

# Frequently Asked Questions about COVID-19 for Mecklenburg County Employees

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## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT COVID-19

### Where do I go for information about COVID-19?

For information related to Mecklenburg County and COVID-19, employees should visit Mecklenburg County's website for more information (<https://www.mecknc.gov/news/Pages/Update-on-Novel-Coronavirus.aspx>). Employees can also visit Meckweb and review EmployeeNewsNow for additional updates.

Employees may also call the Public Health COVID-19 information line at 980-314-9400.

### What can employees do to help prevent the spread of COVID-19?

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds with anti-microbial soap and water or alcohol-based sanitizing gel or wipes
  - Hand sanitizers (and alternative if one cannot wash hands):
    - At least 60% alcohol
    - Hands not visibly soiled
    - Not a substitute for good hand washing
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth
- Promote cough etiquette – cover mouth when coughing /sneezing, dispose of tissue, wash hands
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces
- Avoid close contact with contagious or ill persons
- Do not come to work if you are sick
- Implement social distancing strategies, such as:
  - Maintaining at least 3 feet of separation between individuals
  - Modify frequency and type of face-to-face encounters
    - No handshaking
    - Teleconferencing instead of meeting live
    - Stagger breaks

### Should I wear a mask or other protective equipment?

We suggest following the CDC's recommendations for using a facemask.

- The CDC does not recommend that people who are well wear a facemask to protect themselves from respiratory diseases including COVID-19
- Facemasks should be used by people who show symptoms of COVID-19 to help prevent the spread of the disease to others.

The County will provide protective equipment to appropriate employees if necessary.

### **What if I voluntarily don't want to come into the office to avoid potential exposure to COVID-19?**

Employees must follow the County's standard leave policies. Employees should reference the Human Resources Policy Manual or Contact the Employee Services Center at 704-432-6947 to request more information.

### **Can I work from home to avoid potential exposure to COVID-19?**

Any employees requesting to work from home will be required to gain supervisor approval and complete the Teleworker's Agreement.

In the event that the County requires an employee to telework due to COVID-19, the limit of working from a remote location for a maximum of three days per week will not apply. The employee will be permitted to work from a remote location as specified by your supervisor. All other aspects of the Teleworking policy will apply, including:

- You must have a Teleworker Agreement in place.
- Employee telecommutes from a location in North Carolina.
- Teleworking is not a substitute for dependent care. Teleworkers will not act as the primary caregiver for dependents during scheduled work hours. Employees working at home will manage dependent care and other personal responsibilities in a manner that allows them to successfully meet job responsibilities.

### **Can I still book work-related air travel?**

**Effective immediately, all non-essential business air travel will be suspended until further notice.**

- Essential business air travel should be limited to those situations where business cannot reasonably be conducted without face-to-face interaction or visits to specific locations.
- All essential business air travel requests must be approved by the Director of the relevant Department, the associated Assistant County Manager and County Manager until further notice.
- Any business air travel that is already booked as of March 9 may proceed unless the travel is to a location where there is sustained community transmission of COVID-19. A list of locations that have sustained community transmission will be posted online at <https://www.mecknc.gov/news/Pages/Update-on-Novel-Coronavirus.aspx>. However, we understand that there are various reasons as to why an employee might be reluctant to travel at this time. In the case that travel has already been booked and the employee does not want to travel by air, please work with your department leadership to make alternate arrangements where feasible.

- For cancellations, the employee is responsible for contacting any vendors to request a refund. Final travel reimbursement must include refund documentation.
- Unapproved business travel booked via AAA, on a County travel p-card or personal credit card, will not be reimbursed.

## **I have a personal vacation already planned to an area potentially at risk. Should I still travel?**

- To reduce the overall risk of the spread of infection, employees are strongly encouraged not to engage in personal travel to a location where there is sustained community transmission. A list of locations that have sustained community transmission will be posted online at <https://www.mecknc.gov/news/Pages/Update-on-Novel-Coronavirus.aspx>.
- If an employee has traveled to a country that the Center for Disease Control (CDC) has issued a Level 3 Travel Health Notice, which may be found here <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html>, then the employee should not physically return to the workplace for at least 14 days following return to the County per CDC guidance. If the employee who traveled to a Level 3 country begins to experience symptoms of COVID-19—fever, cough, and shortness of breath—he or she should immediately contact a medical provider or Public Health; and must be cleared to return to work by his or her medical provider or Public Health.
  - While the employee is quarantined from work, the employee will have the option to work remotely. If the employee is unable to telework during this period, the employee must follow the County’s leave policies.
- If an employee has hosted an individual in their home, or has a family member in their home, who has traveled to a country that the CDC has issued a Level 3 Travel Health Notice, then the employee must not physically come to the workplace for at least 14 days and follow the same requirements as an employee who traveled to a Level 3 country.
- The County will follow the CDC’s Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers to Plan and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019 and will update these requirements as necessary.

