



**CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019 (“COVID-19”)
GUIDANCE FOR COUNTY EMPLOYEES
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
APPLICABLE UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE
SUBJECT TO UPDATE AND EXTENSION-Version 12**

The County values its employees and understands that the COVID-19 crisis may be creating a difficult and stressful situation for employees’ work and personal lives. The County is committed to providing employees with as much information as possible to help navigate a variety of uncertainties, and has developed guidelines, procedures and responses to frequently asked questions below.

If questions arise that are not answered below, please contact your Department Human Resources Manager (HR). Given the fluidity of the situation, the procedures described below are subject to change. This guidance will be updated as additional information becomes available.

Please note that the County is following State and Federal guidelines to promote a safe workplace during the COVID-19 crisis. Just as we are committed to our employees, as a local government, we are also committed to providing critical health and safety services to Orange County’s citizens.

Information distributed to employees will be maintained at the COVID-19 Employee Information Site at: <http://www.ocgov.com/gov/ceo/covid19employeeinfo> for future reference. In addition, an email address has been established for employee questions (CEOCOM@ocgov.com). Responses to the questions will be provided to all County employees and may be incorporated into future updates of this document.

These Frequently Asked Questions are to provide information regarding the County’s response to COVID-19 for employees. The COVID-19 pandemic continues to evolve and laws, regulations, and policies regarding COVID-19 continue to be created, change and/or revised. The guidance contained in these FAQs does not supersede any conflicting or more restrictive orders issued by local governments, the State of California, or the Federal Government.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTION TOPICS

I. Medical Information and Questions	Page 3
II. Safety Measures and Facility Planning Questions	Page 12
III. Workers Compensation Questions	Page 17
IV. Time Sheet Coding and Leave Usage Questions	Page 19
V. Disaster Services Worker Questions	Page 26
VI. Telecommuting Resources/Training Questions	Page 30
VII. Benefits Questions	Page 31
VIII. Vaccination Questions	Page 32
IX. Additional Resources	Page 35
X. Human Resources Contact List by Department	Page 36

New/Updated Questions (Links)

I. Medical Information and Questions

- 1. What is COVID-19?*
 - 2. What does the Health Officer's Order mean for County employees? (updated 7/5/21)*
 - 10. Can an employee who does not display symptoms of COVID-19, but is at high risk of having it due to travel, be asked or required to leave work? (updated 7/5/21)*
 - 11. When should an employee with COVID-19, or symptoms consistent with it, be allowed to return to work? (updated 7/5/21)*
 - 23. As a County employee, what options do I have for getting a COVID-19 PCR or Rapid Antigen test?*
-

II. Safety Measures and Facility Planning Questions

- 1. What is the County doing to protect its front-line employees who interact with the public and/or at-risk populations? (updated 7/5/21)*
 - 2. If an employee is 65 years of age or older or has an underlying medical condition that makes them at high risk for COVID-19, will they receive paid Administrative Leave? (updated 7/5/21)*
 - 5. Are masks and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) necessary at work? (updated 7/5/21)*
 - 9. I have been told that there is an "outbreak" in my work location. What does this mean? (updated 7/5/21)*
-

IV. Time Sheet Coding and Leave Usage Questions

- 3. If an employee must be absent from work due to a COVID-19 related issue (e.g. school closure, illness, suspected illness, etc.), how do they code the time on their timesheet? (updated 7/5/21)*
-

VIII. Vaccination Questions

- 1. I do not want to receive the COVID-19 vaccination. Do I need to get it to keep my job with the County?*
- 2. What do I do if I hear an employee voluntarily disclosing that they are not vaccinated and I observe they are not wearing a face-covering at work?*
- 3. Can I get the COVID-19 vaccine on County time and be compensated for mileage if I have to drive to the vaccination site? (updated 7/9/21)*
- 4. I am fully vaccinated from COVID-19. Do I still have to wear a face-covering, maintain social distancing, and adhere to all other COVID-19 safety measures at work?*
- 5. How should I respond if another employee or a supervisor asks me whether I have been vaccinated?*
- 6. What should I do if am questioned about my religious beliefs, or hear other employee's talking about a coworker's religious beliefs, related to their vaccination status.*

7. What do I do if an employee complains that the vaccine received by a coworker (or me) is not as effective as the brand they received themselves?

I. Medical Information and Questions

1. *What is COVID-19?*

COVID-19 is an infectious disease that can be spread through the air when an infectious person talks or vocalizes, sneezes, coughs, or exhales. COVID-19 may also possibly be transmitted when a person touches a contaminated object and then touches their eyes, nose, or mouth, although that is less common.

The County's Risk Management Department has created "**Aerosol Transmissible Diseases and COVID-19 General Awareness Training**" which can be found at the following link:

<https://rise.articulate.com/share/nlZn7kkAr-HQRKluXVqy8DHNDdirGUuV>

2. *What does the Health Officer's Order mean for County employees? (updated 7/5/21)*

All County employees are required to follow the Health Officer's Orders. The Orders are revised at times and may change the requirements for all County employees to follow.

The Orders can be found here: <https://ocCOVID19.ochealthinfo.com/article/oc-health-officers-orders-recommendations>

If new Health Orders are issued that conflict with medical information provided in the Guidance for County Employees - Frequently Asked Questions document, the Health Orders shall supersede the FAQs.

3. *If an employee is concerned that they may have symptoms consistent with COVID-19, what should they do? (updated 12/29/20)*

Employees should self-screen daily prior to coming to work for elevated temperature and/or any of the symptoms associated with COVID-19 which include: fever of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or higher, chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, or diarrhea. If an employee is experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, the employee should stay home and follow normal call-out procedures, regardless of vaccination status.

If an employee begins to feel sick while at work, they should contact a supervisor about the possible need to go home as they would with any other illness. Employees should contact their primary care provider regarding their symptoms. **Employees are to contact Employee Health at (714) 565-3780 to report a diagnosis of COVID-19 and to notify their supervisor or manager of the need to be off work.**

4. *During a pandemic, how much information may a supervisor or manager request from employees who display or report symptoms? (updated 4/20/20)*

Because a pandemic has been declared, employers may ask employees if they are experiencing symptoms such as coughing, fever, or shortness of breath. Employers must treat all information about employee illness as confidential. In general, supervisors and managers are advised not to ask employees if they have COVID-19, although an employee may volunteer it. If there are specific concerns that an employee has a diagnosis of COVID-19 and has not disclosed it, the Department HR team should be contacted. Contact information for your Department HR Team can be found here:

[***Human Resources Contact List by Department***](#)

5. *If an employee has symptoms consistent with COVID-19, can management ask the employee to leave work? (Updated 12/29/20)*

Yes. If an employee is displaying symptoms consistent with COVID-19, they may be asked to leave work.

