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## **COVID-19 AND CONFIDENTIALITY**

When one of our colleagues tests positive for COVID-19, it is natural to want to share the identity with everyone so you can think about whether you came into contact with that person or not. However, the HIPAA laws governing the confidentiality of medical information do not allow us to disclose the name of a person testing positive. Of course, co-workers will use deductive reasoning or just guess to determine who tested positive. Guessing like this may lead to wrong conclusions and inappropriate responses to the wrong person.

Our leadership team will notify their employees stating something like: *"We want to report to you that one of our employees has tested positive for COVID. He/she has not been in the office since Wednesday and reported that he/she has not had close contact (< 6 feet for ≥15 minutes) with co-workers. Please continue to adhere to strict social distancing guidelines, facial coverings and wiping down frequently touched surfaces."*

When we are notified a positive test has occurred, the Spokane Regional Health District (SRHD) has also been contacted by the healthcare provider. SRHD will conduct contact tracing with that employee to determine if others should be notified.

## **OPTIONS WHEN SCHOOL OR DAYCARE IS CLOSED**

In our conversations with the City of Spokane and other Spokane organizations about what to do to support our working parents, it is clear we are all concerned. It is also apparent, there are no easy answers to this situation.

At this point, here are options which may be available to you if your school or daycare closes or goes online.

1. Telecommute: working from home with the approval of your supervisor.
2. Use Accrued Leave Balances: if telecommuting is not option, this option would allow you to stay home and use your accrued leave balances to stay in paid status.
3. Use Federal Emergency Paid Sick Leave Act: grants up to 80 hours of paid leave; can only be used once by employee in a year.
4. Use Expanded Family Medical Leave Act: first 2 weeks unpaid (may cover w/Federal Emergency Paid Sick Leave Act); remaining 10 weeks paid at two-thirds regular rate of pay, up to \$200/day maximum.
5. Take unpaid leave: would require the employee to go on COBRA and pay 102% of the cost of their healthcare insurance.
6. Adjust work schedule, e.g., split daytime shifts: with the approval of the supervisor, may allow an employee to work in the early morning and evening, leaving the mid-day to care for children.
7. Go to part time/percentage: see Policy #217. With Department Head approval, reduce working hours to 50, 60 or 80% and pay 20% of the total health insurance cost for coverage.
8. If you are medically high risk and cannot tele-commute, you may be eligible for up to 26

weeks of unemployment.

If additional options arise we will let you know.

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) has good information on preparing your child for home school, hybrid or in the classroom school. You can find this at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/parent-checklist.html>.

### **WHAT CAN YOU DO TO KEEP OUR WORKPLACE SAFE?**

You can help prevent the spread of COVID-19 by:

- Using personal protective equipment when appropriate, wearing face coverings at work, regularly washing your hands, consistently cleaning and sanitizing work spaces, and practicing social distancing whenever feasible.
- Self-monitoring for symptoms and staying home if you experience any, including: fever of over 100.4° F, cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, or diarrhea.

### **WEAR YOUR MASK**

One of the most controversial topics in America is whether we can be forced to wear a mask. We know wearing the right facial covering helps protect you and those around you from sharing the coronavirus with others. If we were all symptomatic when we carried the virus, it would be much easier. But many of us can be asymptomatic so we are not aware we are virus carriers.

As we move toward becoming a values-based organization, let's hold ourselves ACCOUNTABLE to each other and show each other RESPECT by wearing our masks when we are around our colleagues at work. If you have a medical need not to wear a face covering, please let Human Resources know by completing the variance form at

<https://www.spokanecounty.org/DocumentCenter/View/33560/Variance-Request--Facial-Covering>.

Medical documentation may be requested.

### **WORKERS COMPENSATION ILLNESS COVERAGE FOR COVID-19 WORK-RELATED CONDITIONS**

Under certain circumstances, claims from health care providers and first responders involving COVID-19 may be allowed. Other claims that meet certain criteria for exposure will be considered on a case-by-case basis. In most cases, exposure and/or contraction of COVID-19 is **not** considered to be an allowable, work-related condition.

For allowed claims, time-loss payments for lost wages during a quarantine period may be available for up to 14 days. The CDC indicates that COVID-19 symptoms may appear anywhere from 2 to 14 days after exposure. Appropriate, medically required testing/surveillance would also be covered. This is a time-limited benefit, and no benefits would be paid after the worker tests negative for COVID-19 or the quarantine period has ended, unless the worker develops the disease. As with all wage replacement benefits under the Industrial Insurance Act, the first 3 days are not paid unless the worker is medically required to remain off work on the 14th day following exposure.

Once a claim is allowed, the insurer will pay for treatment of COVID-19. Currently, the only treatment for this new coronavirus is supportive care to help relieve symptoms.

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