



CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

DHR-STW-Q #: To be assigned.	Authority: State of Delaware State of Emergency Declaration Order – March 12, 2020, and all Modifications
Effective Date: July 1, 2022	Supersedes: Revised Coronavirus (COVID-19) Frequently Asked Questions (Revisions Effective 1/3/2022)

The content in these Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) applies to State of Delaware (State) Executive Branch cabinet agency employees. Other employers of State personnel may choose to adopt these provisions as well. Non-cabinet agency personnel should contact their supervisors to determine whether their employer has adopted these provisions. Questions or concerns should be directed to your supervisor or your Human Resources Representative.

This guidance is provided given circumstances relating to the coronavirus (COVID-19) and is not applicable to any past events and does not create an expectation that these guidelines will continue beyond the COVID-19 situation. **The provision of State Paid Emergency Leave and FFCRA leaves, FPSL and FPEL, are hereby rescinded and no longer available for use effective July 1, 2022.**

1. What is coronavirus (COVID-19)?

A novel coronavirus is a new coronavirus that has not been previously identified. The virus causing coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is not the same as the coronaviruses that commonly circulate among humans and cause mild illnesses, like the common cold.

2. I am worried about being exposed to COVID-19 at work. How can I reduce my risk?

Employees are always encouraged to use general precautions (at work, in public, or at home).

Precautions include:

- Wash your hands with warm soapy water for at least 20 seconds each time.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are ill.
- Continue to cover your mouth and nose with a face cover as required and/or recommended.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze.
- Refrain from reusing tissues after coughing, sneezing, or blowing your nose.
- Clean and disinfect surfaces that are frequently touched (cell phones, desk phones, keyboards, remote controls, countertops, refrigerators, and door handles, etc.).
- Stay home from work if you are sick.
- Monitor your health daily.
- Minimize your direct contact with others who may be unwell or who are vulnerable to illness.
- Consider getting your flu vaccination if you have not already done so.
- Consider getting the COVID-19 vaccinations.
- Maintain social distancing if around others.

3. What should I do if I think I am sick, but don't know if I have been exposed to COVID-19?

If you have symptoms of fever and cough or shortness of breath and have not had any known exposure to or tested positive for COVID-19, you should contact your health care provider for further guidance.

4. What should I do if I have been exposed to COVID-19 but do not have symptoms associated with the virus?

The [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) has recently updated the quarantine recommendations for the public. Please [visit the CDC's guidance](#) and [Frequently Asked Questions](#). If you have reason to believe that you have been exposed to the virus, you should contact your health care provider. If you are told by a health care provider¹ or public health official you should be under quarantine due to potential exposure, you should not report to work and may be eligible for leave per the Merit Rules. You must adhere to your agency's attendance procedures should you need to take leave. COVID-19 documentation of absence may be required per the Merit Rules and agency policy.

5. What should I do if I have been exposed to COVID-19 and believe I am developing symptoms associated with the virus?

The [CDC](#) has recently updated the isolation recommendations for the public. Please [visit the CDC's guidance](#) and [Frequently Asked Questions](#). If you think you are developing symptoms associated with COVID-19 and have reason to believe you have been exposed to the virus, you should contact your health care provider. If you are told by a health care provider or public health official that you are to be under isolation due to having COVID-19, you should not report to work and may be eligible for leave per the Merit Rules. You must adhere to your agency's attendance procedures should you need to take leave. COVID-19 documentation of absence may be required per the Merit Rules and agency policy.

6. Where do I seek care?

Employees, pensioners, and their covered spouses and dependent children who are covered under a State of Delaware Health Plan (either Highmark Delaware or Aetna) should first contact their primary health care provider to report symptoms and seek medical guidance. If you do not have a primary health care provider or cannot reach your provider, you may seek medical guidance through telemedicine services. Telemedicine is a service that allows you to have an online video consultation with a doctor to receive a diagnosis and get recommended treatment or referrals wherever you are, by using your computer, tablet, or smartphone. The doctor can even prescribe medications when appropriate.