Employers must provide employees with a workplace that is safe and free from recognized hazards. Employees must be provided with the ability to report symptoms to management without fear of reprisal. Employers should require an employee to leave work if the employee displays or discloses symptoms consistent with COVID-19 or other illness. According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), symptoms include: fever of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or higher, chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, or diarrhea. To confirm which symptoms require an employee to leave work, contact Employee Health Services at (714) 565-3780.

Importantly, managers and supervisors must be consistent in their approach and apply objective criteria to their decision when sending employees home. In other words, departments should take care not to make decisions that are or appear discriminatory based on illegitimate or non-relevant considerations.

6. *If an employee has COVID-19, can they be required to leave work?*

Yes. If an employee has a medical diagnosis of COVID-19, the employee must be required to leave the workplace. In light of the health risks posed by COVID-19, permitting an employee with the virus to be at work could threaten the health and safety of other employees.

In addition, if an employee is required to leave work, Department HR should be contacted to ensure the employee is afforded their due process rights where applicable. Contact information for your Department HR Team can be found here: [*Human Resources Contact List by Department*](#)

7. *If an employee believes a coworker is displaying symptoms consistent with COVID-19, what should they do? (updated 8/24/20)*

The employee should notify a supervisor or manager so the situation can be assessed by Human Resources (HR). If an employee is displaying symptoms consistent with COVID-19, they may be asked to leave work.

8. *If there is a confirmed or likely case of COVID-19 in the workplace, will employees who have had direct contact be notified? (updated 12/29/20)*

Yes. Department HR teams and County supervisors/management are to notify EHS of any reported employee cases of COVID-19. Employee Health Services (EHS) will work with the supervisor or manager to identify employees who had close contact (within 6 feet for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24 hour period, starting 2 days before illness onset; or for asymptomatic patients, 2 days prior to test specimen collection) with a diagnosed COVID-19 positive individual in the workplace. Employees who were in close contact with a reported case of COVID-19 will be notified by EHS within 24 hours and provided directions to follow, including instructions for obtaining a COVID-19 test. Some employees may be ordered to self-quarantine by EHS. Employee medical information is confidential, so the identity of the reported or likely COVID-19 diagnosed employee will only be disclosed on a need-to-know basis.

9. *If there is a confirmed or likely case of COVID-19 in the workplace, will all potentially exposed employees automatically be sent home? (updated 7/5/21)*

No. Per the County Health Officer's amended Health Order (June 17, 2021) individuals who know that they have been in close contact, as defined below, or are notified by EHS of direct exposure, with a person diagnosed with or likely to have COVID-19 must take the following actions:

Self-Quarantine of Persons Exposed to COVID-19. All Orange County residents and visitors who know that they have been in close contact, as defined below, with a person diagnosed with or likely to have COVID-19 shall be deemed exposed to COVID-19 and shall take the following actions:

Not Fully Vaccinated Persons

- All asymptomatic persons shall quarantine themselves in their home or another place of residence for 10 Days after the date of last exposure. They may not leave their place of quarantine except to receive necessary medical care or to obtain such other goods or services necessary for their basic subsistence.
- All asymptomatic persons (i) who reside or work in a high-risk congregate living setting (e.g., skilled nursing facilities, prisons, jails, shelters) or (ii) who reside or work with severely immunosuppressed persons (e.g., Bone marrow or solid organ transplants, chemotherapy) shall quarantine themselves in their home or another place of residence for 14 Days from the date of last exposure. They may not leave their place of quarantine except to receive necessary medical care or to obtain such other goods or services necessary for their basic subsistence.

All persons quarantined must take the following additional actions:

- Self-monitor for COVID-19 symptoms through Day 14 and if symptoms occur, contact the Orange County Health Care Agency or their healthcare provider and seek COVID-19 testing. They should remain at home or another place of residence and away from others pending the results of their testing.
- Stay at least 6 feet from others through Day 14;
- Wear face coverings at all times through Day 14 and adhere to the face covering order # 5, below, after Day 14;
- Avoid crowds through Day 14 after the date of last exposure.

Exemptions:

Asymptomatic persons who are fully vaccinated for COVID-19 are not required to quarantine after exposure to COVID-19. People are considered fully vaccinated for COVID-19:

- 14 days or more after they have received the second dose in a 2-dose series (Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna); or
- 14 days or more after they have received a single-dose vaccine (Johnson and Johnson/Janssen).

As dictated by the Cal OSHA Emergency Temporary Standards, during critical staffing shortages, when there are not enough staff to provide safe patient care, essential critical infrastructure workers in the following categories may return after Day 7 from the date of last exposure if they have received a negative PCR COVID-19 test result from a specimen collected after Day 5:

- Health care providers;
- Emergency responder; and
- Social service workers who work face to face with clients in the child welfare system or in assisted living facilities.

“Close contact” refers to any person who has been within 6 feet of a person diagnosed with or likely to have COVID-19 for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24 hour period, starting 2 days before illness onset (or for asymptomatic patients, 2 days prior to test specimen collection). A person who is diagnosed with or likely to have COVID-19 is considered infectious from 48 hours before his or her symptoms first appeared until the person is no longer required to be isolated. A person who is diagnosed with COVID-19 but has no symptoms is considered infectious from 48 hours prior to the date the person was tested until 10 days after that date.

"*Emergency responder*" includes military or national guard, law enforcement officers, correctional institution personnel, fire fighters, emergency medical services personnel, physicians, nurses, public health personnel, emergency medical technicians, paramedics, emergency management personnel, 911 operators, child welfare workers and service providers, public works personnel, and persons with skills or training in operating specialized equipment or other skills needed to provide aid in a declared emergency, as well as individuals who work for such facilities employing these individuals and whose work is necessary to maintain the operation of the facility.

