Coronavirus (COVID-19) Supervisor Toolkit for Directors and Management under County Administrator

In a Nutshell

- Direct employees to resources at www.pinellascounty.org/hr/coronavirus.
  This is a fluid situation, and we recommend frequent references to this site for updated information.
- Remain calm and measured.
- Monitor the latest guidance.
- Communicate regularly with your employees.
- Be flexible, but consistent.
- Communicate and analyze individual issues with your department leadership and Assistant County Administrators, Human Resources or the County Attorney’s Office, as appropriate.

FAQs

What resources are available to employees?
Encourage employees to view www.pinellascounty.org/hr/coronavirus for information about our sick leave policy, best prevention practices and links to valuable resources.

How should supervisors respond to an employee’s request for time off due to COVID-19 or flu-like symptoms or illness?
The safety and well-being of our employees is paramount to all management within the Unified Personnel System. As has been the practice during times of increased flu activity, effective December 22, 2019, leave taken for flu and flu-like illness is to be considered scheduled leave. Employees experiencing such symptoms should not be coming to work. Absences due to suspected COVID-19 symptoms should be treated in this same way.

Additionally, departments should be consistent with their employees in applying this practice. In accordance with CDC guidance, doctor’s notes will not be required from employees for flu and flu-like illnesses (including COVID-19/coronavirus). 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.

What if an employee has exhausted all paid leave but cannot come in to work due to experiencing COVID-19 or flu-like symptoms or illness?
Precautionary practices, including staying home when sick, are important steps in preventing the spread of COVID-19. The Friend in Need program may be a helpful resource for those challenged with the situation described. The UPB Policy #12: AFIN: A Friend in Need Program 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. Additionally, UPB Personnel Rule 4 - Time Off provides Appointing Authorities with the ability to grant administrative, or other, leave with pay if such leave is deemed to be in the best interests of the organization. Also, in accordance with Rule 4, the use of leave without pay may be requested after all forms of accumulated or gained leave have been exhausted (with the noted exceptions). Please discuss any specific situations or concerns with your department leadership.
What happens if an employee is sick at work?
Send them home. Employees who appear to have acute respiratory illness symptoms (i.e. fever, cough, shortness of breath) upon arrival to work or who become sick during the day should avoid unnecessary contact with other employees and customers, be sent home immediately and consult with their health care provider as appropriate.

What are the rules about telecommuting?
Telecommuting, video chat meetings, conference calling and the use of technological tools that enable remote work can be great ways to maintain operations while limiting exposure between employees. Such options may not be feasible for many positions within the County due to the nature of the job or type of work performed. Exploration of this practice and use of other technology that facilitates productivity while limiting in-person contact is encouraged, where practicable. Whether or not to allow telecommuting is the decision of each Appointing Authority. As such, Appointing Authorities that want to allow, or require, telecommuting should be clear about expectations for those arrangements and consistently apply appropriate policies in effect.

Should work-related travel plan for conferences be cancelled?
Work-related travel to high-risk areas shall be cancelled. Any other work-related travel must be approved by department leadership in accordance with existing policies. The CDC provides updated recommendations on postponing or cancelling travel in CDC Travel Notices based on the results of the most up-to-date assessments. Please check this information when making decisions as recommendations may change quickly.

As always, common sense and employee safety should be considered. If travel bans are imposed, then the level of discretion available to managers will be impacted. Management shall require employees to notify them if they will be traveling for personal reasons to high-risk areas.

What about temporary employees from Personnel Solutions Plus (PSP)?
Temporary contract workers were notified via PSP about our practices of staying home if sick, using good hygiene and that they may be sent home if sick. You as a supervisor should also emphasize these practices to all employees including temporary contract workers.

What protective strategies can my employees use now?
Preventative measures, such as staying home when sick, practicing good personal hygiene, staying updated on the latest recommendations, and remaining calm while diligent offer some of the best ways to protect yourself and others.

Additionally, review the continuity of operations plans for your work area and be sure that you understand your role in these plans. Also, ensure routine cleaning of commonly touched surfaces is performed regularly. (The CDC recommends no additional disinfection beyond routine cleaning at this time.)

What if I have additional questions?
Contact Human Resources Employee Relations at employee.relations@pinellascounty.org or (727) 464-3506.

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