

Interim Guidance for State Departments on Coronavirus (COVID-19)

This guidance document, drafted by the California Department of Public Health and the California Department of Human Resources, complies with applicable laws, policies and memoranda of understanding governing state operations.

State Workers

1. Can I require a doctor's note from an employee to make sure they do not have COVID-19?

All requests for doctor's notes must follow state policies, laws and memoranda of understanding (MOU). If not deviating from policy, laws and MOU, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend not requiring a healthcare provider's note for employees who are sick with acute respiratory illness to validate their illness or to return to work, as healthcare provider offices and medical facilities may be extremely busy and not able to provide such documentation timely.

2. Can I ask for specifics on an employee's illness when they call in sick?

You must follow sick leave policies and MOU in requesting information on employee illnesses. You may only request information on prognosis (i.e. duration, anticipated return and any restrictions), not diagnosis.

3. An employee recently returned from an international trip and someone who went on the trip with the employee became ill. What if anything should we do?

Contact the [local public health department](#) of the employee's residence to see if the ill individual is considered high risk, and ask what, if anything, the employer might need to do including employee self-quarantine, alternate work arrangements for employee, such as telework, or other precautionary measures.

4. What should I do if an employee arrives to work and is visibly sick?

Employees should be encouraged to go home and/or seek medical treatment. Employees cannot be forced to go home, so employers should work with the employees on work alternatives.

5. What precautionary measures can a department take?

Departments should ensure business continuity plans are up to date and work with their human resources office to explore flexible work arrangements (i.e. telecommuting, staggered shifts) to increase the physical distance among employees and between employees and others, if state and local health authorities recommend the use of social distancing strategies. Ensure that you have the information technology and infrastructure needed to support employees who may be able to work from home.

Updated March 3, 2020

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State Workers Deployed for COVID-19

1. Various employees have been deployed for COVID-19 response. What actions, if any, should be taken for their return to the office?

Employees need to have their risk assessed depending on whether there was contact with a known case and whether appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) was worn. CDC risk assessment guidelines are located at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/risk-assessment.html> and risk assessment guidelines for healthcare personnel are located at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-risk-assesment-hcp.html>. In addition, OSHA provides standards for protecting workers from COVID-19 located at: <https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/covid-19/>.

State Workers on Quarantine

1. If an employee has been in the office prior to mandatory or self-quarantine, is there any special disinfecting or cleaning that should be completed?

No additional disinfection beyond routine cleaning is recommended at this time.

2. What if an employee is confirmed to have COVID-19?

If an employee is confirmed to have COVID-19, departments should work with local public health departments on appropriate messaging and any investigation to identify contacts in the workplace.

State Workers with Household Members on Quarantine

1. If someone I live with was exposed to the COVID-19, can I come in to work?

CDC does not recommend testing, symptom monitoring or special management for people exposed to asymptomatic people with potential exposures to COVID-19 (such as in a household), i.e., “contacts of contacts;” these people are not considered exposed to COVID-19.

2. If someone I live with has traveled to an impacted COVID-19 country and is on self-quarantine, can I come to work?

CDC does not recommend testing, symptom monitoring or special management for people exposed to asymptomatic people with potential exposures to COVID-19 (such as in a household), i.e., “contacts of contacts;” these people are not considered exposed to COVID-19.

3. If someone I live with tests positive for COVID-19 and is quarantined, can I come in to work?

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Employees exposed to someone (such as in a household) confirmed to have COVID-19 are considered high risk and should be quarantined for 14 days. Please work with your human resources office regarding the time off for the employee.

State Workers Choosing to Travel to High-Risk Countries

1. If I chose to travel to a [high-risk country](#), come in contact with COVID-19 and subsequently placed in quarantine or self-quarantine, am I eligible for Administrative Time-Off?

Employees who travel to a high-risk country and are placed on self-quarantine or quarantine due to COVID-19 are not eligible for Administrative Time Off and should contact their human resources office.

State Workers Traveling for Work

1. Are there are restrictions on traveling within California related to COVID-19?

There are not any current travel restrictions for traveling throughout California.

2. What do I do if employees are refusing to travel for work?

If the travel is not critical to work functions, the supervisor/manager has the discretion to determine whether or not travel is required. At this time, Public Health is not directing that meetings or events be cancelled.

If the travel is essential to the employee's job functions, the employee would be required to travel. Any refusal to travel by employees should be addressed with your human resources office.

State Workers in Healthcare Settings

1. What precautions should be taken for state workers in healthcare settings?

Departments should follow the rules and policies of the department, and applicable MOUs. CDC guidance refers to standard precautions in healthcare settings to protect healthcare workers from infection and prevent the spread of infection from patient to patient. Standard precautions include:

- Perform hand hygiene with alcohol-based hand rub before and after all patient contact, contact with potentially infectious material, and before putting on and upon removal of personal protective equipment (PPE). Use soap and water if hands are visibly soiled.
- Follow respiratory hygiene/cough etiquette principles.
- Use PPE whenever there is an expectation of possible exposure to infectious material.

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