

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Workplace Policy

Effective March 16, 2020

Updated March 19, 2020

The safety of City employees and the public is of utmost importance. In that regard, the City has been communicating daily information about its emergency preparedness plan, public health recommendations for individuals as reported by the Centers for Disease Control, the Illinois Department of Public Health and other trusted sources, and actions have been taken for the public health, safety and welfare of all. Following is an update to the Workplace Policy originally effective March 16, 2020 for City employees in light of the coronavirus (COVID-19). The effective date of the updated policy is March 19, 2020. If you have any questions, please contact us or your department director.

Ghida S. Neukirch
City Manager

Emily Taub
Human Resource Manager

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory illness that is spreading from person to person. The virus that causes COVID-19 is a novel coronavirus that was first identified during an investigation into an outbreak in Wuhan, China.

The virus is thought to spread mainly between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet) through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. It also may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching his or her own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes.

Risk of infection with COVID-19 is higher for people who are close contacts of someone known to have COVID-19, such as healthcare workers or household members. Other people at higher risk for infection are those who live in or have recently been in an area with ongoing spread of COVID-19.

The City of Highland Park continues to work collaboratively and closely with the Lake County Department of Public Health, the Illinois Department of Public Health, government partners, hospital systems, and the business community to help minimize the spread of this disease.

People can help protect themselves from respiratory illness with everyday preventive actions. Because the health and safety of our employees are among the City's highest priorities, we want to reiterate the following guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
 - If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
 - Always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty.

Workplace Policy

The City will operate under all normal leave and workplace policies as set forth in the City Employee Handbook and the respective collective bargaining agreements except as may be provided herein. Any such provisions are consistent with action steps identified by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and State and local Health Departments.

Release from Work/Leave Use

Employees are required to stay at home if they are not feeling well or are exhibiting flu-like symptoms or symptoms of acute respiratory illness. Employees should remain at home until they are free of a fever (100.4° 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 report to work that are observed by a supervisor experiencing a cough or flu-like symptoms will be released from work by the respective Department Director or designee, and may be directed to remain at home. Decisions to release an employee from work will be made on a case-by-case basis by the Department Director or designee. Supervisor(s) shall not solicit the nature of any medical condition from an employee, but must contact Human Resources for guidance.

Employees will be required to use available sick leave for such absences, and may use other available leave balances upon exhaustion of all sick leave. If all available leave is exhausted, the City Manager or designee may approve unpaid leave on a case-by case basis.

Employees may be required to self-quarantine or may be subject to quarantine as ordered by the applicable Department of Health.

Report-In & Emergency Designation

Effective Monday, March 16, 2020, the City of Highland Park closed all City buildings to the public, except for limited administrative services to be offered from the Police Department. Critical emergency services continued; administrative service were restructured based upon individual Department protocols as approved by the Department Director and City Manager.

In a continued effort to limit the effect of COVID-19 on employees and the community, effective Thursday, March 19, 2020 at the start of business, the next phase of our staffing plan will be implemented that will further suspend many City operations. Administrative and support staff services will be provided on a limited basis of two days per week.

Employees shall report to their primary work location based on their Emergency **[E]** Designation. Each Department Director or designee shall designate employees based on operational need as follows:

- **[E-E] Essential Employees:** Employees designated as **[E-E]** are deemed critical to essential City services and their physical presence at work during a declared emergency is required. Departments may consider establishing a centralized location or a designated meeting place at the opening of business. If an employee is absent, he/she will be expected to follow normal call-off procedures.

- **[E-R] Essential (REMOTE) Employees:** Employees designated as [E-R] are required to telecommute and remote-in to work. [E-R] employees shall not physically report to work, but are expected to perform duties as assigned from a remote location.
- **[E-N] Non-Essential Employees:** Employees designated as [E-N] shall not physically report to work and shall not be granted telecommuting privileges to remote-in.

Notification & Changes in Designation: Each Department Director or designee will be responsible for notifying employees of their emergency designation. Department Directors have developed a plan, as approved by the City Manager, for notifying employees of their emergency designation, activation in a declared emergency, and deactivation at the expiration of a declared emergency. A change of an employee's designation may be made at any time by the Department Director or designee. Employees shall be notified immediately of their designation and provided instructions for work.

Pay & Benefits: During an emergency declaration, all full-time employees, regardless of Emergency Designation, will be paid based upon either their regular hours per pay period if exempt, or their entered hours in Eden if non-exempt. If not practicable, the default value of the employee's regular hours for a pay period will be entered and any reconciliation will take place after the end of the emergency declaration.

