

# CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

## Mayor's Office



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### INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

**TO:** All Employees  
**FROM:** James R. Engler  
**DATE:** April 3, 2020  
**SUBJECT:** 4<sup>th</sup> Policy Statement re: Covid-19

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We remain committed to revising this policy statement during the COVID-19 pandemic to account for evolving public health guidelines, recently-passed laws and statutes, and the City's changing operational needs. Accordingly, we are modifying our policy statement as follows:

The City of Philadelphia will continue to limit onsite operations until at least April 30<sup>th</sup>. Non-public safety offices, excluding DHS walk-in service at One Parkway (ex: MSB, One Parkway, City Hall, Mini City Halls) will continue to be closed to the public.

Starting March 30, 2020 and continuing through at least April 30<sup>th</sup>, City operations may not be limited to essential services only and may be expanded to include work in support other core City services and programs. Appointing Authorities may determine which core City services and programs must continue during this time and which personnel will be required to support those functions.

#### **Continuing City Operations During the City's Closure**

*Onsite Work* – Appointing Authorities must limit onsite staff to those whose presence is required to complete necessary tasks in support of core City services or programs. Onsite staff should be rotated whenever possible to ensure that no City employee works onsite longer than necessary to support ongoing City operations. Whenever possible, Appointing Authorities should delay ancillary City operations requiring significant onsite work for the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic.

A limited number of childcare sites have agreed to remain open to serve children of the City's staff who are actively working full-time and on-site. For additional details regarding availability, hours of operation, and daily rates of charge, please contact the Philadelphia Early Learning Resource Center at 215-382-4762 and ask to speak with the emergency services coordinator.

*Offsite Work and Work-from-Home* – Additionally, starting March 30, 2020, Appointing Authorities may grant permission for all City employees, who are able to do so, to work from home whenever possible in order to minimize onsite staff and to continue core department operations. Functionally, Appointing Authorities should identify which tasks/functions of their respective departments can be performed from home, and which personnel will be tasked with completing the identified tasks/functions. Please note that the tasks/functions need not be essential or necessary; Appointing Authorities may require employees perform any and all types of work from home. City employees working from home should follow, to the extent possible, the guidelines set forth in *Enterprise Policy: Temporary Expansion of Virtual Work Policy in Response to COVID-19 Outbreak*. Once the City resumes normalized onsite operations, employees will be able to continue to request to work from home to care for dependent children due to

COVID-19- related school or day care closures. All such requests will need to be reviewed and approved by the Appointing Authority.

### **Public Health Guidelines**

*Self-Quarantine* – We continue to emphasize the need to self-quarantine as the primary method of reducing exposure risk. Healthcare workers should follow this [PDPH Healthcare Worker guidance](#). Additionally, any employee who is required to wear Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) as part of their standard operating protocols (ex: Police or Fire Department) should follow the guidelines established by their department as it relates to self-quarantine and isolation.

For all other employees, the following protocols apply.

Employees who meet any of the following criteria must notify their Appointing Authority or designee immediately and will be required to self-quarantine for fourteen days.

- Employees who have symptoms of COVID-19 (fever, dry cough, shortness of breath) who are being evaluated as a person under investigation for COVID-19;
- Employees who are required to comply with a federal, state, or local quarantine or isolation order related to COVID-19;
- Employees who have been advised by a health care provider to self-quarantine due to concerns related to COVID-19;
- Employees who have traveled or live in the same household as someone who has travelled within the past two weeks to a Level 3 country as defined by the CDC;
- Employees who have traveled to New York City or the surrounding counties (Nassau, Westchester or Suffolk counties in NY or Bergen County in NJ) within the last 14 days should notify your supervisor and self-quarantine and monitor for symptoms for 14 days from the date the employee returned from that travel; or,
- Employees who have come into close contact<sup>1</sup> with an individual who has been diagnosed with COVID-19.

Employees who have received a diagnosis of COVID-19 should follow the direction of their health care provider and directions of the Department of Public Health. This may require self-isolation for longer than the required 14 days and/or confirmatory negative tests before an employee will be cleared to return to work.

