



DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION Enterprise Policy

COVID-19 Policy – Revised effective August 7, 2020

Division of Human Resources

Purpose:

In response to increased cases of COVID-19 (coronavirus disease 2019), the following policy establishes procedures for supporting employees who may be exposed to or infected with COVID-19. The goal of this policy is to maintain a safe and healthy workplace, protect the privacy of infected 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 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) 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 District of Columbia;
 - c. Have recently returned from travel on a [cruise ship](#);
 - d. Have recently returned from non-work-related travel from any location with a high community spread rate as set forth on the list maintained by RIDOH (www.health.ri.gov/covid) 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 unexplained fever, cough, and shortness of breath. For more information go to <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/symptoms.html>.

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. Agencies may establish flexible work hours in accordance with the [Flexible Work Arrangements Policy](#); authorize telecommuting in accordance with the [Teleworking Policy](#); and promote social distancing practices between employees and customers.
7. Employees are required to wear cloth face coverings while at work (including in state vehicles) unless the employee can easily, continuously, and measurably maintain at least six (6) feet of distance from other employees and/or visitors for the duration of the work (e.g., solo office) or unless doing so would damage the employee's health. 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 should contact the Human Resources Disability Management Unit at 401-574-8401.
8. Daily health screenings are required of all 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 a 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.

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:
 - a. Have come into close contact (less than six feet for 15 minutes or more) 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 District of Columbia;
 - c. Have recently returned from travel on a [cruise ship](#);
 - d. Have recently returned from non-work-related travel from any location with a high community spread rate as set forth on the list maintained by RIDOH

(www.health.ri.gov/covid) 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 unexplained fever, cough, and shortness of breath.

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.

2. 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

*Please see the [Families First Coronavirus Response Act Policy](#).

3. 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 Human Resources Disability Management Unit. 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.

4. 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.
5. 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.
6. 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](#) symptom-time based approach and 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.
7. 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, and family responsibilities. For further information, review the Personnel Rules covering the types of leave in #2 above and the [Families First Coronavirus Response Act Policy](#).

II. Travel Approval Requirements During COVID-19 Event

All state-funded international travel and state-sponsored domestic travel remains suspended until further notice. The Department of Administration, in consultation with the Rhode Island Department of Health and its partners, will reassess this suspension at the end of November 2020. 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.

It is the responsibility of the **employee** to cancel trips planned through December 2020. Employees will not be allowed to book future trips through the end of December 2020. **To cancel your upcoming state-sponsored travel, please follow these steps:**

- 1) Cancel through the entity in which you booked travel and related expenses, such as hotel stays. If you booked through the State's travel agent, Short's Travel, please be sure to cancel through Short's Travel and request all documentation related to the trip cancellation. If you booked directly with a hotel or through a conference, please cancel through the same channel and request cancellation documentation.
- 2) Request documentation of any refunds, credits, and/or cancellation fees, if applicable. If a copy of the entity's refund/credit/cancellation policy is available, please include that with your other documentation prior to submission.

3) Submit all trip cancellation-related documentation to your agency's finance office (see above).

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.

Signature



Director of Administration

8/13/2020

Date