Employees not scheduled or required to work by their supervisor will continue to be paid without the need to use benefit time.

In the event of an emergency declaration, part-time employees not scheduled or required to work by their supervisor will receive an average of the last 12 completed pay periods per pay period for 14 calendar days as determined by the City Manager.

Employees (full-time and part-time) who were otherwise previously not scheduled to work during this Emergency Declaration period, for example those individuals with previously scheduled vacation or time off, will not receive pay for that time unless the previously scheduled benefit time is used.

Expiration: Emergency Designations will cease activation upon the expiration of an emergency declaration and upon resuming normal City of Highland Park operations. All normal leave and workplace policies as set forth in the Employee Handbook and respective collective bargaining agreements shall resume. The City reserves the right to change any employee's emergency designation based on the evolving needs of the City.

Communications

The City of Highland Park continues to monitor the COVID-19 situation and is working closely with the Lake County Health Department, State of Illinois and Center for Disease Control in order to obtain timely and accurate information. Department Directors or designees will communicate information to employees as necessary to implement this policy. Other City communication methods including voicemail and email will be used to communicate to employees.

Media inquiries will be centrally managed and all inquiries shall be directed to the City Manager or designee pursuant to the City's Communications Policy.

Payroll Processing

The Finance Department has developed procedures to ensure the continuity of payroll operations in a declared emergency.

Remote Access / Telecommunicating

Employees who are designated as **[E-R]** by their Department Director or designee in a declared emergency shall access email and/or work operations from home or other distant locations. The terms of use will be governed in accordance with relevant City policies governing electronic systems, email, and electronic communication.

Employees who are designated as E-R by their Department Director or designee and are telecommunicating should report hours actually worked in Eden as regular time. This may result in days with partial time worked and partial benefit hours worked. Employees are required to maintain a complete and accurate record of all hours worked remotely, regardless of the time of day the work is performed. Further direction regarding time entry will be distributed.

Work Area

Employees should routinely clean or sanitize their workstations (including assigned City vehicles), telephones, and keyboards with anti-bacterial solution or wipes. Work areas should have tissues and alcohol-based hand sanitizer available for use. If additional supplies are needed, supervisors should be notified. Employees should practice frequent hand washing, and cover nose and mouth with a tissue during a cough or sneeze, then throw the tissue in the trash.

Continuity of Government Plan

Department Directors are responsible for developing their continuity of government or business continuity plans, and any modification are required to be approved by the City Manager or designee.

Travel

As directed by the City Manager, City employees should not schedule attendance at any in-state or out-of-state conferences where they are representing the City of Highland Park.

The City Manager may limit domestic travel and approve only mission-critical domestic travel.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1) What is Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)?

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person. The virus that causes COVID-19 is a novel coronavirus that was first identified during an investigation into an outbreak in Wuhan, China.

2) What can I do to help prevent the onset and/or spread of the COVID-19?

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
 - If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
 - Always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty.

Stay informed. Follow public health advice. Refer to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention website at www.cdc.gov.

3) If the entire City is closed due to a COVID-19 outbreak, am I going to get paid and how?

Yes, if the City closes operations due to an outbreak, fulltime employees will receive a paycheck, provided leave time is available or unpaid leave or an advance of paid leave is approved by the City Manager. Employees not scheduled or required to work by their supervisor will continue to receive pay without the use of benefit time.

If payday is approaching and current pay period entries are complete, payroll will be issued as normal. However, if payday is approaching but current pay period entries are not complete, full-time employees will be issued the default value equal to regular hours. Part-time employees may not receive a paycheck until pay period entries of their actual time worked are complete, or a calculation of hours under an emergency declaration is able to be completed. As necessary for any employee, adjustments will be processed during the next possible pay period.

4) Am I subject to being assigned to different work hours, shifts and/or locations?

Yes, for various reasons in a declared emergency (building closure, operational/functional need, etc.) any and all employees may be required to work different hours, shifts and/or locations.

5) If an employee appears ill, can a supervisor inquire about the nature of the employee's illness?

A supervisor can and should send an employee who appears ill and should notify Human Resources.

Human Resources may contact employees with limited inquiries as necessary to determine if other leave policies apply or if there is a health and safety risk to other City employees.

6) If I am sent home from work due to COVID-19, or if I stay home due to COVID-19, how will I be paid?

