



State of Alaska

COVID-19 Leave Policy

I. Purpose

On March 11, 2020, Governor Mike Dunleavy issued Administrative Order #315 and declared a State of Emergency in the state of Alaska as a result of the outbreak of COVID-19. The outbreak of COVID-19 throughout the world is a public disaster that significantly impacts the life and health of our people, the economy of Alaska, property and the public peace. The following guidelines address work restrictions and pay provisions for employees during the COVID-19 public health emergency.

II. Guidelines

A. Public Health Guidance

Under current public health guidance, if an employee has symptoms of fever ($>100.3^{\circ}\text{F}$) and cough or shortness of breath, the employee is to stay home for seventy-two (72) hours after their fever is gone and symptoms have improved. An employee with the symptoms of a common cold or flu, but without a fever, is encouraged to stay home until symptoms are resolved.

B. Travel Guidance

If you are returning from out-of-state travel, please adhere to the following guidance:

1. If you have traveled anywhere out-of-state or international and are entering Alaska within the past 14 days **you must**:
 - Self-quarantine and stay home and avoid contact with other household members.
 - Contact your employer and **do not go to work** for this 14-day period after you return.

2. **Health Guidance for Returning Travelers in the Higher and Medium Risk Groups**
 - a. Take your temperature with a thermometer two times a day and monitor for fever ($>100.3^{\circ}\text{F}$). Also watch for cough or trouble breathing.
 - b. Do not take public transportation during the time you are practicing social distancing.
 - c. Avoid crowded places (such as shopping centers and movie theaters) and limit your activities in public.
 - d. Keep your distance from others (about 6 feet or 2 meters).
 - e. If you get sick with fever ($>100.3^{\circ}\text{F}$), cough, or shortness of breath, please call your health provider.
 - f. If you seek medical care for other reasons, such as dialysis, call ahead to your doctor and tell them about your recent travel.

C. Telecommuting and Workplace Configuration Guidance

State agencies, corporations, and departments shall continue to explore and promote all possible options to expand telecommuting for state employees.

If a workplace configuration does not allow for employees to be safely distanced from others (about 6 feet or 2 meters), then the employer should work to alter the workplace configuration and schedule, and explore possible telecommuting options so social distancing in the workplace is achieved.

These efforts are done with the recognition of current extenuating circumstances and will not create a past practice or expectation of continuation of telecommuting arrangements made to accommodate this emergent situation.

C.1 Employees Requesting Telecommuting

Normal telecommuting and leave rules apply when agencies are operating under normal operating hours and plans. Telecommuting is available to employees only in management-approved positions, and in accordance with the State of Alaska Telecommuting Policy. Section II.E. of the policy states:

Management retains the right to approve or deny requests based on established criteria.

Telecommuting should only be considered if mutually beneficial for the agency and the employee. In deciding whether to approve an employee's request for telecommuting, the supervisor shall consider the following factors:

1. The position's suitability for telecommuting;
2. The employee's suitability for telecommuting; and
3. The mutual benefits to the agency and the employee.

D. Telecommuting-Ineligible Employees

State of Alaska employees not eligible for telecommuting because of job function, duty and location include, but are not limited to, roles that are essential to public safety, safety site visits, child welfare, and some people within 24/7 facilities. As necessary to protect employees in these roles, the state will provide employees with the necessary personal protective equipment (PPE) and training to protect themselves and the public while performing necessary job functions.

E. Guidance for Employees at Risk Due to Travel or Community Exposure

Using the travel guidance conditions listed above for Higher Risk and Medium Risk travel areas – an employee falling into those categories will need to discuss their work situation with their employer before returning to work.

An employee may be required to telecommute during the self-quarantine period. If the employee is directed to telecommute and declines to do so, the employee must use their own accrued leave or be in a leave without pay status for the time in self-quarantine.

If the employer has determined there are no telecommuting options for an employee who: (1) falls in the self-quarantine group as defined under (B) above; (2) has an objective reason to believe they may have been exposed to someone with COVID-19; (3) has been advised by a

health care provider to self-quarantine due to concerns related to COVID-19 or (4) displays COVID-19 symptoms, the employee can choose to be released for no longer than fourteen (14) calendar days per self-quarantine event:

- with no loss of pay under COVID-19 Leave;
- on union bank leave; or
- on accrued leave.

The employee is not permitted to report to the worksite during the time they are in self-quarantine. Employees must complete the form, “Employee Verification for Paid Leave Due to Coronavirus (COVID) 2019.” The employer retains the right to request written verification confirming the circumstances warranting the self-quarantine, which may include a signed affidavit from the employee.

If during the period of an employee’s self-quarantine, an employee is unable to continue telecommuting due to illness (unrelated to COVID-19), personal needs, or other factors, the employee is required to use accrued leave or leave from a union leave bank, in accordance with state policies, procedures, and any applicable collective bargaining agreement.

Employees can begin taking COVID-19 leave as of March 16, 2020.

F. Contracted Virus

If an employee tests positive for COVID-19, the employee can choose to be released for fourteen (14) calendar days or until symptoms fully resolved, whichever is longer:

- with no loss of pay under COVID-19 Leave;
- on union bank leave; or
- on accrued leave.

If the employee tests positive, but is otherwise able to work, the employee may telecommute consistent with the guidelines above, if the employee is telecommuting-eligible and has approval to do so.

G. Supervisors

Supervisors who notice an employee exhibiting contagious sick symptoms consistent with COVID-19 at the workplace (e.g., fever plus coughing or difficulty breathing) should require the employee to leave for home.

Supervisors can call the DHSS Epidemiology Help Line, their HR Manager, or the Division of Personnel and Labor Relations for further guidance.

H. Office Closure

In the event of a department, office, or facility closure, instructions will be provided to employees regarding their work status (e.g., telecommuting, administrative leave, employee required to work in operations that must provide public safety or other essential public business).

I. Review of Policy

The State reserves the right to modify the policy in order to ensure that the components of this policy advance appropriate public health policy and are not disruptive to the operations of government. This entire policy shall be reviewed no later than fourteen (14) days from its issuance.

J. COVID-19 Related Questions

- a. www.coronavirus.alaska.gov
- b. For non-clinical questions call 2-1-1