"*Health care provider*" includes physicians; psychiatrists; nurses; nurse practitioners; nurse assistants; medical technicians; any other person who is employed to provide diagnostic services, preventive services, treatment services or other services that are integrated with and necessary to the provision of patient care and, if not provided, would adversely impact patient care; and employees who directly assist or are supervised by a direct provider of diagnostic, preventive, treatment, or other patient care services; and employees who do not provide direct health care services to a patient but are otherwise integrated into and necessary to the provision those services – for example, a laboratory technician who processes medical test results to aid in the diagnosis and treatment of a health condition. A person is not a health care provider merely because his or her employer provides health care services or because he or she provides a service that affects the provision of health care services. For example, IT professionals, building maintenance staff, human resources personnel, cooks, food services workers, records managers, consultants, and billers are not health care providers, even if they work at a hospital or a similar health care facility.

For more, and any updated information, please review the OC Health Officer’s Orders and Recommendations and the Cal OSHA Emergency Temporary Standards can be found here: <https://ocovid19.ochealthinfo.com/article/oc-health-officers-orders-recommendations>

<https://www.dir.ca.gov/title8/3205.html>

10. Can an employee who does not display symptoms of COVID-19, but is at high risk of having it due to travel, be asked or required to leave work? (updated 7/5/21)

The California Department of Public Health provides guidance on quarantining related to travel:

- All travelers arriving in or returning to California from other states or countries should follow [CDC travel guidance](#).
- All travelers who test positive or develop symptoms of COVID-19 should isolate and follow the County’s Public Health Officer’s Orders.
- Fully vaccinated travelers:
 - are less likely to get and spread COVID-19, and can travel safely within the United States and California.

- should follow [CDC travel guidance](#), and are not required to test or quarantine before or after travel unless they have symptoms concerning for COVID-19 disease.

Non-Essential Travel of unvaccinated persons:

1. Non-essential travelers who are not fully vaccinated should get tested with a viral test 1-3 days before travel, and get tested 3-5 days upon arrival to their destination. They should stay home and self-quarantine for a full 7 days after travel, even if their test is negative.
2. Non-essential travelers who are not fully vaccinated and don't get tested should stay home and self-quarantine for 10 days after travel.

Updated CDPH information can be found here:

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/Travel-Advisory.aspx>

11. When should an employee with COVID-19, or symptoms consistent with it, be allowed to return to work? (updated 7/5/21)

In accordance with County Public Health Officer's Orders guidelines, all Orange County residents who have been diagnosed or are likely to have COVID-19 and were directed to care for themselves at home may discontinue home isolation under the following conditions:

Self-isolation of Persons with COVID-19. All Orange County residents and visitors who have been diagnosed with or are likely to have COVID-19, as defined below, shall immediately isolate themselves in their home or another residence under the following criteria, as applicable:

- a. Individuals with COVID-19 symptoms shall isolate themselves until: (i) at least 24 hours after they have recovered, meaning their fever has resolved without use of fever-reducing medications and their respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath) have improved; AND (ii) at least 10 days has elapsed from when their symptoms first appeared.
- b. Individuals who have a positive COVID-19 PCR or rapid antigen laboratory test result and are without COVID-19 symptoms shall isolate themselves for 10 days from the date when the first specimen for the positive COVID-19 laboratory test result was obtained.
- c. Received a positive COVID-19 PCR or rapid antigen laboratory test result; and/or
- d. Been informed by a physician that he or she is likely to have COVID-19 and/or;
- e. Signs and symptoms that are consistent with COVID-19 (i.e., new onset of fever, cough, shortness of breath or trouble breathing).

For more, and any updated information, please review the OC Health Officer's Orders and Recommendations that can be found here: <https://ocovid19.ochealthinfo.com/article/oc-health-officers-orders-recommendations>

Employees are to consult with their medical provider to determine when it is safe to return to work. If the employee has taken leave under the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) due to COVID-19, consult with Department HR team about the necessary medical clearances to return to work. Contact information for your Department HR Team can be found here: ***Human Resources Contact List by Department***

12. When can an employee who did not display symptoms of COVID-19, but was compelled to leave work due to risk of exposure, be allowed to return? (updated 7/5/21)

EHS will provide notice to employees compelled to leave work due to exposure in the workplace. EHS will indicate on the notice when an employee may return to work if the employee remains symptom free during the entire quarantine period.

If an employee develops COVID-19 symptoms during a quarantine period, the employee is not to return to work and follow Public Health Officer's Orders. It is also strongly recommended the employee contact his/her personal physician for further guidance on when it is safe to return to work.

13. What if an employee does not want to return to work because they have a compromised immune system or other medical condition potentially putting them at high risk of COVID-19 infection?

Departments should engage in the interactive process with such employees. Employees who disclose a pre-existing medical condition, including an underlying health condition or compromised immune system, may request a reasonable accommodation, such as working from home. Employers have a legal obligation to provide employees with reasonable accommodations unless doing so would create an undue hardship for the Department. Departments should consult with their Return to Work Coordinator in such a situation.

14. What if an employee is considered at high risk of COVID-19 infection because of age? (updated 7/5/21)

The County's Public Health Officer's Orders provides the following "Strong Recommendations" for "Vulnerable Populations":

In general, the older a person is, the more health conditions a person has, and the more severe the conditions, the more important it is to take preventive measures for COVID-19 such as getting vaccinated, social distancing and wearing a mask when around people who don't live in the same household, and practicing hand hygiene. For more information, go to:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-with-medical-conditions.html>.

For further, and any updated information, please review the OC Health Officer's Orders and Recommendations that can be found here: <https://ocovid19.ochealthinfo.com/article/oc-health-officers-orders-recommendations>

15. What if an employee refuses to come to work because of a generalized fear of infection? (updated 7/5/21)

If operationally feasible, the employee may be allowed to telecommute. However, an employee can be required to attend work, and the refusal to do so may be grounds for discipline.

Current CDC guidance recommends getting vaccinated against COVID-19, use of face coverings, staying six feet away from others who are sick, and frequent hand washing/use of hand sanitizer as effective and critical means to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. Further CDC guidance about protecting yourself from COVID-19 can be found here:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html>

16. What can you tell other employees about a coworker who has COVID-19?

Employee medical information is confidential, so the identity of the diagnosed employee should not be disclosed.

Individuals with COVID-19 or from countries of origin associated with the outbreak of COVID-19 must not be stigmatized. The County will continue to ensure that employees are not harassed or discriminated against based on a protected category. If an employee feels as though they have been harassed or discriminated against due to concerns related to COVID-19, they should speak with Human Resources or contact the EEO Access Office immediately.

