



Coronavirus (COVID-19) and Resuming Office Operations FAQs for Employees

Our priority is the safety and well-being of our employees, their families and customers. If a situation arises, all proper notifications will be given to employees who may have been exposed to someone with COVID-19 consistent with directions and recommendations from the Florida Department of Health.

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Prevention

What protective strategies should I continue using?

Preventative measures, such as staying home when sick, practicing good personal hygiene, [practicing social distancing](#), wearing face coverings, staying updated on the latest recommendations, and remaining calm while diligent offer some of the best ways to protect yourself and others at work and at home.

Testing

Where can I get tested for COVID-19?

Visit the Pinellas County testing web page at <https://covid19.pinellascounty.org/testing>. Employees should call the site of their choice beforehand to determine what is required. Get information on the [different types of tests](#) from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

Am I eligible for free COVID-19 testing?

Yes. If you are enrolled in our Point of Service (POS) Health Plan or our Consumer Driven Health Plan, the test will be covered at no cost to you. Employees should take their UnitedHealthcare (UHC) card with them. UHC will cover testing at 100% even if you don't have a prescription. Some locations do not require proof of insurance. Check before you go.

Is the COVID-19 antibody test covered under our health plan?

Yes - it is covered as long as it is an FDA-authorized COVID-19 test ordered by a physician or appropriately licensed health care professional. Please note that antibody tests should not be used to diagnose someone as being currently sick with COVID-19.

Do I have to stay at home/self-isolate after having the test but before I get the results?

Yes. Whether or not you have symptoms, if there is a chance that you have COVID-19, don't risk spreading it to others. Speak to your supervisor and stay home/self-isolate.

COVID-19 Exposure

I think I might have COVID-19. What should I do?

Stay up-to-date with [symptoms](#) associated with COVID-19. If you develop symptoms such as fever, a cough, difficulty breathing, or other symptoms recognized by the CDC, consult with a healthcare provider who can determine if you need to be tested. Here are your options:

- Contact UnitedHealthcare NurseLine 24/7 by calling (888) 478-4752, logging in at myuhc.com, or using the UnitedHealthcare App.
- Talk with a [Virtual Visit](#) doctor by phone or video 24/7:
 - **Teladoc:** Use the UnitedHealthcare app or website at myuhc.com, visit the Teladoc website at www.teladoc.com or call (800) 835-2362.
 - **Doctor on Demand:** Visit www.doctorondemand.com or call (800) 997-6196.
 - **Amwell:** Visit www.amwell.com or call toll-free (844) SEE-DOCS (733-3627).
- Call your doctor or the Florida Department of Health (FDOH) hotline to discuss your situation and obtain medical advice. The FDOH, COVID-19 Call Center is available 24/7 at (866) 779-6121 or email COVID19@flhealth.gov.

What if I THINK I've been exposed to someone with COVID-19 but I don't feel sick?

- If an asymptomatic employee believes they may have come in contact with an infected person, they should contact their supervisor immediately and advise them of the situation. That employee should also contact the [Florida Department of Health](#) to discuss their potential risk factors and obtain direction about any further steps that should be taken. Employees are discouraged from making announcement of a possible infection to large groups of employees.
- If an asymptomatic employee calls their supervisor and notifies them that they are required to stay home in quarantine because they were a contact of a confirmed case, the contacts they had at work are considered "contacts of a contact", are not required to be in quarantine and should be permitted to continue to work, following recommendations for social distancing as appropriate.
- If you have had a [close contact](#) with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, you must [quarantine](#) and follow guidelines.

What happens if I have been exposed to someone with COVID-19?

- If you are contacted by the Health Department notifying you that you are a contact of a confirmed case, you will be required to be under mandatory 14-day quarantine or precautionary quarantine in your home, depending on if the contact was close (a contact) or proximate (a contact of a contact) respectively, following the guidelines provided by the CDC.
- If you have had a [close contact](#) with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, you must quarantine and follow guidelines.

What if a member of my household is a contact?

- Any household members, assuming both they and the individual under quarantine are asymptomatic, are considered a "contact of a contact" and therefore are not required to be in quarantine. They can go to work or engage other activities following recommendations for social distancing as appropriate.

Symptoms at Work

What if I begin to feel sick at work?

The employee should:

- Speak immediately with your supervisor or manager in a safe, quiet area, or on the telephone about the situation. To maintain a level of calmness and allow correct course of action, employees are discouraged from making announcements of a possible infection to large groups of employees.
- Avoid other employees while still onsite.
- Follow your supervisor or management's direction about leaving the worksite.

