asking employees to restrict non-essential work travel . Please follow your department’s protocol for any new work related travel inquiries. Please review travel options to ensure that your purchases can be refunded in the event of a cancelled conference and or travel restrictions.

If you have not yet booked travel expenses for an upcoming trip, please wait to do so and talk through it with your supervisor.

Prior to travel, please review if you have any symptoms of acute respiratory illness before starting travel and notify your supervisor and stay home if you are

sick. If you become sick while traveling please notify your supervisor and promptly call a healthcare provider for advice if needed.

If you are in a risk group as defined by the CDC (over age 60 or who have serious chronic medical conditions) you may want consider limiting your travel, especially to locations with confirmed cases.

If you have already booked a trip, but now have concerns about travel, please work directly with your supervisor and stay up-to-date by visiting the County Public Health COVID-19 Coronavirus website: www.lanecountyor.gov/coronavirus. Many airlines and hotels have been crediting customers due to cancelled conferences and other business related events.

For personal travel, please know that there could be travel restrictions with little or no advance notice. [The CDC has an updated list of international travel health notices.](#)

D. Flexible Telework

We've had a lot of people ask about working from home. If you are sick or need to care for family members who are sick, we want to ensure you are able to properly rest in order to get well. If there is an extreme emergent situation where we need an employee to work from home, those may approved on a case by case basis. Many positions are not suitable to work from home; however, we are currently evaluating what types of positions could possibly telework for a short duration due to COVID-19. As part of our ongoing preparedness planning efforts, supervisors are working closely with Technology Services to ensure connectivity for those approved positions. This is all dependent on the infrastructure (equipment, staffing to set it up) available at the time.

6. Leave Usage

Lane County is closely monitoring COVID-19 as the situation develops and is taking precautionary measures in our operations – recognizing that this is a quickly evolving situation, which could lead to changes in policies and practices as facts develop. Based on evolving COVID-19 potential health impacts, we have tried to address some of the more commonly asked leave questions and any temporary changes to Lane County specific leave processes and policies.

If you are sick, do not come to work. Illness in the workplace creates a risk to your co-workers, your co-workers' families, and can impact the operations of the entire organization. Lane County's leadership wants you to take care of yourself and be well.

As a reminder, Lane County offers several types of leave to eligible employees. If you expect to be out of work for 3 or more days please refer to [Lane County's Protected](#)

[Leave](#) page on the county website. You may be eligible for FMLA, OFLA, Oregon Sick Time, or Short Term Disability depending on your specific situation.

During the next 90 days, through June 15, 2020, we are removing the requirement that you utilize TM prior to asking to use Leave Without Pay (LWOP) for any cold, flu and symptoms related to COVID-19.

A. What are symptoms related to COVID?

Answer:

The following symptoms may appear **2-14 days after exposure.***

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath

B. What if an immediate family member is ill, can I use sick leave?

Answer: Employees who are unable to report to work due to their own illness or are caring for someone due to illness may use Time Management (TM) to make up any hours remaining on their normal work schedule. For this current COVID-19 situation, the County is suspending the restriction on using LWOP for this purpose, so you may use leave without pay. This is one of the very few exceptions when employees may take unpaid leave before all other leave banks are depleted. So even if you have accrued TM, comp time, personal time or even vacation time, you may use LWOP.

C. Can staff with conditions with a higher risk of contracting or experiencing more severe symptoms of COVID-19, or care for family members with higher risk, take leave preemptively to avoid becoming ill? If so, how would they be paid?

Answer: As always, staff may request time off for any reason following their normal leave request procedures. Managers are encouraged to carefully consider the request, especially if an employee or family member has an underlying health condition which may cause them to be at higher risk. Approvals are subject to regular business and staffing requirements. Employees are eligible to use accrued TM, compensatory or personal time, or Oregon Sick Leave. An employee may request LWOP in this case prior to using TM banks.