## **What if one of my coworkers traveled to an area with known cases of COVID-19?**

- If an employee has traveled to a country that the Center for Disease Control (CDC) has issued a Level 3 Travel Health Notice, which may be found here <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html>, then the employee should not physically return to the workplace for at least 14 days following return to the County per CDC guidance. If the employee who traveled to a Level 3 country begins to experience symptoms of COVID-19—fever, cough, and shortness of breath—he or she should immediately contact a medical provider or Public Health; and must be cleared to return to work by his or her medical provider or Public Health.

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- The County will follow the CDC's Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers to Plan and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019 and will update these requirements as necessary.

### **I'm a supervisor and I want to send a potentially sick employee home. Can I do so?**

Please call your Human Resources Business Partner prior to taking any action. Your HRBP will partner with Public Health before providing guidance.

### **What resources are available to me if I feel sick?**

#### Blue Cross and Blue Shield (BCBS)

BCBS is implementing the following measures beginning March 6:

- **Expanding virtual access to doctors**
  - BCBS will expand and promote access to virtual visits with primary care providers, where available. This will further encourage the use of virtual visits, and allow doctors to monitor members at home, minimizing the spread of infection, and easing the burden on emergency rooms.
- **Expediting approvals for acute care**
  - BCBS will work to expedite approvals in order to support members needing care related to COVID-19; specifically relating to hospitalization, post-acute care and medical equipment needed in the home.

These measures will remain in effect for a 30-day period, and then be re-evaluated.

#### CVS Caremark

- **Virtual Visits**
  - CVS MinuteClinics offer patients the opportunity to request a Video Visit. Virtual care options such as video visits can be an effective way to evaluate and treat viruses from the comfort of one's home, while minimizing exposure to other potentially contagious viruses. For more information about CVS MinuteClinics, please visit <https://www.cvs.com/minuteclinic/virtual-care/video-visit>.
- **Increasing access to medication**

- CVS has activated a standard process to enable pharmacists to fill an emergency script for an impacted member. All controlled substances are automatically excluded from the standard emergency refill process.

### *OurHealth MyClinics*

If you believe you are experiencing symptoms related to Coronavirus, please call OurHealth at 866-434-3255 Option 2 before proceeding directly to the clinic so they can triage your symptoms over the phone and not put clinic staff and other patients at unnecessary risk. You will be asked two screening questions based on current CDC guidance. If the answer to both questions is “yes,” and the OurHealth representative determines that the Coronavirus may be present, they will coordinate with the local health department and direct you to the best point of care.

### **How can I keep my workspace clean?**

- In partnership with our maintenance providers, the County will begin implementing additional measures to help ensure a clean workplace through:
  - Implementing enhanced cleaning at County facilities to include disinfecting touch points along common routes of travel through the facilities,
  - Checking building restrooms multiple times, a day to ensure adequate supplies of soap and paper products, and
  - Installation of wall-mounted hand sanitizers in many common areas and office suites.
- County Procurement is also working to acquire additional supplies for Departments, such as wipes and tissues, as supplies become available. Due to this effort, staff are directed not to separately purchase cleaning supplies through their offices.

### **What if I work in a shared workspace (cubical or office)?**

- Prior to entering your workspace, wash your hands for at least 20 seconds.

### **What if I have to use a shared vehicle for work?**

- Prior to entering the vehicle, wash your hands for at least 20 seconds.
- When you exit the vehicle, wash your hands for at least 20 seconds.

### **Can I use Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) leave if I or an immediate family member contracts COVID-19?**

The County will follow its standard procedures for FMLA leave; please review the Family-Medical Leave Act policy in the Mecklenburg County Human Resources Policy & Procedures. Contact the Employee Services Center at 704-432-6947 to request more information.

### **If I go on leave due to COVID-19, am I eligible for disability benefits?**

Yes, if your leave qualifies under the disability plan. Contact the Employee Services Center at 704-432-6947 to request more information.