- Do not report to work when sick and follow established call-out procedures.
- Call your healthcare provider or the Florida Department of Health (FDOH) hotline to discuss your situation and obtain medical advice. The FDOH, COVID-19 Call Center is available 24/7 at (866) 779-6121 or email COVID19@flhealth.gov.
- Follow appropriate healthcare provider directions.
- Stay away from others and practice social distancing and good personal hygiene in accordance with current recommendations (<https://floridahealthcovid19.gov>) and your healthcare provider's instructions.

What if I've heard that another employee may be sick with COVID-19?

If you have information about a possible infection, please **share the information privately with management only** so that proper steps can be taken and to avoid causing anxiety among other staff.

Absence and Leave

Will my absence due to COVID-19 or flu-like symptoms or illness be considered unscheduled?

No. As has been the practice during times of increased flu activity, effective December 22, 2019, leave taken for flu and flu-like illness is considered scheduled leave. **If you do not feel well, you should not come to work.** Absences due to suspected COVID-19 symptoms should be treated in this same way.

Will my supervisor require a doctor's note to take leave?

No. In accordance with guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), doctor's notes will not be required from employees to take leave for flu and flu-like illnesses (including COVID-19). The same applies if an employee stays at home to take care of a household family member who is experiencing COVID-19 or flu-like symptoms or illness. A doctor's note for return to work after COVID-19 illness will likely be required. Check with your supervisor.

Will employees who have been out sick related to COVID-19 – whether or not they have been tested – be required to provide proof of medical clearance to return to work?

In an effort to safeguard the health and well-being of co-workers and customers, a proof of a negative test or doctor's note to return to work after COVID-19-related illness may be required. Check with your supervisor and submit any required documentation to your supervisor.

What are my options for paid leave?

Beginning April 1, 2020 through December 31, 2020, for eligible employees:

- *Emergency Paid Sick Leave (EPSL)* – This is a new type of leave provided in accordance with a recent federal law. Review the [Families First Coronavirus Response Act FAQs](#) for specific info, but basically this provides full-time employees up to 80 hours of Emergency Paid Sick Leave if unable to work due to COVID-19 illness or childcare issues due to school closures.
- *Emergency Family & Medical Leave Expansion* – This is an expansion of FMLA, providing partial pay if certain conditions are met. Review the [Families First Coronavirus Response Act FAQs](#) for specific information.
- *A Friend in Need (AFIN)* – See [Policy #12](#). This is a voluntary program through which an eligible employee may choose to assist eligible fellow employees in times of need by permitting person-to-person leave donation as defined within the policy. NOTE: A Friend in Need Program is available for an employee who is sick or needs to care for a sick family member but NOT to an employee who needs to take care of well children due to school being closed.
- *Administrative leave with pay* – See [Personnel Rule 4](#) which provides Appointing Authorities the ability to grant administrative leave with pay if such leave is in the best interests of the organization.
- *Leave without pay* - See [Personnel Rule 4](#) which provides the option of leave without pay after all forms of accumulated or gained leave have been exhausted (with noted exceptions).

Short Term Disability

Are employees eligible for Short Term Disability (STD) benefits related to COVID-19?

The County's short term disability benefits (STD) are administered by The Standard. According to The Standard, individuals whose claim is solely due to being placed in quarantine or isolation will likely not be eligible for STD benefits as they would not meet the policy's Definition of Disability. If the individual has a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19 or other evidence of disability, she/he may be eligible, depending on the specific facts of the claim. For more info, contact The Standard at (855) 290-9479 from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. M-F, or email absence@standard.com.

Reminder: Standard FMLA is leave meant to care for employees or their immediate family member for a covered illness, while *STD covers only the employee* due to illness or disability. If an employee is out caring for a sick child, spouse, parent or due to their own illness, they can apply for FMLA. The Standard will make the determination of whether their situation should be covered.

[A Friend in Need Program](#) could potentially assist, if they meet the criteria and have no paid leave.

Does a diagnosis of COVID-19 qualify an employee for STD benefits?

Such individuals will retain coverage under the Short Term Disability policy for the duration of quarantine, and The Standard will evaluate any claim for disability benefits individually.

Well-Being Resources

What well-being resources are available?

Emotional well-being resources are offered through the [Employee Assistance Program](#) and the [Wellness Program](#). Contact the Wellness team for more information at (727) 464-4049 or email wellness@pinellascounty.org. Managers are encouraged to request [Critical Incident Services](#) to address department-wide anxiety and fear.

Telecommuting

What are the rules about telecommuting/remote work?