Employees at higher risk for complications from COVID-19 are encouraged to contact their health care provider at the first signs of illness for advice.

Employees at higher risk for complications during a potential outbreak are encouraged to contact their Human Resources representative to confidentially discuss leave, reassignment, or options based on a qualifying medical condition.

D. I'm afraid of catching COVID-19 and don't want to come to work. What are my leave options?

Answer: Employees are expected to make every effort to come to work to serve the public, unless they have an approved leave. In times of high absenteeism, leave requests may not be granted. Employees are encouraged to manage their leave requests so as to not be without paid leave in the event of a future TM need. This would not be an approved LWOP situation. However, know that the County is responding to concerns about addressing the spread of the virus by implementing additional cleaning efforts for high touch surfaces as outlined by the CDC. Please see the Facilities COVID-19 Cleaning Plan which is located on the Intranet page:

<http://insidelane.lc100.net/employeeinfo/coronavirusemployeeinformation/myportal.aspx>

E. Can I get time off work to care for my child if schools or daycare centers close due to outbreak?

Answer: State and local officials, in conjunction with school officials, determine closure of schools and childcare facilities. Individual school buildings or entire school districts and childcare centers may close to prevent the spread of infection. Governor Brown has announced a statewide K-12 school closure from Monday, March 16th – Tuesday, March 31st.

During the next 90 days, through June 15, 2020, we are removing the requirement that you utilize TM prior to asking to use LWOP for any cold, flu and symptoms related to COVID-19. Please communicate with your immediate supervisor to notify them of your LWOP status.

In some cases, employees may be entitled to use TM due to closure of the school or childcare facility attended by the employee's child if the closure is ordered by a public official due to a public health emergency. Please work with your supervisor for specific guidance regarding the use of TM to care for a child impacted by public health closure of a school or childcare facility.

Employees are encouraged to pre-plan as much as possible for care of children in the event of school or childcare closures. Make this a part of your family emergency plan so all family members know what to do. However, in the event of an emergent situation, please discuss your options with your supervisor.

F. What happens if I run out of Time Management (TM)?

Answer: This is one of the very few exceptions when employees may take unpaid leave. For this current COVID-19 situation, the County is suspending the restriction on using Leave Without Pay (LWOP) for this purpose, so you may use leave without pay. Please communicate with your immediate supervisor to notify them of your LWOP status.

G. If I run out of Time Management (TM) can I request TM donations?

Answer: Yes. We are looking at suspending the restrictions on TM donation. Please note the minimum request will remain at 40 hours. We are working on specifics to establish a TM donation pool that can be used by others that have a need.

7. Other Questions:

A. Will I be asked to perform other duties within my department or outside of my department?

Answer: It could happen that you might be asked to help provide essential services due to high absenteeism. In that case, you will receive the necessary training.

Please note as we proceed we might need to cancel TM requests.

8. Commitment to Equity

As new information emerges, please remind your community that the risk of COVID-19 is not at all connected with race, ethnicity, or nationality. Stigma will not help to fight the illness. Do not make determinations of risk based on race or country of origin and be sure to maintain confidentiality of people with confirmed COVID-19 infection. Sharing accurate information during a time of heightened concern is one of the best things we can do to keep rumors and misinformation from spreading. The [CDC website](#) is an excellent source of information.

9. Where can I get additional information?

Please be careful where you receive information regarding COVID-19. There is a lot of misinformation online and we have had a spike in malicious phishing emails to Lane County email addresses. If you receive an email from an outside source, please consider carefully before clicking on any links or attachments.

We encourage you to visit www.lanecountyor.gov/coronavirus for information. We have local information in English and Spanish, as well as links to Oregon Health Authority, Centers for Disease Control, and the World Health Organization.

The Lane County Public Health non-emergency call center is open from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday–Friday at 541-682-1380. Questions can also be submitted via email to corona-info@lanecountyor.gov.