Amwell and/or Doctor on Demand are the telemedicine vendors for Highmark Delaware members, and Teladoc is the telemedicine vendor for Aetna members. There is currently no cost to members for using these services.

¹ A health care provider must meet the definition of this term under the Family and Medical Leave Act regulations (https://webapps.dol.gov/elaws/whd/fmla/3.aspx?Glossary_Word=PROVIDER#:~:text=The%20Act%20defines%20%2020%E2%80%9Chealth.)).

Highmark Delaware members wanting to learn more about telemedicine should visit: dhr.delaware.gov/benefits/medical/highmark/telemedicine.shtml

Aetna members wanting to learn more about telemedicine should visit: dhr.delaware.gov/benefits/medical/aetna/telemedicine.shtml

7. Will my insurance cover the cost of COVID-19 testing and treatment?

100% coverage for medically necessary COVID-19 testing is available for individuals enrolled in a State of Delaware Group Health Plan through Aetna or Highmark Delaware. Members who are experiencing symptoms and receive one or more COVID-19 tests or have a healthcare provider visit (in or out of network), urgent care visit, or emergency room visit that results in an order for or administration of the COVID-19 test due to a medical necessity will have a zero-dollar copay, coinsurance, and deductible. State of Delaware Group Health Plan benefits and COVID-19 information, resources, and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) are being updated regularly on the Statewide Benefits Office [website](#). Please visit this site regularly for the latest information. If you have benefit-related questions that are not answered on our website, please submit your questions to benefits@delaware.gov.

8. I am concerned about exposure from a coworker who seems sick. Can I insist that the coworker be sent home?

If you have a concern about an employee who appears sick, speak to your supervisor. If agency management, in consultation with their human resources office, believes that an employee has symptoms associated with COVID-19, the employee may be sent home or required to not report to on-site work.

9. Will I be notified if someone I work with is confirmed to have COVID-19?

Employees who have been exposed to an individual diagnosed with COVID-19 may be notified that a case has been confirmed, but the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) protects the identity and medical information of people with communicable diseases. Please refer to DPH for [current guidance](#) on contact tracing.

10. Should I cancel a planned business trip?

All essential and nonessential out-of-state business travel restrictions have been lifted and may be considered by agencies. The DPH recommends following the CDC travel advisories and travel guidance.

11. What additional precautions can a state agency take for employees dealing with the public?

Agencies may consider the following precautions:

- Agencies may continue to restrict how closely the public may come to employees;
- Encourage employees to wash hands often and use alcohol-based hand sanitizer frequently;
- Maintain social distancing, when possible;
- Maintain separate pens and other equipment for the public, when feasible.

12. How will I be paid if I am working from home or from an alternate location?

As state offices are open and operational, if an employee is on approved remote work and/or while state offices transition to returning to the workplace, they will be paid in their regular manner. This includes casual/seasonal employees, who will be paid for hours worked.

13. Who will be asked to or approved to telecommute?

At the discretion of agency management, an employee may be asked to or offered the opportunity to telecommute. This will depend on several factors including, but not limited to: job functions, essential status, operational requirements of the agency, and ability to access required technology in accordance with the State's [Alternative Work Arrangement Policy and Procedures](#).

14. What if I need to miss work to care for a family member who is ill as a result of COVID-19?

Eligible state employees may use available sick leave per the Merit Rules to care for their family member(s) as a result of COVID-19. You must adhere to your agency's attendance procedures should you need to take leave. COVID-19 documentation of absence may be required per the Merit Rules and agency policy. If the results of testing for the family member are confirmed, you should remain at home under the guidance provided in FAQs #4 and #5. For these purposes, a family member is defined by Merit Rule 5.3.6.2.

During the monitoring, mitigation, or emergency management of the coronavirus, agencies are encouraged, whenever operationally feasible, to allow casual/seasonal employees to rearrange their work hours within the pay period so that they may continue to work or telework, and their paycheck is minimally impacted.

15. What if I need to miss work as a result of a school, dependent care, or elder care facility closure² due to a COVID-19 outbreak?

