COVID-19 Policy – Revised effective August 12, 2021

Division of Human Resources

Purpose:

This policy establishes procedures for supporting employees who may be exposed to, infected with, or vaccinated against COVID-19. The goal of this policy is to maintain a safe and healthy workplace, protect the privacy of infected and exposed persons, and let all employees know their rights in discharging leave and remote work options related to this disease.

Agency and Employee Responsibilities:

1. The State’s decisions involving persons who have COVID-19 or who may have been exposed to COVID-19 shall be based on current guidance and well-informed medical judgments from the Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

2. Executive Branch agencies will cooperate with RIDOH and the Department of Administration’s Division of Human Resources in the event an employee reports potential exposure to COVID-19.

3. All employees have a responsibility to prevent the spread of COVID-19. To that end, when an employee meets one of the criteria below, they need to follow proper protocol outlined in this policy:
   
   a. Have come into close contact (less than six feet for 15 minutes or more within a 24-hour period) with a person with a confirmed case of COVID-19 or symptoms of COVID-19;

   b. Have recently returned from travel anywhere outside the 50 United States or U.S. territories;

   c. Have recently returned from travel on a cruise ship;

   d. Have recently travelled to a hot spot within the 50 United States or U.S. territories for non-work-related travel by any mode of transportation (airplane, bus, train, car, etc.); and/or

   e. Have been infected with COVID-19, or are presenting with any signs of illness consistent with COVID-19, such as fever, cough, and shortness of breath. For more information go to symptoms of COVID-19 on the CDC's website.
Note for healthcare workers: Please refer to your agency’s guidance regarding proper protocols.

4. The State respects the right to privacy of any employee who is directly exposed to or infected with COVID-19. Information about the risk to employees related to COVID-19 will be disclosed only to the extent necessary to minimize the health consequences to co-workers, individuals, and others while complying with state and federal privacy and confidentiality laws.

5. The State will not tolerate any discrimination against and/or harassment of an employee as a result of an employee’s contraction of or exposure to COVID-19. Any discrimination against and/or harassment of an employee may result in disciplinary action.

6. Both fully vaccinated employees (any person who has received all recommended dose(s) of a COVID-19 vaccine authorized by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration or the World Health Organization and it has been at least 14 days since the administration of the final dose) and employees who have not been fully vaccinated against COVID-19 (any person who has not received all recommended dose(s) of a COVID-19 vaccine authorized by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration or the World Health Organization and/or it has not been at least 14 days since the administration of the final dose), are required to wear cloth face coverings or a higher-grade mask while at work (including in state vehicles) unless they have a health condition which prevents them from safely wearing a mask. All employees must wear face coverings in any entry, exit, and common areas of the buildings, including, but not limited to: reception, hallways, restrooms, breakrooms, elevators, and stairways. Employees who have a health condition which prevents them from safely wearing a mask must contact the Human Resources Disability Management Unit at 401-574-8401.

7. Daily health screenings are required of all non-fully vaccinated employees arriving for work at a state building or worksite whether the employee is using the State’s Self-Screening Portal, completing an in-person verbal screening or, in specific low-density offices, completing an in-person self-screening. Employees are expected to provide complete and accurate information every workday when completing the daily health screening. An employee answering “Yes” to any of the self-screening questions should not be reporting to work unless the employee has a letter from the Human Resources Disability Management Unit. Otherwise, the employee cannot enter the building and must contact their supervisor and Human Resources representative.

8. If an employee is fully vaccinated, they have the option to voluntarily show their vaccination card to a screening captain at their facility to certify that they are fully vaccinated and going forward they will no longer be required to complete a daily health screening. They must continue to monitor their symptoms every day and if they are experiencing any COVID-19 symptoms, they cannot enter the building and must contact their supervisor and Human Resources Representative.

9. If an employee is vaccinated but they choose to not voluntarily disclose their vaccination status, they must continue to complete a daily health screening and obtain a color sticker from a screening captain.
I. Procedures for Employees Who Are Potentially Exposed to and/or Contracted COVID-19

1. Employees who experience the following are required to stay at home and self-monitor for any symptoms for the specified quarantine period as determined by RIDOH and the CDC if they have not been fully vaccinated against COVID-19 or have not been infected with COVID-19 within the past 90 days. A fully vaccinated person is someone who has received all recommended dose(s) of a COVID-19 vaccine authorized by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration or the World Health Organization AND at least 14 days have elapsed since the administration of the final dose. An employee who was infected with COVID-19 within the past 90 days is someone who was diagnosed with COVID-19 within 90 days of date of symptom onset OR within 90 days of date of a positive test if asymptomatic:

a. Have come into close contact (less than six feet for 15 minutes or more within a 24-hour period) with a person with a confirmed case of COVID-19 or symptoms of COVID-19;

b. Have recently returned from travel anywhere outside the 50 United States or the U.S. territories*, the person must obtain a negative viral COVID-19 test result from a specimen taken 3-5 days after travel and self-quarantine for 7 full days, even if test is negative. If the person chooses not to get tested, they must self-quarantine for 10 days upon their return from travel;

c. Have recently returned from travel on a cruise ship*, the person must obtain a negative viral COVID-19 test result from a specimen taken 3-5 days after travel and self-quarantine for 7 full days, even if test is negative. If the person chooses not to get tested, they must self-quarantine for 10 days upon their return from travel;

d. Have recently travelled to a hot spot within the 50 United States or U.S. territories* for non-work-related travel by any mode of transportation (airplane, bus, train, car, etc.), the person must obtain a negative viral COVID-19 test result from a specimen taken 3-5 days after travel and self-quarantine for 7 full days, even if test is negative. If the person chooses not to get tested, they must self-quarantine for 10 days upon their return from travel;

e. Are currently infected with COVID-19, or are presenting with any signs of illness consistent with COVID-19, such as fever, cough, congestion, loss of taste or smell, and shortness of breath; and/or

f. Have been instructed by RIDOH to quarantine or isolate.