17. During a pandemic, may an employer take employees' temperatures to determine whether they have a fever? (updated 12/29/20)

Generally, measuring an employee's body temperature is a medical examination that may only be performed under limited circumstances. Based on current Cal/OSHA COVID-19 Emergency Temporary Standards, employers may measure an employee's body temperature for the limited purpose of evaluating the risk that employee's presence poses to others in the workplace as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, Department Heads/Managers should consult with Employee Health Services prior to the implementation of any process to measure employees' body temperature.

Employees are expected to self-screen daily prior to coming to work for elevated temperature and/or any of the symptoms associated with COVID-19 which include: fever of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or higher, chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, or diarrhea. If an employee is experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, the employee is expected to stay home and follow normal call-out procedures.

18. My department/facility/building is requiring employees to go through a temperature screening in order to enter the facility/building. What does this mean to me? (updated 12/29/20)

A symptom associated with COVID-19 is a temperature at or above 100.4 F or higher. Employees should self-screen daily prior to coming to work for elevated temperature and/or any of the symptoms associated with COVID-19. Additionally, to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and ensure a safe and healthy workplace for employees, some County facilities/buildings are requiring employees go through temperature screening in order to enter the facility/building. Temperature readings are considered confidential information and will only be shared with individuals that have a legitimate business-related need to know the reading.

An employee who refuses to go through temperature screening may not be allowed to work and required to post their own balances to cover their absence.

If an employee has a temperature at or above 100.4 or higher, they will not be permitted to work and encouraged to talk with their medical provider to determine when it is safe to return to work. The employee will be asked to voluntarily leave work and required to post their balances to cover the absence. If the employee does not voluntarily leave and disagrees with posting balances to cover the absence, the employee will have the opportunity to appeal the decision. If you have any questions, please contact your Department HR representative for more information. Contact information for your Department HR Team can be found here: [**Human Resources Contact List by Department**](#)

19. Will I be paid if I am ordered to self-quarantine or isolate from Employee Health Services?

Departments are strongly encouraged to allow employees to telecommute during self-quarantine or isolation if operationally feasible. Employees will continue to be paid if telecommuting during self-quarantine or isolation.

An employee who is directed by EHS to be absent from duty due to an on-the-job exposure to a contagious disease may be eligible to receive full compensation for a period not to exceed eighty (80) working hours for a full-time employee or fourteen (14) calendar days for a part time employee. Please contact your Department HR representative for more information. Contact information for your Department HR Team can be found here: [Human Resources Contact List by Department](#)

20. If I am notified by EHS that I have been possibly exposed to COVID-19 in the workplace, will the County provide me the opportunity to receive a COVID-19 test?

Yes. When you are notified by EHS that you have possibly been exposed to COVID-19 in the workplace, you will have the opportunity to voluntarily be tested for COVID-19. You will receive directions from EHS on how to receive the test when you are notified of the possible exposure in the workplace.

21. I heard that someone in my building/facility was diagnosed or likely to have COVID-19. Will I be notified? (updated 12/29/20)

To ensure compliance with AB 685, you will be informed that that someone at your worksite likely has COVID-19 or has tested positive for COVID-19 and the date. Employee Health Services has implemented contact tracing measures that include the identification of those who have been in close contact with an employee diagnosed or likely to have COVID-19 in the workplace. Close contact refers to any person who has been within 6 feet of a person diagnosed with or likely to have COVID-19 for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24 hour period, starting 2 days before illness onset (or for asymptomatic patients, 2 days prior to test specimen collection). Departments may provide further updates to its employees about COVID-19 exposure in its buildings/facilities.

If you were not notified by EHS of possible exposure in the workplace, it is because you were not identified as being in close contact to the employee diagnosed or likely to have COVID-19. If you believe you were in close contact with an employee diagnosed or likely to have COVID-19 while at work, please contact your Department HR representative. Contact information for your Department HR Team can be found here: [Human Resources Contact List by Department](#)

There is an inherent risk of exposure to COVID-19 in any public area and/or where other people are present. Every employee is expected to follow safety measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 while at work, including wearing a face-covering or respirator if not fully vaccinated. The face-covering order SHALL NOT APPLY to the following employees:

- Anyone who has trouble breathing, or who is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the face-covering without assistance; or
- Persons with a medical or mental health condition or development disability that prevents wearing a face-covering.
- Persons for whom wearing a face covering would create a risk to the person related to their work, as determined by local, state, or federal regulators or workplace safety guidelines.
- Note: Persons exempted from wearing a face covering due to a medical condition who are employed in a job involving regular contact with others must wear a non-restrictive alternative, such as a face shield with a drape on the bottom edge, as long as their condition permits it.

22. *If I feel ill prior to the start of my shift should I go to work? Or, if I am at work and start to feel ill should I stay at work? (*Including symptoms consistent with COVID-19 or other illness)*

No. Immediately notify your supervisor and leave work or contact your supervisor and inform him/her that you will not be attending work. Please contact your health care professional for guidance on when it is safe for you to return to work.

The County must ensure a safe and healthy workspace for all employees. If your supervisor or management observes you displaying signs of illness at work, you will be asked to voluntarily leave work and may post your balances to cover your absence. If you refuse to leave, you may be directed to leave work by your supervisor or management and may post your balances to cover your absence.

If you disagree with posting your balances to cover your absence, you will have the opportunity to appeal the decision. If you have any questions, please contact your Department HR representative for more information. Contact information for your Department HR Team can be found here: ***X. Human Resources Contact List*** by Department

23. *As a County employee, what options do I have for getting a COVID-19 PCR or Rapid Antigen test?*

Regular communications are sent to employees regarding County provided testing options. You may also schedule a test through your private healthcare provider or through a community testing site such as CVS. If you have been notified of COVID-19 exposure in the workplace, you will be provided with the opportunity to get a COVID-19 test during working hours.

As always, if you are sick, stay home and contact your medical provider. If you have been exposed to an infected individual outside of work or have symptoms consistent with COVID-19 and believe that a COVID-19 test may help reduce the spread of this disease, you may use your Emergency Paid Sick Leave (EPSL) to obtain a test. Each employee was provided 80 hours of EPSL and it is authorized for 1 hour of EPSL to be used in order to get a COVID-19 test. Employees should work with their supervisor to identify a time that works best based on the business need. Other testing options:

- **County Employee Testing Site** (County Employees Only)
Employee Health (714) 565-3780
- **At Home Test Kit**
 - Order [AMBRY COVID-19 Home Test Kit](#) for County Employees.
 - After receiving your test kit you **MUST** register your [AMBRY COVID-19 Home Test Kit](#) **PRIOR** to sending your specimen back to the lab for processing.
 - Please have your employee ID number and insurance information available when you register on the Ambry website.
 - This testing program is available at no out-of-pocket cost to you because third party payors are billed. (Third party payors may include: Medicaid, Medicare, private health insurance plans, HRSA, CA DHCS and/or the Orange County Health Care Agency.)