Appointing Authorities that want to allow, or require, telecommuting will communicate options and expectations for those arrangements. View the [BTS Remote Workforce Guide](#) (in SharePoint).

Travel

Is work-related travel cancelled?

Management can require or excuse work-related travel (i.e. employees scheduled to fly to a conference) at their discretion, as authorized by their Appointing Authority. Management can also require employees to notify them if they will be traveling for personal reasons to high-risk areas, or plan to be in contact with someone that has been in a high-risk area. The postponement or cancellation of unnecessary travel should be considered in accordance with CDC recommendations.

If I am planning to travel for vacation, are there special procedures in place that should be followed prior to and/or upon return? Speak with your supervisor about accommodations prior to and after your travel plans. It is important to check the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) and [Florida Department of Health's travel guidance](#) for the most recent recommendations.

COVID-19 Resuming Office Operations

As we gradually resume office operations and increase our person-to-person contact, Pinellas County is implementing procedures to safeguard the health and well-being of our employees, volunteers, their families and customers.

County Commitment

- Use of additional cleaning crews
- Place hand sanitizing stations in conveniently assessable locations
- Consider remote work when feasible with business operations to reduce staff density
- Place signage at entryways and around the workplace to alert employees, vendors and customers of what to expect once they enter the workplace
- Use sneeze/cough guards in direct customer service locations and floor markings reminding to social distance in key high traffic areas where possible
- Provide the appropriate Personal Protective Equipment

Employee Expectations

- Practice safety and social distancing guidelines
- Stay home if you feel sick
- Know how to [reduce the spread of COVID-19](#)
- Wear a face covering if you are in an indoor common area of a County government building such as a breakroom, hallway, restroom or elevator
- Treat others in a respectful manner at all times
- Check the employee COVID webpage at www.pinellascounty.org/hr/coronavirus often

Safety Measures

What if my supervisor tells me to return to the office but I don't feel comfortable returning?

Please discuss your specific concerns with your supervisor and ask about resources and options that may be available to address your concerns.

Will sneeze/cough guards be installed?

Sneeze/cough guards have been installed in high traffic areas where appropriate.

Will meetings still be held virtually or in person?

Employees are encouraged to conduct virtual meetings whenever possible. In situations where in-person meetings are necessary, social distancing measures should be maintained.

What signage is being installed?

Facilities has procured social distancing and directional arrow floor stickers, which can be used on hard or carpeted surfaces. Building signage was installed the week of June 1 at building entrances, common areas and in restrooms.

Cleaning Protocols

What is the County doing to clean common areas?

Facilities is committed to frequent and enhanced cleaning of all work and common gathering areas. The cleaning crews will regularly clean high-touch surfaces in common areas including doorknobs, light switches, shared equipment, elevator buttons, sink, faucets, etc. Please evaluate your work area and determine if there are additional cleaning and/or safety precautions needed; discuss these concerns with your supervisor.

What are additional cleaning protocols during COVID-19?

Enhanced cleaning protocols include increased nightly cleaning of all buildings and instituting repeated daily cleaning of horizontal surfaces and high touch areas. These enhancements will continue indefinitely. ***In addition to the enhanced cleaning protocols, each building was deep cleaned in May.*** The deep cleaning involved the cleaning and disinfection of every surface by a separate, dedicated janitorial crew, and the sanitizing and disinfection of carpeted surfaces.

What about the air quality of the buildings?

Facilities is employing several tactics to provide optimal indoor air quality, including increasing outside air into the buildings, utilizing approved disinfectants on air handlers, and progressively installing ultraviolet lights in air handlers as an added disinfectant protocol.

What about hand sanitization stations?

Hand sanitizers (at least 60% alcohol) are provided for common areas to be used by employees and customers and will be continually replenished.

What cleaning is expected from employees?

Cleaning supplies, based on supply and inventory, will be available, and employees are encouraged to clean and disinfect their workspaces as needed. Be sure to follow all manufacturer guidelines for their use.

Face Coverings (Masks)

Are we required to wear masks?

Yes. The Appointing Authorities determined that [face coverings are required](#) inside all Pinellas County government buildings for the safety of employees and citizens as of July 6. This requirement applies to all indoor public places and common areas, but it is not intended for an employee working alone in their office or cubicle.

Will the County provide masks?

The County will provide masks for employee use if needed. Staff may also bring their own face covering to wear, following the [CDC guidance](#) on fabric, use, and cleaning. Masks will not be provided to the public at this time. For more information, see [Face Covering FAQs for Employees](#).

View www.pinellascounty.org/hr/coronavirus for up-to-date information and resources.