First, stay home if you are experiencing fever, cough, or shortness of breath. Use appropriate leave with proper approval pursuant to the terms of the City Employee Handbook and applicable collective bargaining agreements. In such cases, sick leave will be used first followed by catastrophic sick leave. Other available leave may be used if and/or when sick leave is exhausted. Paychecks will continue to be processed through the Finance Department.

7) If I do not have sufficient leave to cover my absence due to an incident of COVID-19, can I take unpaid leave?

In the event sufficient leave is not available, the City Manager may approve either the availability of a negative balance of leave time used upon the receipt of a signed Wage Advance Agreement, or unpaid leave may be approved by the City Manager on a case-by-case basis. Employees will not be disciplined for being absent without leave in the event of a declared emergency.

8) Although I am still employed, if I am directed to stay home and have no available leave, am I eligible for unemployment?

Normally, no, however the determination will be made by the State of Illinois, and the State of Illinois has issued guidance that adjustments are recommended to the regular determination of unemployment subject to approval. Unemployment decisions are not made by the City of Highland Park.

9) My child or family member's school/day or other care arrangements are closed related to COVID-19, however my child is not sick. I have no other child care arrangements. Can I bring the child to work with me?

No. Use appropriate leave with proper approval pursuant to the City Employee Handbook and applicable collective bargaining agreements. If no leave is available, promptly notify your supervisor of the reason for your absence and provide verification of school or facility closure. In such cases, employees will not be disciplined for being absent if no leave is available provided appropriate documentation is received.

If care arrangements are closed related to COVID-19, the City will make an exception to the Sick Leave policy in this limited instance and allow the use of sick leave in addition to other leave types.

10) During the COVID-19 outbreak can my supervisor cancel my vacation leave that has already been approved?

Yes. Your Department Director or designee has the authority to cancel any pre-approved vacation requests. Please communicated planned travel with your supervisor.

11) Does FMLA apply if: a) I contract COVID-19, b) my spouse or child contracts COVID-19 and I stay home to care for him/her?

Confirmed cases of COVID-19 may qualify under FMLA for FMLA eligible employees for the period of time you or your spouse or child is ill. Human Resources may send information on FMLA and require the completion of appropriate paperwork upon receipt of which eligibility will be reviewed.

12) Does FMLA apply if I choose to self-quarantine for the recommended 14 days?

It depends on the specific facts of the situation. The City will address the potential application of FMLA leave or other available leave for persons who are non-symptomatic on a case by case basis.

13) If I have a family member at home who is sick with COVID-19, should I go to work?

No. Please stay home to prevent any possible transmission to others.

14) Does my supervisor have to approve my request to telecommute if there is a COVID-19 outbreak?

No. The Department Director or designee, in consultation with the City Manager's office, shall make the determination for employees telecommuting.

15) What assistance is available to me to help me cope with the emotional impact of a COVID-19 outbreak?

The City of Highland Park provides resources to help employees cope with these types of life events through its Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provided by Family Service of Lake County. To obtain more information please contact Family Service at 847.432.4981 Ext. 200.

16) Will my City sponsored healthcare plan cover medical expenses associated with treatment for COVID-19?

Yes. You will have the same coverage that is currently available for any emergency or non-emergency illness.

17) Can employees be required to wear personal protective equipment (PPE) such as facemasks, gloves, or gowns that are designed to reduce the transmission of COVID-19?

Yes, employees may be required to wear personal protective equipment (PPE). An initial safety inspection shall be performed on all new equipment to determine the requirements for the PPE and if the level of protection fit the expected exposure. PPE may include gloves, gowns, laboratory coats, face shields or masks, eye protection, pocket masks, and other protective gear. As of March 12, 2020, the CDC does not recommend that people who are well wear a facemask to protect themselves from respiratory diseases, including COVID-19. Facemasks should be used by people who show symptoms of COVID-19 to help prevent the spread of the disease to others, as well as emergency responders and those treating and caring for individuals who have tested positive with the virus.

18) What if I use public transportation to travel to and from work, and due to COVID-19, the public transit system shuts down and I am unable to get to work?

It is important to plan ahead for this situation and look for other ways to travel to work. If you are unable to report to work, you will be required to take appropriate leave.

19) Who should I contact if I have additional questions?

For employment related matters please contact Human Resources Manager Emily Taub at etaub@cityhpil.com or 847.926.1005. For questions specific to City services or operations please contact the appropriate Department.

The health and safety of our employees and the public is of utmost importance. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the City Manager, Human Resources Manager, your supervisor or department director. We appreciate your hard work and commitment.

Additional Sources of Information:

www.cdc.gov

<http://www.dph.illinois.gov/>