[Return to Top](#)

II. Safety Measures and Facility Planning Questions

1. *What is the County doing to protect its front-line employees who interact with the public and/or at-risk populations? (updated 7/5/21)*

The County adheres to all Cal/OSHA COVID-19 Emergency Temporary Standards regarding workplace safety. The requirements for social distancing practices (in most circumstances) have ended. Further, each Agency in the County is required to have a Cal/OSHA COVID-19 Prevention Plan in place to protect employees. Preventative measures such as engineering controls, personal protective equipment, identification and correction of potential hazards, and communication regarding COVID-19 are addressed in the agency's specific plan.

At this time, the County will provide a face-covering and/or N95 mask (respirator) for voluntary use to any employee requesting one, regardless of vaccination status. An employee may wear a face-covering or respirator at work, regardless of vaccination status, without fear of retaliation. When receiving an N95 mask for voluntary use, an employee will receive instructions on how to properly fit the mask to their face. Instructions on how to properly fit the mask and information about voluntary use respirators are found in "Guide to Respiratory Protection at Work" at: <https://www.ocgov.com/gov/ceo/covid19employeeinfo>. All employees receiving an N95 mask for voluntary use must read this document.

Face coverings are not respiratory protective equipment. N95s are more protective respirators and protect the users from airborne disease while face coverings primarily protect people around the user.

The County has also decided to voluntarily keep previously installed protective barriers as an added measure of safety for its employees.

2. *If an employee is 65 years of age or older or has an underlying medical condition that makes them at high risk for COVID-19, will they receive paid Administrative Leave? (updated 7/5/21)*

No. Employees who are 65 years or older and/or have an underlying medical condition that makes them high risk should review the County's Public Health Officer's Orders "Strong Recommendations" for "Vulnerable Populations":

In general, the older a person is, the more health conditions a person has, and the more severe the conditions, the more important it is to take preventive measures for COVID-19 such as getting vaccinated, social distancing and wearing a mask when around people who don't live in the same household, and practicing hand hygiene. For more information, go to:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-with-medical-conditions.html>.

For more, and any updated information, please review the OC Health Officer's Orders and Recommendations that can be found here: <https://ocovid19.ochealthinfo.com/article/oc-health-officers-orders-recommendations>

3. *Is the County working with my union regarding how COVID-19 is affecting employees? (updated 12/29/20)*

Yes, as suggested by the Board of Supervisors, HR has been communicating with all unions and has established an Ad-Hoc committee to facilitate collaboration as we work through this critical time as a County family.

Union employee representatives are allowed and encouraged to participate in the identification and evaluation of COVID-19 hazards.

4. *What should I do if the County building that I work in is closed? How will employees be returned to the workplace? (Updated 5/15/20)*

In March 2020 decisions were made to close some County buildings to protect the public and employees. While public access to some buildings and services may continue to be limited, County departments managing a specific building or service may begin to reintroduce some or all employees to the workplace. While each department will have unique operational issues, departments have been provided with guidance for planning and returning employees to the workplace safely.

Review the guidance and suggestions provided to departments at the following link:

<https://www.ocgov.com/gov/ceo/covid19employeeinfo>

5. *Are masks and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) necessary at work? (updated 7/5/21)*

It depends where you work and the job you perform. The County adheres to all Cal/OSHA COVID-19 standards regarding workplace safety. The requirements for social distancing practices under the Cal/OSHA COVID-19 Emergency Temporary Standards (in most circumstances) have ended. Further, the County is to evaluate the need for personal protective equipment (PPE) to prevent exposure to COVID-19 hazards, such as gloves, goggles, and face shields, and provide such personal protective equipment as needed. Each Department is to determine its need to provide PPE based on work performed by its employees.

“Fully vaccinated” means you have received either the second dose in a two-dose series COVID-19 vaccine (e.g., Pfizer or Moderna) or a single dose of a one-dose vaccine (e.g., Johnson & Johnson/Janssen) at least 14 days prior to signing this document. The vaccine must be FDA-approved or have emergency use authorization from the FDA or World Health Organization (WHO), if vaccinated out of the country.

Employees who work in the following settings must continue to wear a face covering even if they are fully vaccinated from COVID-19:

- On [public transit](#) (examples: airplanes, ships, ferries, trains, subways, buses, taxis, and ride-shares) and in transportation hubs (examples: airport, bus terminal, marina, train station, seaport or other port, subway station, or any other area that provides transportation)
- Indoors in [K-12 schools](#), [childcare](#) and other youth settings.
- [Healthcare settings](#) (including [long-term care facilities](#))
- State and local [correctional facilities and detention centers](#)
- [Homeless shelters](#), [emergency shelters](#), and [cooling centers](#)

Please check with your supervisor or human resources representative if you have any questions regarding if you work in any of these settings.

Consistent with Cal/OSHA guidance, fully COVID-19 vaccinated employees may choose to not to wear face coverings, except for certain situations such as during COVID-19 outbreaks and in settings where the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) requires all persons to wear them (see above), if they voluntarily self-attest to being fully vaccinated from COVID-19. Employees have an opportunity to attest if they are fully vaccinated by submitting a confidential electronic form that will be sent directly to Employee Health Services. The voluntary attestation form is located at:

[Employee Self-Attestation For COVID-19 Vaccination](#)

Employees are required to provide accurate information about vaccination status and may be required to provide documentation that they have been fully vaccinated (e.g., a copy of a vaccine card or other official document confirming vaccination status) upon request. Vaccination status will be kept confidential but may be shared with limited County staff as deemed necessary to comply with the ETS and/or other state and local regulations.