Where possible, employees on self-quarantine who are well enough to work may work from home for all or some of this time in accordance with the *Enterprise Policy: Temporary Expansion of Virtual Work Policy in Response to COVID-19 Outbreak*.

*At-Risk Employees* – Employees with a medically-documented greater risk of harm from the virus, such as those with compromised immune systems, should inform their Appointing Authority. Where appropriate, the Appointing Authority should take this into consideration when assigning onsite tasks.

<sup>1</sup> The Centers for Disease Control consider “close contact” a being within approximately six feet of a COVID-19 case for more than ten minutes or coming into direct contact with infectious substances (e.g., being coughed on.)

Appointing Authorities should engage in the interactive process to determine what accommodation may be made for employees faced with this situation.

*Meetings* – All meetings of more than 10 people should be held virtually or postponed. If onsite meetings are to be held, physical distancing must be enforced (i.e., sitting at least 6 ft apart)

*Official Travel* – All official, non-essential international and domestic travel within the next 60 days on behalf of city government is now suspended.

## **Leave Usage**

*COVID Excused Time vs. Leave* – Starting March 30, 2020, employees who are required to work, either onsite or offsite, and, do not complete their regularly scheduled shift as assigned because they chose not to or for personal reasons, must use approved leave such as vacation, compensatory time or sick leave. If the leave is not approved, the employee will be marked AWOL. Employees will still be granted COVID Excused Time for any time in which they are unable to complete job duties due to the lack of work.

Employees who self-quarantine at the direction of a departmental safety officer or human resources professional due to close contact with an individual potentially infected with COVID-19 while at work will be granted COVID Excused Time while self-quarantining.

*Dependent Care Leave Usage* – Employees may use accumulated leave, including sick time, to care for a dependent who is in self-quarantine or in the case of COVID-19 related school or daycare closure for their children. Accumulated leave may be used intermittently. If the employees are able and authorized to work from home, they may use work from home time during this time period. Employees for whom the City has opted-out of providing FMLA+ (see below) are limited to using accrued leave for dependent care pursuant to existing leave usage policies and collective bargaining agreements.

*Emergency Paid Sick Leave and FMLA+* – Beginning April 1, 2020, employees may be eligible for up to ten days' Emergency Paid Sick Leave (EPSL) and certain employees may also be eligible for up to 12 weeks' FMLA+ pursuant to the Families First Coronavirus Response Act. Please see the guidance attached to this policy for more details.

Please note that because the EPSL provides ten days' leave, the City will no longer be advancing sick leave for COVID-19 related conditions after April 1, 2020.

*Physician's Notes* – Though the City is not requiring notes for sick leave used during a 14-day quarantine period, or for return to work after a 14-day quarantine period, we recommend that you contact your health care provider either electronically or by phone to discuss your situation. Employees must complete the full quarantine period and may not return to work prior to the end of the quarantine period.

## **Childcare**

*School and Daycare Closures* – At present, employees are not permitted to bring children to City facilities. Once normal City onsite operations resume, employees unable to make alternate childcare arrangements may bring their children to work with their Appointing Authority's written approval. All such requests must be assessed by the Appointing authority to assure the environment provides the flexibility and safety to grant the requests and will not disrupt the workplace. Sick children with infectious illnesses, such as chickenpox, head lice, or conjunctivitis, shall not be brought into the workplace at any time. Appointing Authorities may determine that some units, programs, or worksites are unable to accommodate children.

## **Emergency Updates**

*Emergency Messaging* – We strongly encourage employees to opt-in to receiving emergency messages regarding any ongoing City issues by providing cell phone numbers if they want text message updates. Updates will also be provided by email, and, in some cases, by phone. We also recommend that all employees stay up to date on the status of COVID-19 both internally and in the City by visiting the City’s site dedicated to the COVID-19 outbreak: [phila.gov/COVID-19](http://phila.gov/COVID-19) and opting into text messages by texting COVIDPHL to 888-777.