Eligible state employees may use leave per the Merit Rules due to the COVID-19 closure of a school or childcare facility to care for their child/ren under the age of 18. The leave may also apply for adult child/ren who is/are incapable of self-care and whose facility closed due to COVID-19. You must adhere to your agency's attendance procedures should you need to take leave. COVID-19 documentation of absence may be required per the Merit Rules and agency policy.

Agencies are encouraged, whenever operationally feasible, to allow casual/seasonal employees to rearrange their work hours within the pay period so that their paycheck is minimally impacted.

16. What options are available for employees who need to be absent from work for any other reason as it relates to COVID-19?

Given that there is some uncertainty around how long this situation will continue, and to assure

² <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/pandemic/ffcra-questions>

that employees are taking care of themselves and their families, we are making attempts to be flexible around leave and telecommuting policies; however, we still need to be able to deliver state services. As such, you may be asked to telecommute (work from home) if your job and condition allow during this period.

State employees who have been advised by a medical provider to self-quarantine, are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms and seeking a medical diagnosis, are subject to a federal, state, or local quarantine or isolation order related to COVID-19, have been exposed to COVID-19 and are seeking or awaiting the results of a test for COVID-19 or the employer has requested such test or diagnosis, are obtaining the COVID-19 vaccination, or are recovering from an injury, disability, illness or condition related to the COVID-19 vaccination may be eligible to use leave as provided for in Merit Rule 5.

You must adhere to your agency's attendance procedures should you need to take leave. COVID-19 documentation of absence may be required per the Merit Rules and agency policy.

17. What options are available for casual/seasonal employees who may need to be absent from work due to COVID-19?

Agencies are encouraged, whenever operationally feasible, to allow casual/seasonal employees to rearrange their work hours within the pay period so that their paycheck is minimally impacted.

18. Am I entitled to use Family and Medical Leave (FMLA) for COVID-19?

You may be entitled to use FMLA for absence related to COVID-19 if you have a qualifying event, as defined by the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA). Your Human Resources Representative can assist you with questions related to FMLA eligibility. Additional information can be found here: dhr.delaware.gov/policies/documents/fmla-policy.pdf.

19. Since the use of Emergency Family and Medical Leave (FMLA) Expansion Act (FPEL) is over, how does this impact my Family and Medical Leave?

Any time used under FPEL was deducted from your total FMLA leave entitlement of 12 weeks in a 12-month period. Please refer to your timekeeper system or supervisor for questions about your available leave balance.

20. My spouse and I are both state employees. Can we be absent from work or telecommuting at the same time pursuant to the provisions in these FAQs?

If both spouses are eligible to be absent under the provisions discussed in these FAQs, they may be asked to take the time separately to assure continuity of operations in one or both workplaces. Eligible employees who qualify for telecommuting at the same time may do so as long as it is operationally feasible to the agency(ies) involved.

21. What should I do if I have a delayed return from personal travel?

If you have a delayed return from personal travel as a result of any state's or country's monitoring or management of the coronavirus or transportation disruptions associated with such monitoring or management, you should contact your supervisor. The employee must use their own leave

per the Merit Rules, if applicable.

22. Should I cancel personal travel plans?

Individuals must make their own decisions regarding their personal travel. DPH recommends following the CDC travel advisories and travel guidance.

23. What leave can I take if I am now eligible to take the COVID-19 vaccination?

An eligible state employee may use available leave as provided for in Merit Rule 5.

24. What leave am I eligible for if I suffer from an illness after I receive the COVID-19 vaccination?

An eligible state employee may use available leave as provided for in Merit Rule 5.

25. Where will notifications of State announcements for State employees be posted?

Notifications will be posted on the Department of Human Resources' website:
<https://dhr.delaware.gov>

For any other personnel-related questions not covered in these Frequently Asked Questions, please contact your Human Resources Representative.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

Division of Public Health Website: de.gov/coronavirus

Division of Public Health Email for inquiries and questions: dphcall@delaware.gov

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/