If an employee does not complete the voluntary self-attestation form, then they are considered unvaccinated from COVID-19. Unvaccinated employees and those who do not complete the self-attestation form are still required to wear a face covering indoors in the workplace except when alone in a room or vehicle, or when eating/drinking and six feet apart, or for brief times when a work task is not feasible with a face covering. Further exemptions include:

- Anyone who has trouble breathing, or who is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the face-covering without assistance; or
- Persons with a medical or mental health condition or development disability that prevents wearing a face-covering.
- Persons for whom wearing a face covering would create a risk to the person related to their work, as determined by local, state, or federal regulators or workplace safety guidelines.
- Note: Persons exempted from wearing a face covering due to a medical condition who are employed in a job involving regular contact with others must wear a non-restrictive alternative, such as a face shield with a drape on the bottom edge, as long as their condition permits it.

6. *My department/facility/building is requiring employees to go through a temperature screening in order to enter the facility/building. What does this mean to me? (updated 12/29/20)*

A symptom associated with COVID-19 is a temperature at or above 100.4 F or higher. In order to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and ensure a safe and healthy workplace for employees, some County facilities/buildings are requiring employees go through temperature screening in order to enter the facility/building. Temperature readings are considered confidential information and will only be shared with individuals that have a legitimate business-related need to know the reading.

An employee who refuses to go through temperature screening may not be allowed to work and required to post their own balances to cover their absence.

If an employee has a temperature at or above 100.4 or higher, they will not be permitted to work and encouraged to talk with their medical provider to determine when it is safe to return to work. The employee will be asked to voluntarily leave work and required to post their balances to cover the absence. If the employee does not voluntarily leave and disagrees with posting balances to cover the absence, the employee will have the opportunity to appeal the decision. If you have any questions, please contact your Department HR representative for more information. Contact information for your Department HR Team can be found here: [*Human Resources Contact List by Department*](#)

Employees are expected to self-screen daily prior to coming to work for elevated temperature and/or any of the symptoms associated with COVID-19 which include: fever of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or higher, chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, or diarrhea. If an employee is experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, the employee is expected to stay home and follow normal call-out procedures.

7. Is it okay for an employee to go to their work site on a day off (or to a different work area for non-work reasons) for example, to visit co-workers? (updated 7/5/21)

No. Although most social distancing requirements have ended per the Cal/OSHA Emergency COVID-19 Temporary Standards, there are situations where social distancing may still be required (such as during COVID-19 major outbreaks). As a result you may inadvertently walk into an area where a COVID-19 outbreak is occurring and place yourself and others at risk.

Employees should not visit their work site outside of their regularly scheduled shift unless they are working authorized overtime, are directed to do so by a supervisor or manager or are going to the site to receive County-offered services. Likewise, employees should avoid unnecessary visits outside of their regular work areas of their work location to limit exposure to other employees.

8. Where can I find a summary of County Safety Measures and Facility Planning?

Please view L&OD's video, "Welcome Back – Guidelines for Returning to the Office":
<https://youtu.be/eWFGowU0QMc>

The County's Risk Management Department has created "Aerosol Transmissible Diseases and COVID-19 General Awareness Training" which can be found at the following link:

<https://rise.articulate.com/share/nlZn7kkAr-HQRKluXVqy8DHNDdirGUuV>

[Additional plan details can be obtained through your Department's COVID-19 Prevention Plan.](#)

9. I have been told that there is an "outbreak" in my work location. What does this mean? (updated 7/5/21)

Cal/OSHA issued Emergency Temporary Standards for COVID-19 Prevention. Risk Management is working with departments to ensure the standards are being adhered to in all County departments. The County is adhering to the requirements included in the guidelines.

The Cal/OSHA guidelines also include information regarding the identification and response when there are multiple COVID-19 infections or "Outbreaks" in the workplace. There are two different standards that define an Outbreak:

- Three or more COVID-19 cases in an exposed workplace within a 14-day period.
- Twenty or more COVID-19 cases in an exposed workplace within a 30-day period.

When an Outbreak of three or more COVID-19 cases has occurred, the regulations mandate COVID-19 available testing for unvaccinated individuals in that exposed workplace, as well as an investigation to determine the possible cause of the Outbreak.

When an Outbreak of twenty or more COVID-19 cases has occurred, the regulations mandate COVID-19 available testing for all individuals that were in the exposed workplace, as well as an investigation to determine the possible cause of the Outbreak.

Risk Management has worked with County Counsel and Human Resource Services and developed a County-wide plan on responding to Outbreaks as defined above. The current general procedures are as follows:

- Risk Management is analyzing the COVID-19 positive cases in County departments on a daily basis to determine if either of the definitions of Outbreak is met.
- If an Outbreak has determined to have occurred in an exposed workplace, Risk Management will contact the Department Head and Designated Safety Representative(s) of that workplace and notify them of the Outbreak.
- Risk Management/Department Safety Representative(s) will assist in the coordination of COVID-19 testing with Health Care Agency/Employee Health Services for the individuals in that exposed workplace per Cal/OSHA guidelines.
- Risk Management and the Department Safety Representative(s) of the exposed workplace will coordinate with department staff in conducting the mandatory investigation, and implement any corrective actions in accordance with Cal/OSHA guidelines.

10. I have been notified that a COVID-19 outbreak occurred at my worksite. I have been offered to receive no cost COVID-19 testing and need to drive to the testing location during my normal working hours. Will I receive mileage to drive to/from the testing site and my worksite?

Yes. If an employee is provided a written notice of a COVID-19 outbreak at their worksite, the employee will receive instructions on how the County is offering a no cost testing option to them. If that testing option requires the employee to drive to a location to take the test, the employee may claim that mileage to/from the testing location and their normal worksite. Employees are to utilize the Job Number EOC20121 in tracking the mileage cost for COVID-19 Testing funding reimbursement. If an employee decides to utilize their own medical provider to take a COVID-19 test, the employee may not claim mileage for that testing.

11. I have been notified that a COVID-19 outbreak occurred at my worksite and I have been offered to receive no cost COVID-19 testing. When I arranged for the testing/arrived to take the test, I was required to provide my medical insurance information. Will I be charged for the testing?

If an employee has been provided a written notice of a COVID-19 outbreak at their worksite, the employee will receive instructions on how the County is offering a no cost testing option to them. If an employee utilizes the County testing provider identified in the notice, the employee will be required to provide medical insurance information to take the test. The employee should not receive a bill for that test. However, if an employee receives a bill for the test, the employee will not be responsible for the bill. If an employee receives a bill for the test, the employee is to contact Employee benefits at c19testbilling@ocgov.com.

