

**Subject: Temporary Employee Wellness Policy**

**Effective Date:** March 13, 2020 – April 10, 2020 with options for extension

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**To All City Employees:**

The City of Durham is taking proactive steps to protect the workplace in the event of an infectious disease outbreak. It is the City's goal during any such time period to strive to operate effectively and ensure that all essential services are continuously provided and that employees are safe within the workplace.

The City of Durham is committed to providing authoritative information about the nature and spread of infectious diseases, including symptoms and signs to watch for, as well as required steps to be taken in the event of an illness or outbreak.

This policy applies to all full-time, temporary with benefits, and part-time employees and Council members.

**I. Policy**

**A. Cleaning Your Workspace**

1. General Services will ensure a clean environment, including the regular cleaning of objects and areas that are frequently used by the public, such as bathrooms, breakrooms, conference rooms, door handles and railings.
2. We ask all employees to cooperate in taking steps to reduce the transmission of infectious disease in the workplace. The best strategy remains the most obvious—frequent hand washing with warm, soapy water; covering your mouth whenever you sneeze or cough; and discarding used tissues in wastebaskets. We also ask you to routinely clean your work equipment and work surfaces.

**B. Social Distancing and Telecommuting**

1. Department Directors are encouraged to assess telecommuting options, where appropriate. Given the current state of available technology and limited remote access to critical systems, it may not be possible to immediately implement telecommuting arrangements.
2. Where telecommuting is appropriate and possible during this state of emergency, telecommuting policy will be relaxed to allow approval of telecommuting arrangements by the Department Director or Assistant Director. A formal telecommuting agreement may not be necessary and timelines for telecommuting may be relaxed to allow for continuity of operations.
3. It will be the Department Director's responsibility to ensure that telecommuting arrangements are not abused. If an employee's work does not allow for the practical use of telecommuting to complete meaningful work, telecommuting will not be approved.
4. During the workday, employees are encouraged to:
  - a. Practice good hygiene (wash your hands frequently for at least 20 seconds, cover coughs and sneezes)
  - b. Use the telephone, video conferencing, e-mail or instant messaging to conduct

business as much as possible, even when participants are in the same building.

- c. If a face-to-face meeting is unavoidable, minimize the meeting time, choose a large meeting room and sit at least one yard from each other if possible; avoid person-to-person contact such as shaking hands.
- d. Cancel or postpone non-essential meetings, gatherings, workshops and training sessions.

5. Outside of work, employees are encouraged to:

- a. Follow all CDC guidelines with respect to travel.
- b. Avoid large gatherings of 100 or more people if they are at high risk for infection (e.g. over 65, heart disease, respiratory disease, diabetes, compromised immune system).

6. Staying Home When Ill

a. Many times, with the best of intentions, employees report to work even though they feel ill. We provide paid sick time and other benefits to compensate employees who are unable to work due to illness. Employees who report to work showing visible signs of illness may be asked to go home, and may be subject to discipline. During an infectious disease outbreak, it is critical that employees do not report to work while they are ill and/or experiencing the following symptoms:

- i. Fever
- ii. Cough
- iii. Body aches

- b. Employees who stay home or who are sent home due to a suspected communicable illness, as assessed by a review of the above symptoms, are encouraged to seek immediate medical attention (e.g. urgent care, primary care physician, telemedicine, etc.). Medical clearance will be required before the employee can return to work. Acceptable forms of clearance may change, as circumstances change, but may include a negative test for any infectious disease.
- c. Employees who stay home or are sent home due to a suspected communicable illness as assessed by a review of the above symptoms must contact HR Connect at 919-560-4214 or via email at [HRConnect@durhamnc.gov](mailto:HRConnect@durhamnc.gov) to obtain a link to the Online Personal Illness form, which must be completed within one business day of the first date of absence. If the employee is physically unable to complete the form, it can be completed by an employee's designee.
- d. Full-time, Temporary with Benefits, and Part-time with Benefits Employees - will be required to provide a doctor's note electronically to Human Resources to confirm the initial visit; the note must be provided within one business day of the initial visit.

If the employee is not immediately cleared by their doctor to return, the employee will be granted a one-time allotment of emergency leave equivalent to 5 days of regular work (prorated for part-time with benefits employees based on work schedule). After 5 days, the employee must again request clearance by a doctor.

If the doctor clears the employee to return to work, the employee must present the acceptable medical clearance to Human Resources to be cleared before reporting for duty.

If the employee is not cleared, the employee must use accrued leave until he/she is cleared to return to work. Leave policies will be relaxed to allow the use of sick leave, vacation leave, comp time, or management leave, etc. as needed. In all cases, the employee will be required to obtain acceptable clearance from a doctor before returning to work.

- e. Part-time Employees - Employees will be required to obtain acceptable clearance from a doctor before returning to work. If the doctor clears the employee to return to work, the employee must present the acceptable medical clearance to Human Resources to be cleared before reporting for duty.

If the employee is not cleared to return and tests positive for COVID-19, the employee will be granted a one-time allotment of prorated emergency leave based on their work schedule.

- f. In all cases, employees will be required to obtain acceptable clearance from a doctor before returning to work.
- g. Employees who stay home for any reason must contact their supervisors via established departmental protocols.
- h. Council members – are encouraged to stay home when ill.

### C. Related Policies

1. Employees will only be granted one allotment of emergency leave equivalent to 5 days of regular work based on the employee's normal work schedule for all occurrences related to this current state of emergency.
2. During this state of emergency related to COVID-19, all leave policies will be relaxed to allow employees to use any form of accrued leave to self-isolate.
3. Employees who have pending transferred sick leave will be awarded those transfers immediately.
4. Employees who are due a second allotment of management leave will have those allotments awarded immediately.
5. Employees who have exhausted all forms of leave will be advanced up to 13 days of sick leave. Employees must contact Human Resources prior to exhausting all leave to begin the advanced sick leave process. Shared sick leave will be allowed in accordance with existing policy.