



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS  
**DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION**  
**Enterprise Policy**

## **COVID-19 Policy – Revised effective March 30, 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 when they are aware or suspect that they are or may be a carrier of COVID-19. For the purposes of this policy, employees are "aware" that they may have been exposed to and/or contracted COVID-19 if they:
  - a. Have come into contact with a person with a confirmed case of COVID-19;
  - b. Have recently returned from any international travel;
  - c. Have recently returned from travel on a [cruise ship](#);
  - d. Have recently returned from non-work-related travel\* from any other state by any mode of transportation (airplane, bus, train, car, etc.); and/or
  - e. Have been infected with COVID-19, or are presenting with 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 commuters:** State employees traveling from out of state are still allowed to come to work. However, the State continues to strongly encourage teleworking where possible. If you are unable to telework but need to make arrangements to stay home to address personal or family needs, please see information below about our flexible sick leave policy.

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.

## **I. Procedures for Employees who are Exposed to and/or Contract 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. Employees who are returning from any international travel in the last 14 days from the date of issuance of this policy and moving forward;
  - b. Employees who have travelled on a [cruise ship in the last 14 days from the date of issuance of this policy and moving forward](#);
  - c. Employees who have returned to from domestic travel in the 14 days prior to issuance of this policy and moving forward; and/or
  - d. Employees who are aware that they have come into direct contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19, or who have been notified by RIDOH of a potential exposure.

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

2. Employees out of work due to a mandatory quarantine period as a result of traveling on work-related business or due to a potential 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 March 19, 2020 [Director's Message: Family Responsibilities and Sick Leave](#), regarding sick time flexibility.

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 illness.
  - 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 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 and Human Resources Disability Management Unit as soon as possible.
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 presenting a written statement from his or her physician indicating that the employee is no longer infectious and, as of a specified date, is able to return to work and carry out the essential job functions. An employee will not be allowed to return to work until such time as the statement 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 March 19, 2020 Director's Message: Family Responsibilities and Sick Leave at [www.hr.ri.gov](http://www.hr.ri.gov). Absences due to personal or family illness may qualify as [Family and Medical Leave Act](#) (FMLA). If applicable, the employee will be placed on FMLA leave.

**II. Travel Approval Requirements During COVID-19 Event**

**Effective immediately, the State is suspending all state-funded international travel and state-sponsored domestic travel through the end of April 2020.** The Department of Administration, in consultation with the Rhode Island Department of Health and its partners, will reassess this suspension at that time. 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.

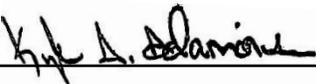
It is the responsibility of the **employee** to cancel trips planned through the April 2020. Employees will not be allowed to book future trips through the end of August 2020. **To cancel your upcoming state-sponsored travel, please follow these steps:**

- 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.

**Signatures**

  
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**Division Director**

**3/30/2020**  
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**Date**

  
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**Director of Administration**

**3/30/2020**  
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**Date**