If an employee chooses to obtain a COVID-19 test through a medical provider of their choice instead of utilizing one of the County's offered no cost testing options, the employee may be responsible for any costs incurred for testing. It is strongly recommended that employees check with their medical insurance provider before obtaining a COVID-19 test.

12. I have been notified that a COVID-19 outbreak occurred at my worksite and I have been offered to receive COVID-19 testing. I recently tested positive for COVID-19 and have recovered. My supervisor has offered me a no cost testing option due to the COVID-19 outbreak. Do I need to take the COVID-19 test?

No. In accordance with Cal/OSHA COVID-19 regulations, the County is required to provide a no cost COVID-19 testing option to all employees that normally work in an area in which a COVID-19 outbreak

has occurred. This testing option is required to be provided until the outbreak has ended. Based on Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and County Health Care Agency (HCA) guidelines:

- 1) Employees who have recovered and remain asymptomatic should not be retested per CDC guidelines.
- 2) People can test positive for up to 3 months, but not be infectious.
- 3) This also does not imply that they are immune to COVID-19.
- 4) If they become symptomatic again, they should seek medical attention and possibly get re-tested if recommended by a medical Provider.

Further information can be found at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/duration-isolation.html>

[Return to Top](#)

III. Workers Compensation Questions

1. *What should I do if I think I was exposed to COVID-19 at work? (updated 8/24/20)*

An employee may report their concern to a supervisor and an injury or illness report (5020) will be filed. Supervisors and managers are also to file a 5020 when notified by EHS that an employee has been exposed to an individual diagnosed or likely to have COVID-19 in the workplace. This report will be deemed a record only. An exposure is not an injury or illness and a claim will not be filed. However, CEO-Risk Management will maintain the form on file in the event you as the employee test positive for the disease and believe it is work related.

2. *Has the law regarding workers' compensation claims related to a diagnosis of COVID-19 changed? (Updated 9/29/20)*

Governor Gavin Newsom issued an Executive Order dated May 6, 2020 which expanded the workers' compensation presumption to employees who reported to their place of employment between March 19, 2020 and July 5, 2020 and who tested positive for or were diagnosed with COVID-19 within the following 14 days during that time period. Effective September 17, 2020, Governor Newsom signed SB 1159 which codified the Executive Order and extended the rebuttable presumption that illness or death related to COVID-19 is an occupational injury and therefore eligible for benefits beyond July 6, 2020 for first responders and certain health care workers. For all other employees, the rebuttable presumption only applies under certain circumstances where there is a COVID-19 "outbreak" at the employee's specific workplace.

Review the Executive Order at the following link:

<https://www.ocgov.com/civicax/filebank/blobdload.aspx?BlobID=115690>

Review SB 1159 at the following link:

https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=201920200SB1159

3. *I have been diagnosed or tested positive with COVID-19. Is it work related? (updated 9/29/20)*

It is only work related if you believe that you contacted COVID-19 at work, you tested positive 14 days after you worked outside of the home at the County's direction from March 19, 2020 to January 1, 2023, and you file a Claim for Benefits. If you believe that you were not exposed to COVID-19 at work,

do not file a claim. The County does have the right to investigate your claim and could delay your claim for up to 30 days while it is investigated.

4. *I work from home, am I covered by the Governor's Executive Order and/or SB 1159? (updated 9/29/20)*

No. Only employees required to work outside of the home at the County's direction are covered by the Governor's Executive Order and/or SB 1159. The order applies to work performed outside of the home from March 19, 2020 to January 1, 2023.

5. *I have symptoms, but my doctor won't test me. Am I covered by the Governor's Executive Order and/or SB 1159r? (updated 9/29/20)*

Yes. All employees who work outside the home or at the employer's direction from March 19, 2020 to January 1, 2023 are covered by the Executive Order and/or SB 1159. If your doctor will not provide a test any licensed physician in the State of California can test including a workers' compensation doctor. The Executive Order and SB 1159 cover employees who test positive within 14 days after the employee worked outside of the home at the County's direction from March 19, 2020 to January 1, 2023, or after a diagnosis by a physician that is confirmed by testing within 30 days. This only applies during the stay-at-home period from March 19, 2020 to January 1, 2023

6. *I am not considered an essential worker, am I still covered by the Governor's Executive Order and/or SB 1159? (updated 9/29/20)*

Yes. Every employee that was required to come into work by the County outside their home from March 19, 2020 to January 1, 2023 is covered under the Governor's Executive Order and/or SB 1159.

7. *What benefits am I entitled to if my injury is found to be work related?*

The employee is entitled to all workers' compensation benefits provided in the California Labor Code including, but not limited to, total temporary disability benefits, permanent disability benefits and medical treatment as long as it is supported by medical evidence. Workers' Compensation will take into consideration any other benefits paid for COVID-19 time off including paid sick leave benefits for COVID-19 (EPSL).

8. *How is temporary disability paid?*

Temporary disability is paid every 14 days, however you must use Emergency Paid Sick Leave (EPSL) specifically for COVID-19 first. Once you exhaust those 80 hours, temporary disability or 4850 benefits can be paid if your illness extends beyond the 14 days.

9. *What if I had COVID-19 and used my balances for my time away from work from March 19, 2020 to January 1, 2023? (updated 9/29/20)*

The Executive Order and SB 1159 cover all employees who work outside the home from March 19, 2020 to January 1, 2023. You may be entitled to reimbursement, contact your Department's HR representative. Contact information for your Department HR Team can be found here: [**Human Resources Contact List by Department**](#)

[Return to Top](#)

IV. Time Sheet Coding and Leave Usage Questions

1. *Does an employee have to use leave balances if they are compelled to leave work due to symptoms of COVID-19 or being in a high-risk category?*

No. An employee may choose to either use leave balances or take unpaid leave. However, if an employee chooses unpaid status, they may be responsible for both the County and the employee's share of medical benefits.

2. *What if an employee compelled to leave work is out of leave balances? (updated 4/20/20)*

Legally, the County can require an employee to leave work and go unpaid, but the employee would likely be entitled to an appeal. The employee should be encouraged to telecommute if operationally feasible and the employee is well enough. If telecommuting is not an option, they can be advanced up to 80 hours of additional sick/healthcare leave to use for this purpose.

Please see further "Leave Usage Questions" for information about additional leaves an employee may qualify for if absences are for a qualifying reason related to COVID-19.

