



# Pandemic Policy

## **Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to activate a pandemic plan in order to minimize the impact on County business operations while protecting the health and safety of the public and County employees.

## **Policy**

During the time of an imminent or declared pandemic, the County Manager may activate the County's Pandemic Policy. Human Resources will notify employees when the Pandemic Policy is in effect and when the period ends.

The County Manager or a designee will consult the local Public Health Director and the County's Communicable Disease Medical Director to determine symptoms that are pertinent to the pandemic. Human Resources will provide notice of the effective date at the initiation of the pandemic plan period and notice of certain identified symptoms which are subject to change throughout the duration of the applicable period.

Employees are instructed not to report to work if exhibiting such identified symptoms. Human Resources will continuously update the list of symptoms and will provide notice to employees of any that are new and emerging as guidance is provided from authorities.

### **Leave From Work - Mandatory**

Department managers or authorized designees will refer to updated guidance from the local Public Health Director and the County's Communicable Disease Medical Director to determine the medically safe timeframe for employees to return to work after symptoms resolve and will provide notice to applicable employees. Return to work requirements may change throughout a pandemic period.

During a pandemic plan period, employees may be subject to the provisions of a State of Emergency "Stay at Home Order", may be diagnosed as positive in person or remotely by a health care provider, may be quarantined subject to an Order, or may be asked to self-quarantine away from work for a predetermined period due to either experiencing certain identified symptoms or due to exposure to the pandemic's pathogen. A public health department's communicable disease team member will contact the employee to provide further instruction.

Per the usual County policy, accrued sick leave is used due to an illness and annual leave may be used if there is no accrued sick leave balance.

If no accrued paid leave is available, an employee may apply to use a "Leave of Absence Without Pay" for short-term absences as an exception to the Leave of Absence Without Pay policy's usual eligibility requirements. This special use of the "Leave of Absence Without Pay" is available only due to the employee's own illness while experiencing the identified symptoms or if required to care for the employee's spouse, parent or child who experiences the identified symptoms.

Human Resources will notify employees of any leave policy changes during a pandemic period as a result of changes to state and federal law.

An employee who is asked to self-quarantine, who requests approval for paid or unpaid leave due to an applicable diagnosis, or who is ill due to identified symptoms in connection to the pandemic is not subject to any disciplinary action, to a negative performance appraisal, or any other

negative employment action as a result of an approved absence under this policy. Employees shall follow their own department's usual call in procedures.

Employee's children under age 18 are not allowed in the workplace for any reason.

### **Pandemic Prevention Measures**

Pandemic prevention measures may preempt the activation of this policy. Since each pandemic may vary to some degree, the County Manager or designee will follow federal and state guidelines, will consult with the local Public Health Director, and will consult with the County's Communicable Disease Medical Director to determine adequate measures for decreasing the spread of the pandemic's pathogen and reducing its impact to the workplace.

Vaccination. Employees are encouraged to stay current on all vaccinations to include the seasonal flu vaccine. Further, employees are allowed to use work time to participate in the Public Health Department's flu clinic(s) under staggered work schedules as directed by the immediate supervisor so that all employees are able to participate.

Pandemics with new and emerging pathogens are not likely to immediately have an available vaccine. The Public Health Department will provide notice and further instructions for employees through Human Resources when it is available.

Telework. Dependent upon the severity of the pandemic, County management may determine telework is an option to reduce the possibility of disease spread. Each department manager shall develop a plan that minimizes interruption to the department's daily business operations. Although duties for all positions are not conducive to telework, the County will consider allowing remote work for those employees who can effectively perform essential functions without disruption. Employees are required to follow the County's telework policy.

### **Other Preventive Measures**

Employees are encouraged to meet via a teleconferencing platform.

In accordance with any guidance provided or as applicable, employees should maximize the distance between their work space and their co-workers to the extent possible.

Employees are encouraged to wash hands frequently and vigorously with soap and water for over 20 seconds frequently. If it is impossible or impractical to wash hands, employees may use sanitizer as an alternative.

Employees are encouraged to maintain a clean workspace and shall sanitize shared phones, keyboards, and other shared surfaces using a disinfecting agent.

The County Manager or designee may consult the local Public Health Director and the General Services Director to determine the cleaning or enhanced disinfecting procedures for County facilities.

The County Manager or designee may consult the local Public Health Director or the County's Communicable Disease Medical Director to determine if employee or public symptom screening is required for entrance into any County facility.

## Scope

All County Employees

## Definitions

**Quarantine** - a mandatory or voluntary period of separation from people or a place after experiencing symptoms or after a known exposure to an infected person.

**Pandemic** - an outbreak of a disease that occurs over a wide geographic area and affects an exceptionally high proportion of the population.

**Pathogen**- organisms (e.g. bacteria and viruses) that causes disease in human beings.

**Telework** - a flexible work arrangement under which an employee performs the duties and responsibilities of their appointed position and any other authorized activities from an approved worksite other than the regularly assigned location. In practice, telework is an arrangement that allows an employee to perform work during any part of regular, paid hours at an approved alternative worksite (e.g. home or telework center).

## Procedures

1. Employees are responsible for reading and understanding this policy before and during a pandemic.
2. Subject to the supervisor's approval and instructions, employees shall follow the guidance provided by the MIS Department to ensure telework capabilities.
3. Applicable employees shall review the telework guidelines and follow their supervisor's instructions.