



DEPARTMENT OF CENTRAL & SHARED SERVICES
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Christina Coranoto- Conklin
HR, Director

County of Sussex

To: Sussex County Employees
From: Gregory Poff, County Administrator
Christina Conklin, HR Director, Office of Employee Services
Re: Telecommuting and Leave Guidance During Pandemic – Revised
Date: August 5, 2020

This guidance shall apply to all County employees and supersedes the April 6th, 2020 guidance that was previously issued to address leave for COVID-19 related issues, including school closures, working remotely and essential/non-essential services.

Through Executive Order 107, Governor Murphy established a statewide policy that residents were to maintain social distancing which included, where practical, remaining in one's residence. The Executive Order further provided that if individuals could work remotely, it was the state policy to have work performed from an individual's residence or other remote location where appropriate social distancing could be maintained. The State Executive Order shut down all non-essential businesses, but it excepted state, county and local governments which needed to continue to provide operations. The state policy and CSC guidance was also clear that continued operations should be maintained in a safe fashion, remotely, to the extent practical, otherwise, safely, in person.

On June 9, Governor Murphy lifted the Stay at Home Order and the County, therefore, now issues this guidance regarding employees' work obligations and duties moving forward. Please review the policy carefully as most, if not all, previous mandates have been modified.

As will continue to be the general policy, County employees will be required to engage in their regular work activities in order to be in a paid status. Those employees who cannot or do not work may be permitted to use their paid time off to remain in a paid status.

Work From Remote Location

Supervisors will continue to make the determination as to which duties/services are amenable to being performed from remote locations through use of VMware, email and other electronic services, and based upon their department's specific needs as the County re-opens. Therefore, those employees who can perform their job functions effectively and efficiently from a remote location may continue to do so until further notice and/or unless they are advised by their supervisor that department operations and services require them to be on site, In the latter instance, social distancing practices will be observed including increasing physical space between employees at the worksite by modifying the workspace, increasing physical space between employees and customers, and delivering services remotely (e.g., phone, video, or web), where feasible.

Work Required On Site:

To the extent there are functions and job duties that cannot be performed from a remote location, such duties shall be identified with Department and Division Heads to determine an appropriate manner in which those services can be performed, and in which to return employees safely to work. For example, providing appropriate space for seating within a department, provision of PPE and staggered shifts are all ways in which employees can return to work and comply with all safety protocol.

To the extent employees do continue to work from home, the County has developed a work from home guidance that should be reviewed by employees, and approved work from home by Supervisors, Division and Department Heads. Refer to Telework Guidance attached. Supervisors shall be responsible for entering into telework agreements with their employees and for monitoring the compliance and duration of telework arrangements.

Employees Out For Child Care

Executive Order No. 110 was rescinded effective June 15, 2020, thus allowing child care centers and other child care facilities to resume operations for all clients. In addition, youth summer camps were given permission to re-open on or after Monday, July 6, 2020.

In light of the above, effective July 6th, 2020 employees were and are expected to return to their regularly scheduled work day unless other arrangements have been made because the employee is unable to return to work due to child care needs. Despite the foregoing, any employee who performs work that can be done from a remote location may continue to do so with approval from their direct supervision and Division / Department Head, If the employee is unable to complete their work from a remote location they should discuss their individual circumstances with their direct supervision and Division/ Department Head. If an employee who is out due to childcare who can perform their work remotely but refuses to work, then the employee will not be paid unless they choose to use their own benefit leave time.

As of July 6th, 2020 the applicable Federal Laws such as Expanded Emergency Family Medical Leave and Emergency Sick Leave will no longer be applicable for child care purposes. The particular situation of child care will be revisited in the fall upon a better understanding of the opening of schools.

Illness Directly Affecting Employees

In an effort to keep everyone as safe as possible, employees who have been exposed to or diagnosed with the COVID-19 virus will not be permitted to enter the workplace (all County locations) until they are medically cleared (those with COVID-19) or until the expiration of the recommended 14-day period of quarantine from the point of last exposure (only for those exposed to COVID-19).

If an employee is: 1) medically diagnosed with COVID-19, or 2) Directed by a medical professional or government agency to self-isolate or quarantine due to suspicion of exposure to or diagnosis with COVID- 19, and /or 3) Undergoing a period of self-quarantine or isolation pursuant to public health assessment recommendations, the employee will not be required to utilize accumulated leave time for their absence if they provide the documentation verifying the COVID-19 diagnosis, suspicion or recommendation to self- isolate or quarantine as soon as reasonably practical. Please

notify the County immediately if you fall into any of the mentioned categories so that the County can take immediate steps to assess the risk of spread.

Any documentation the employee may have related to COVID-19 should be provided to the Office of Employee Services only to ensure confidentiality. If an employee does not provide the required documentation to Employee Services, then the employee will be required to utilize their own benefit leave time to cover the period of absence.

Illness Affecting the Family of an Employee

If the employee is absent due to the employees need to care for an immediate family member as defined by County policy, who: 1) has been diagnosed with COVID-19; 2) was directed by a medical professional or government agency to self-isolate or quarantine due to the suspicion of exposure to or diagnosis with COVID-19; and/or 3) Is undergoing a period of self-quarantine or isolation pursuant to public health assessment recommendations, the employee will not be required to utilize accumulated leave time for their absence if they provide the documentation verifying the COVID-19 diagnosis, suspicion or recommendation to self-isolate or quarantine as soon as reasonably practical.

Any documentation the employee may have related to COVID-19 should be provided to the Office of Employee Services only to ensure confidentiality. If an employee does not provide the required documentation to Employee Services, then the employee will be required to utilize their own benefit leave time to cover the period of absence.

Pre-Existing Condition Deemed Dangerous Due to COVID-19

As the state of NJ continues to move through the different phases of safely re-opening through the COVID-19 pandemic, the County continues to adapt in its operations accordingly. If an employee is approved for a leave of absence due to a pre-existing as per County guidance, which was issued on April 6th 2020, a continued approved leave will need to be re-visited by the employee's physician as the County seeks to return staff to work. Upon receiving medical documentation, the County will review and decide with the employee whether a reasonable accommodation can be made. However, as is the case in all circumstances, if an employee can perform their work remotely, they should do so with the approval of their direct supervision or Department Head.

For those employees with a pre-existing condition who cannot perform their job remotely, you must return to your on-site role. Please be assured that the County is making every effort to ensure a safe working environment. The County has already implemented numerous safety precautions for all of its employees and will work with those employees at [higher risk](#) for severe illness through supportive policies & practices such as staggered shifts, reduced access to customers and other staff and the use of PPE upon their return.