



TEMPORARY COVID-19 PERSONNEL POLICY

Issued by Jay Osborne, Director of the Department of Human Resources
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King County seeks to responsibly and equitably respond to the COVID-19 situation by providing policy guidance to its employees with the intention of promoting public health and safety.

This temporary policy applies to all Executive Branch employees¹. Employees in other branches of County government will receive guidance from their leaders.

This policy is effective immediately and will end upon declaration by the Director of the Department of Human Resources. This policy is subject to change during this time and will be reissued if things change.

To the extent this policy changes existing County policy that applies to represented employees, adds to or modifies the collective bargaining agreement, OLR will bargain the effects of that change to the extent required by law.

DEFINITIONS

COVID-19 (also known as “novel coronavirus”) – a new virus strain spreading from person-to-person. Its symptoms include, but are not limited to, fever or chills, a cough, shortness of breath and difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, and diarrhea. Symptoms may appear in as few as 2 days or as long as 14 days after exposure to the virus.

POLICIES

MASKS FOR EMPLOYEES

Employees in health care settings, including those in Jail Health, are required to always wear a mask while in patient-facing settings.

Some executive branch employees may work in county facilities that have more restrictive mask requirements, for example in courtrooms or in areas where court business is conducted with the public. Executive branch employees must abide by those more restrictive requirements when working in those areas.

King County encourages and welcomes anyone who wants to wear a mask.

¹ **Executive Branch departments:** Department of Assessments, Department of Adult and Juvenile Detention, Department of Executive Services, Department of Community and Human Services, Department of Human Resources, Department of Judicial Administration, Department of Local Services, Department of Metro Transit, Department of Natural Resources and Park, Department of Public Defense, Department of Public Health, Executive Department, King County Elections, King County Information Technology, King County Sheriff's Office.

Other branches of County government: District Court, King County Council, Prosecuting Attorney's Office, Superior Court.

Accommodation

If an employee who is required to wear a mask, has a medical condition that impacts the employee's ability to wear a mask, they should contact their HR Manager. The county may not be able to reasonably accommodate a disabled employee's request that they be exempted from the requirement to wear a mask, especially if the employee works in an environment where not wearing a mask creates a risk of exposing others.

VACCINATIONS

Effective February 6, 2023, most Executive Branch employees are no longer required to be vaccinated. Employees working in non-county facilities where outside employers require vaccination will still be required to be vaccinated. These employees will be notified by their supervisor about their ongoing vaccination requirements.

WHICH EMPLOYEES MUST BE OUT OF THE WORKPLACE

1. **Employees who have symptoms**, should be out of the workplace for at least 5 days. The first day with symptoms is day 0. Employees can return to the workplace 6 days after their symptoms have begun if their symptoms are improving and they are fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication. It is recommended that the employee get tested as soon as possible. The employee may telecommute, if feasible, or may use accrued leaves during the absence. In some instances, departments may have varying rules provided that they have received approvals from the appropriate personnel and public health authorities.
2. **Employees who test positive for COVID and are asymptomatic**, these employees must be out of the workplace for at least 5 days from the day they are tested. The day of the test is considered day 0. If they remain asymptomatic, they can return to the workplace on day 6. The employee may telecommute, if feasible, or may use accrued leaves during the absence.
3. **Employees who test positive for COVID and have or develop symptoms**, must be out of the workplace for at least 5 days from the start of their symptoms (not from the day they test positive). The first day with symptoms is day 0. Employees can return 6 days after their symptoms have begun if their symptoms are improving and they are fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication. The employee may telecommute, if feasible, or may use accrued leaves during the absence.
4. **Employees who come into close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19** do not need to be out of the office but should monitor for symptoms.

LEAVES AVAILABLE FOR COVID-19-RELATED ABSENCES

Employees can use their accrued leaves (sick, vacation, executive leave, comp. time, and benefit time off (BTO)) for COVID-19-related absences, these include:

- The employee's own health condition;
- The health condition of a family or household member;
- A school or childcare closure due to COVID-19;
- Employees who are exhibiting symptoms and are sent home; and
- For COVID-19 testing.

Leave Without Pay

Employees who have been approved for leave may choose to go into a leave without pay status before using all accrued paid leaves for any COVID-19-related absence. Note, that a choice to go into a leave without pay status may impact the employee's benefits, e.g., retirement credits, healthcare benefits, leave accruals, etc. Employees should talk to their department HR Manager for more information.

MEDICAL VERIFICATION

Doctor's notes for COVID-19 related absences or other medical conditions are at the discretion of the HR Manager.