



CITY EMPLOYEE UPDATES

COVID HR Policies and info 03242020

The COVID-19 situation is changing rapidly. Please note that information may change on a regular basis. Employees are encouraged to check the benefit hub on a regular basis for the most up-to-date information and if you have any questions, to visit with your Department Director.

Employee Health: The health and safety of all our employees is paramount as you interact with each other, the public, and in your private life. With that in mind, the following policies regarding staying home and sending employees home have been put in place.

Based on guidance from the Minnesota Department of Health, all City employees are being asked to self-screen for illness. For purposes of this situation, a “fever” is defined as any temperature of 100.4° or more.

When you will be sent home or must stay home:

- If you have symptoms of a respiratory disease (including fever, coughing, muscle aches, sore throat, and/or headache).

When can I come back?

- Employees who have symptoms of acute respiratory illness are recommended to stay home and not come to work until they are free of fever (100.4° F [38.0° C] or greater using an oral thermometer), signs of a fever, and any other symptoms for at least 72 hours, without the use of fever-reducing or other symptom-altering medicines (e.g., cough suppressants).

Take Care of Your Health and the Health of Others - All employees are asked to wash their hands frequently including:

- After using the restroom
- Before eating
- After coughing or blowing your nose
- After interaction with the public

We also encourage everyone to practice social distancing of 6’, stay home when sick, and use Doctor on Demand if you are feeling ill.

New Laws Related to COVID-19:

Families First Coronavirus Response Act, Emergency Paid Sick Leave. The new law requires emergency Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) leave be provided to qualifying employees and requires that emergency paid sick leave be offered to an employee who is unable to work due to specific impacts of COVID-19. The law goes into effect April 2 and will sunset on Dec. 31, as the law is meant to specifically address concerns around COVID-19.

The City's position is that prior to April 2nd, employees have access to their City sick leave for the purposes outlined in this Act.

Emergency Paid Sick Leave Act – Effective April 2, 2020: This provision requires the City to provide employees two weeks of paid sick leave (paid at the full regular rate) for employees who are unable to work or telework because they need to:

- Quarantine; or
- Seek a diagnosis or preventive care for coronavirus.

However, two-thirds of the employee's regular rate must be paid to:

- Care for a family member who has been quarantined or advised by a health care provider to self-quarantine.
- Care for a child whose school has closed or whose child care provider is unavailable due to the coronavirus.
- Or substantially similar conditions

Full-time employees are entitled to two weeks (80 hours) and part-time employees are entitled to the typical number of hours that they work in a two-week period. The amount paid is capped at \$511 per day (\$5,110 in the aggregate) for personal sick leave and \$200 per day (\$2,000 in the aggregate) for leave to care for others. Any unused paid leave granted by the act does not carry over into 2021.

Your timesheet must indicate that your absence is related to COVID-19.

Emergency Family and Medical Leave Expansion Act – Effective April 2nd - This amends the FMLA by granting up to 12 weeks of job-protected leave to employees to care for children because school has been closed or they are without child care, due to a public health emergency. A "public health emergency" is defined to mean "an emergency with respect to COVID-19 declared by a federal, state, or local authority." Employees who have been employed for at least 30 calendar days are eligible. The act provides leave for employees who are unable to work (or telework) because they need to care for a son or daughter under 18 years of age whose:

- School or place of care has been closed, or
- Child care provider is unavailable due to a public health emergency.

The first 10 days of the leave may be unpaid, but the following 10 weeks must be paid at no less than two-thirds the regular rate of pay for the number of hours the employee would otherwise be normally scheduled to work. An employee may elect, or be required by the employer, to substitute any accrued vacation leave, personal leave, or medical or sick leave for the first 10 days of unpaid leave. The pay is capped at \$200 per day (\$10,000 in the aggregate).

There is an exception to the job protection provisions for employers with fewer than 25 employees if the employee's position does not exist after FMLA leave due to an economic downturn or other operating conditions that affect employment caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, but specific conditions must be met.

The City's position is employees who are eligible for 2/3's pay can recoup the other 1/3 by using your City vacation, sick or comp time. Keep in mind this is the employee's choice to do so. Before making the decision, we recommend you visit with Finance to investigate the implications of your decision. Know how much vacation, sick and/or comp time you have.

Your timesheet must indicate your absence is related to COVID-19.

What "Shelter in Place" means to employees: If the Governor issues an order to "Shelter in Place" or to "lock down", plan to come to work, work from home, or continue to do whatever you have been assigned to do by your Supervisor. If you are ill or were home the day of the declaration or for some other reason have been staying home - stay home. We will be in contact with you.

If a Shelter in Place order has been put in place, all employees must wear their City ID's at all times. If you don't have your ID, please notify your Department Director.

If you are working from home, timesheets for each department are available on the "S" drive.

Under certain conditions, City staff may be allowed by the City Administrator to work from home during the COVID-19 emergency. Can you work from home? We will review that on a case by case basis. A request must meet the following criteria:

- Is the work necessary to maintain City operations and functions?
- Is there practical value to the City in allowing the employee to work from home?
- Does the employee have the ability (computer equipment and hi-speed internet) at home to be able to do it? In most instances the City will not provide the electronics and/or hi-speed internet connection necessary to work from home.
- Is the City able to work out the necessary details, including equipment being put in place, to facilitate the remote work through a VPN?
- Has the City Administrator approved the request to work from home?

Working from home may be limited to only certain functions of any employee's job and as such, the hours of work may be limited.

What is an "Essential Employee"?: For us it probably doesn't mean too much and in most of the "Shelter in Place" orders issued by other governors, counties and cities, city employees were exempt from the list of businesses and activities that are required to stay home or close. Right now, for you, as a City employee, the "Essential" classification doesn't mean anything.

Miscellaneous:

- If you have traveled out of state, we ask that you stay home for seven days. After the seven days you may return to work if you are symptom free.
- Remember, if you are home sick or have been diagnosed, you have an obligation to report that to your supervisor.
- If we learn of an employee who has been diagnosed with COVID-19, we will inform staff, although under Federal law, we will not be allowed to share the name of that employee.

For questions related to this information, please contact City Administrator Prafke at 507-934-0663 or extension 721 or toddp@saintpetermn.gov.