*Note: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that individuals who are un-vaccinated do not travel until they are fully vaccinated.

If any of the above apply, employees must contact their supervisor and the Human Resources
2. For employees who have been fully vaccinated against COVID-19 or have been infected with COVID-19 within the past 90 days:

   a. If they come into close contact (less than six feet for 15 minutes or more within a 24-hour period) with a person with a confirmed case of COVID-19 or symptoms of COVID-19, they are not required to quarantine if they are asymptomatic, but they must monitor their symptoms for 14 days after exposure and obtain a viral COVID-19 test 3-5 days after exposure. If symptoms develop, they should monitor and get tested;

   b. If they have recently returned from travel anywhere outside the 50 United States or the U.S. territories, they are not required to quarantine if they are asymptomatic upon arrival in Rhode Island, but they should obtain a viral test 3-5 days after return from travel and self-monitor for COVID-19 symptoms. If symptoms develop, they should isolate and get tested;

   c. If they have recently returned from travel on a cruise ship, they are not required to quarantine if they are asymptomatic, but they should obtain a viral test 3-5 days after return from travel and self-monitor for COVID-19 symptoms. If symptoms develop, they should isolate and get tested;

   d. If they have recently travelled to a hot spot within the 50 United States or U.S. territories for non-work-related travel by any mode of transportation (airplane, bus, train, car, etc.) they are not required to quarantine if they are asymptomatic, but they should self-monitor for COVID-19 symptoms. If symptoms develop, they should isolate and get tested;

   e. If they are presenting with any signs of illness consistent with COVID-19, such as fever, cough, congestion, loss of taste or smell, and shortness of breath, they are required to stay at home and self-monitor for any symptoms and are encouraged to seek medical evaluation and obtain a COVID-19 test if recommended by RIDOH or a health care provider; and/or

   f. If they have been instructed by RIDOH to quarantine or isolate, they must follow RIDOH’s instructions for staying at home and self-monitor for the specified period.

If any of the above apply, employees must contact their supervisor and the Human Resources Disability Management Unit at 401-574-8401.

**Note for healthcare workers:** Please refer to your agency’s guidance regarding proper protocols.

3. Employees out of work due to a mandatory quarantine period as a result of traveling on
work-related business or due to a work-related exposure are eligible for paid administrative leave. Non-work-related exposure resulting in mandatory quarantine will be covered by available leave options. For further information review the Personnel Rules covering the following types of leave:

- Sick leave
- Family sick leave
- Annual leave (vacation)
- Compensatory leave
- Leave without pay
- Medical leave without pay

4. Upon receiving a positive diagnosis of having COVID-19, employees must:

a. Immediately leave the workplace, and/or remain out of the workplace for the duration of their isolation period (see RIDOH Guidelines for Isolation by Population).

b. Notify their immediate supervisor that they are unable to report to work. This notification should be made by speaking directly to the supervisor. If that is not possible, the employee may leave a voice or text message or email explaining why they are unable to report to work and a contact number where the employee can be reached. Understanding that the employee’s medical condition may not allow them to contact their supervisor, the Division of Human Resources will make every effort to reach the employee’s emergency contact if the employee has an unexplained absence from work.

c. Provide a medical report from a licensed healthcare provider or COVID-19 test results to the Human Resources Disability Management Unit. The Human Resources Disability Management Unit will provide the employee with appropriate documents as necessary, based on the information received from the physician to support the employee during their recovery.

5. Supervisors should report instances of absences due to COVID-19 to the agency director or COVID-19 agency liaison and Human Resources Disability Management Unit as soon as possible. A Rapid Response Team call will then be initiated.

6. Where telework is a viable work option and approval is granted in accordance with the Teleworking Policy, an employee may temporarily work from home during a quarantine or isolation period. While teleworking, an employee does not need to discharge time.

7. An employee who is restricted from work because of illness due to COVID-19 may return to work upon recovery following RIDOH’s Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Quarantine and Isolation Guidance to end isolation and with approval of the Human Resources Disability Management Unit. An employee will not be allowed to return to work until such time as the approval is provided.
8. All currently available forms of leave may be considered in the event an employee is out of work due to their own illness, the illness of a family member with a communicable disease. For further information, review the Personnel Rules covering the types of leave in #3 above.

II. Travel Approval Requirements During COVID-19 Event

All state-funded international travel remains suspended until further notice. The Department of Administration, in consultation with RIDOH and its partners, will reassess this suspension at the end of August 2021. The following exceptions to the travel suspension are allowable with the signed permission of the Personnel Administrator:

- Travel deemed critical to maintaining operations of government;
- Travel related to COVID-19 management and public health efforts;
- Court-ordered travel; and
- Travel deemed necessary for public health and safety.

III. Special Note on Collective Bargaining Agreements

Provisions of collective bargaining agreements, with respect to all paid leave options available to employees, should be consulted and this policy should be administered consistent with said provisions.

Director of Administration

8/12/2021

Signature		Date