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**Office of the County Manager**

P.O. Box 550  Raleigh, North Carolina 27602



MEMORANDUM

## **To:** All County Employees

**From:** Emily Lucas, Chief Financial Officer

**Date:** March 11, 2020

**Re: COVID-19 Restrictions and Guidelines – County Business Travel**

As the County responds to the COVID-19 (Coronavirus) situation, County management releases the following restrictions and guidelines for individuals conducting **business travel**, effective immediately.

These restrictions and guidelines apply to all employees and other individuals covered under the [County’s Travel & Transportation Policy](https://wakecountync.sharepoint.com/sites/unilydocs/Policy%20Documents/Finance/Policies%20and%20Procedures/Travel%20and%20Transportation/Travel%20Policy.pdf).

1. **The County is prohibiting business travel to large conferences, trainings, or meetings scheduled through April 15, 2020 as well as any business travel by airline during this time.** The County will continue to monitor and potentially extend the date of business travel to be cancelled.

Large conferences, trainings, or meetings are defined as gatherings (in-state, out-of-state, or international) with attendance of 150 or greater. It is the responsibility of the individual and supervisor to confirm the expected attendance at events and plan cancellations accordingly.

Individuals with other authorized business travel may cancel plans during this time without penalty. Individuals are encouraged to conduct local meetings via conference call or other remote means, if possible.

1. For cancelled business travel:
	1. Departments should seek to obtain refunds where possible.
	2. The County will cover the costs of any non-refundable business travel expenses.
		1. Where business travel arrangements were booked using a County p-card, please include written supervisor approval with the p-card statement.
		2. Where business travel arrangements were booked using an employee’s personal credit card, employees may request reimbursement of non-refundable costs through the Travel Expense Report process. Please include written supervisor approval with the expense report.
	3. In instances where a credit rather than a refund is issued, employees and supervisors are responsible for utilizing this credit on future business travel.
2. Individuals on prohibited business travel as of the effective date of these guidelines will email their supervisor, department head (or designee), Wake County Risk Management, and Wake County Occupational Health & Safety before returning to work.
	1. Wake County Occupational Health & Safety will contact individuals within one business day to assess the individual and their exposure risk to determine when the individual can return to work. Wake County Occupational Health & Safety will document and provide direction to employee with regards to returning to work. Employees cannot return to work without this approval.
	2. Individuals may be required to stay at home up to 14 days after return. In this situation, the County will determine if the employee will be required to work from home or if the employee will be placed on Administrative Leave with pay. Employees will not be required to use their own leave balances or take leave without pay.
3. Any exceptions to these travel restrictions must be approved in advance by the County Manager or designee. Department heads should submit in writing an exception request to their respective chief.

For travel occurring after April 15, 2020:

1. Employees and supervisors should monitor travel locations and be aware of registration deadlines and deadlines to cancel travel arrangements and receive refunds.
2. Employees and supervisors should utilize cancellable rates and fees when available to book future hotel, flight, and other travel arrangements until further notice.
3. Employees may request to travel by means other than an airline (as listed in the Travel & Transportation Policy), even if airline travel is the most economical form of transportation.
4. Employees with access to the tools to conduct work remotely should take their laptops, work phones, etc. with them when they leave on their last day in office prior to their scheduled work travel.

If individuals encounter a business travel situation not specifically referenced above, please contact your department head, or their designee, to decide the most appropriate course of action.

**Contacts:**

Wake County Occupational Health & Safety: Ruth Barlow at 919-212-9498 or Ruth.Barlow@wakegov.com, or Nancy Phillips at 919-404-7575 or Nancy.Phillips@wakegov.com.

Wake County Risk Management: Kimberly Coman at 919-856-5486 or Kimberly.Coman@wakegov.com.

Disbursement Services (for travel authorization and/or expense documentation): 919-856-6161 or Disbursement.Services@wakegov.com.

This is a rapidly changing situation, and these restrictions and guidelines are subject to change at any time. Updates to these restrictions and guidelines will be posted on The Wire.