



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Marc Elrich
County Executive

Andrew W. Kleine
Chief Administrative Officer

MEMORANDUM

Friday, March 13, 2020

TO: Department and Office Directors

FROM: Andrew Kleine, Chief Administrative Officer (CAO)

SUBJECT: Supervisory Guidelines in Light of Coronavirus

In order to protect the health and safety of Montgomery County Government (MCG) employees and continue providing services to the maximum extent possible, MCG is escalating its preparedness regarding coronavirus (COVID-19). I am providing additional supervisory guidance on COVID-19 to supplement our previously issued Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs).

The following reflect the most frequent inquiries Office of Human Resources (OHR) has received regarding COVID-19 and human resources policies. The topics discussed include:

- Continuity of Operations (COOP)
- Situational Telework
- School Closings
- At-risk Employees and Family Members
- Employees Who Have Travelled Outside the United States
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- Training Offered by MCG
- Future Updates and Employee COVID-19 News

Continuity of Operations (COOP)

Departments must continue to review and update their emergency and COOP plans, as needed. Emergency and COOP plans must include the identification of mission critical essential operations and plans for their continuation.

The successful incorporation of Situational Telework (below) and “social distancing” in COOP and emergency planning will allow MCG to continue functioning efficiently and effectively, while ensuring the health and safety of employees. Departmental COOP plans must have Telework fully incorporated.

Situational Telework

Supervisors must, effective immediately, make arrangements to maximize the number of Teleworking employees. This may include establishing policies and practices, such as flexible work hours (e.g., staggered shifts) to increase the physical distance among employees and between employees and others.

In addition, the following Situational Telework policy is effective immediately for employees whose positions are Telework eligible (“eligible employees”), meaning employees whose work can be effectively performed remotely :

- Eligible employees may Telework up to five (5) days a week with supervisory approval. Such requests shall not be unreasonably denied.
- Probationary employees in Telework-eligible positions are allowed to Telework with supervisory approval.
- Eligible employees who do not have an approved Telework agreement must review the Telework training videos on the Telework website and complete the attached one-page Situational Telework (Ad Hoc) Agreement; there is no need to complete the online packet or take the online test.
- Employees who engage in Situational Telework must use the Telework Reason Code when submitting timesheets in MCtime. #TELECOVD# For guidance see the Resources tab on the Telework website.
- Supervisors and employees must ensure that all documents needed by the employee are on OneDrive and SharePoint (i.e., Office365) and have Outlook access. Contact the IT Help Desk at 240-777-2828 for assistance with obtaining VPN access for employees who require it.

Further, departments must immediately review their current Telework policies and ensure that written Situational Telework Agreements are in place for as many employees as possible, including all eligible employees who are currently without a signed Telework

agreement. Departments should strive to maximize Telework eligibility so that any work that can be effectively performed remotely is performed through Telework. For example, field workers may be allowed to travel directly from home to appointment sites, rather than reporting to an office.

Finally, I ask that all departments take steps to prepare all eligible employees to effectively Telework and have access to agency IT systems and networks, as may be necessary, should the conditions from COVID-19 so warrant an MCG office closure.

Contractors: To help with continuity of operations, Department hiring managers may make a determination if a contractor's assignment is appropriate for a temporary Telework arrangement.

For general Telework Program details, visit:

<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HR/Telework/TeleworkProgram.html>

School Closings

During the COVID-19 situation, employees who are approved to Telework may do so, despite the presence of young children or other persons requiring care and supervision at their Telework location. Telework-eligible employees may adjust their work hours so that they occur around child/family-care responsibilities.

Employees whose positions are not Telework eligible who are impacted by school/child/family-care closures may, with supervisory approval, remain home to care for their young children or other persons requiring care and supervision. Non-Telework eligible employees must utilize their earned leave (annual, compensatory, sick, or personal) during the time that they are home. **Employees who have less than 80 hours of total leave balance will be advanced 10 days of sick leave.** This policy will be reviewed if school closures extend beyond March 27.

At-risk Employees and Family Members

- At-risk employees are defined as individuals who:
 - Are over 60 years of age;
 - Have a severe underlying chronic medical condition like heart or lung disease or diabetes;
 - Employees must receive OMS verification that they are at risk.
 - Live with a person who has a severe underlying chronic medical condition like heart or lung disease or diabetes.

- Employees must receive OMS verification that the person they are caring for is at risk.
- At-risk employees who wish to Telework *may* do so, subject to supervisor approval. Such requests shall not be unreasonably denied.
- If the at-risk employee's position is not eligible for Telework, at the employee's request, the supervisor shall:
 - Accommodate the at-risk employee by moving them to a less-forward facing position or otherwise ensure adequate social distancing; or
 - If accommodation is not possible, the at-risk employee may stay home and must use their earned leave (annual, compensatory, sick, or personal) during the time that they are home. **Employees who have less than 80 hours of total leave balance will be advanced 10 days of sick leave.**

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Although not required or considered clinically necessary by the Public Health Officer, employees are now permitted to wear their own PPE without OMS approval.

Note: For employees whose position already entails the use of PPE, there is no alteration to the current guidelines.

Sick Employees and Return to Work

Employees who are sick should stay home.

Employees may return to work at the conclusion of a non-COVID-19 illness or a self-quarantine period so long as they have no symptoms of acute respiratory illness and are free of fever (100.4 F [37.8 C] or greater using an oral thermometer), signs of a fever, and any other symptoms for at least 24 hours, without the use of fever-reducing or other symptom-altering medicines (e.g. cough suppressants).

Employees who were diagnosed with COVID-19 may return to work after they have two negative COVID-19 tests taken 24 hours apart after and have received clearance to return to work from OMS. Employees must provide the medical documentation from their medical provider indicating clearance to return to work.

Employees Who Have Travelled Outside the United States

Employees are advised to use caution when travelling to areas with high numbers of COVID-19.

Employees who are returning to work from a CDC level 2 or level 3 risk country shall self-quarantine for two weeks. Employees whose positions are eligible for Telework, feel that they can Telework, and do not need to enter County property to obtain items/equipment needed for Telework may Telework if they so choose. Employees who are unable to telework, either do to the absence of necessary items/equipment or because they hold a position that is not eligible for Telework, will receive Administrative Leave for the duration of the self-quarantine period.

Employees may return to work at the conclusion of the self-quarantine period so long as they have no symptoms of acute respiratory illness, are free of fever (100.4 F [37.8 C] or greater using an oral thermometer), signs of a fever, and any other symptoms for at least 24 hour, without the use of fever-reducing or other symptom-altering medicines (e.g. cough suppressants).

Training Offered by MCG

All County trainings have been cancelled. Non-essential meetings must be cancelled or conducted on a virtual basis.

Future Updates and Employee COVID-19 News

As this is a rapidly evolving situation, OHR will continue to assist and inform departments and employees regarding the potential impacts of and available responses to COVID-19. OHR will also update our new [Employee Coronavirus News](#) webpage on a frequent basis to provide the latest guidance and additional FAQs. Please note that the guidance in this memo will be added to the FAQs as soon as possible.

For the latest employee COVID-19 workplace-related information, visit:
www.montgomerycountvmd.gov/EmployeeNewsCOVID19

Attachment: Situational Telework (Ad Hoc) Agreement