3. *If an employee must be absent from work due to a COVID-19 related issue (e.g. school closure, illness, suspected illness, etc.), how do they code the time on their timesheet? (updated 7/5/21)*

On March 19, 2021, Governor Newsom signed into law Senate Bill 95 (SB 95), known as 2021 COVID-19 Supplemental Paid Sick Leave, mandating that public agency employers provide COVID-19 Supplemental paid sick leave to eligible employees. This new law went into effect on March 29, 2021 and is retroactively effective on January 1, 2021.

In accordance with SB 95, the County's current EPSL program will be extended through September 30, 2021. Employees may use EPSL when they are unable to work or telework and have qualifying reasons for such leave, including:

- Caring for Yourself: The employee is subject to quarantine or isolation period related to COVID-19 as defined by an order or guidelines of the California Department of Public Health, the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, or a local health officer with jurisdiction over the workplace, has been advised by a healthcare provider to quarantine, or is experiencing COVID-19 symptoms and seeking a medical diagnosis.
- Caring for a Family Member: The covered employee is caring for a family member who is subject to a COVID-19 quarantine or isolation period or has been advised by a healthcare provider to quarantine due to COVID-19, or is caring for a child whose school or place of care is closed or unavailable due to COVID-19 on the premises.
- Vaccine-Related: The covered employee is attending a vaccine appointment or cannot work or telework due to vaccine-related symptoms.

Employees may request the use of EPSL by completing an "Emergency Paid Sick Leave Certification" or "Emergency Paid Sick Leave School/Daycare Closure Certification" Form and submit it to their department's human resources representative. The forms are located at:

<https://www.ocgov.com/gov/ceo/covid19employeeinfo>

In total, a full time employee may have received up to 120 hours of COVID-19 Emergency Paid Sick Leave through the Families First Coronavirus Recover Act, Senate Bill 95 (SB 95), known as 2021 COVID-19 Supplemental Paid Sick Leave, and Board of Supervisors approved COVID-19 Sick Leave.

An employee who must be absent from work due to any qualifying COVID-19 related reason (see chart below) may use Emergency Paid Sick Leave. Employees can then use their sick/healthcare leave balances until they are exhausted. This applies to all employees including those with annual leave balances. Once sick/healthcare leave is exhausted the employee will code any absence per the terms of the applicable Memorandum of Understanding. If an employee exhausts all balances, they can be advanced up to 80 hours of additional sick/healthcare leave for this purpose. An employee may be entitled to paid leave if compelled by direction of a County-designated physician to be absent from work due to an on-the-job exposure to a contagious disease. Please contact your Department HR representative for more information. Contact information for your Department HR Team can be found here: [Human Resources Contact List by Department](#)

4. *What if the employee who is not compelled to leave but opts to leave work due to COVID-19 related issues (e.g. without symptoms but high risk) is out of leave balances?*

Legally, the County can require an employee to go unpaid, but this employee should also be offered the opportunity to telecommute if operationally feasible and they are well enough. If telecommuting is not an option, they can be advanced up to 80 hours of additional sick/healthcare leave for this purpose.

5. *What kind of due process is required for employees who are compelled to leave work and use their leave balances?*

Regular employees who are required to use their leave balances should be offered the opportunity to meet with designated personnel via telephone or video conference or provide a written response within a reasonable time after they have left the workplace if they disagree with the decision. This meeting would be similar to a *Skelly* hearing, during which the employee may present any relevant information in support of their position. Department HR will assist with this process. Contact information for your Department HR Team can be found here: [Human Resources Contact List by Department](#)

6. *What if my child's school is conducting some or all of the school week remotely or childcare provider is fully or partially closed? (updated 7/5/21)*

Emergency Family Medical Leave Act which entitled parents to take time off to care for their child if their child's school or daycare was closed as a result of COVID-19 **ended** on December 31, 2020.

On December 15, 2020, the Board of Supervisors approved the ability of an eligible employee to use remaining Emergency Paid Sick Leave (EPSL) balances and the use of up to 40 additional hours of EPSL (based on their regular work schedule) for the qualifying reasons above through June 17, 2021. EPSL may be used to absences associated with needing time off to care for an employee's child if their child's school or daycare is closed as a result of COVID-19.

On March 19, 2021, Governor Newsom signed into law Senate Bill 95 (SB 95), known as **2021 COVID-19 Supplemental Paid Sick Leave**, mandating that public agency employers provide COVID-19 supplemental paid sick leave to eligible employees. This new law went into effect on March 29, 2021 and is retroactively effective on January 1, 2021.

In accordance with SB 95, the County's current EPSL program will be extended through September 30, 2021. Employees may use EPSL when they are unable to work or telework and have qualifying reasons for such leave, including:

- **Caring for a Family Member:** The covered employee is caring for a family member who is subject to a COVID-19 quarantine or isolation period or has been advised by a healthcare provider to quarantine due to COVID-19, or is caring for a child whose school or place of care is closed or unavailable due to COVID-19 on the premises.

Employees may request the use of EPSL by completing an “Emergency Paid Sick Leave Certification” or “Emergency Paid Sick Leave School/Daycare Closure Certification” Form and submit it to their department’s human resources representative. The forms are located at:

<https://www.ocgov.com/gov/ceo/covid19employeeinfo>

7. My child’s school is giving me a choice between having my child attend in person or participate in a remote learning program for the fall. I signed up for the remote learning alternative because, for example, I worry that my child might contract COVID-19 and bring it home to the family. Since my child will be at home, may I take paid leave under the FFCRA in these circumstances?

Emergency Family Medical Leave Act which entitled parents to take time off to care for their child if their child’s school or daycare was closed as a result of COVID-19 **ended** on December 31, 2020.

On December 15, 2020, the Board of Supervisors approved the ability of an eligible employee to use remaining Emergency Paid Sick Leave (EPSL) balances and the use of up to 40 additional hours of EPSL (based on their regular work schedule) for the qualifying reasons above through June 17, 2021. EPSL may be used to absences associated with needing time off to care for an employee’s child if their child’s school or daycare is closed as a result of COVID-19.

On March 19, 2021, Governor Newsom signed into law Senate Bill 95 (SB 95), known as **2021 COVID-19 Supplemental Paid Sick Leave**, mandating that public agency employers provide COVID-19 supplemental paid sick leave to eligible employees. This new law went into effect on March 29, 2021 and is retroactively effective on January 1, 2021. In accordance with SB 95, the County’s current EPSL program will be extended through September 30, 2021. An employee may use EPSL when caring for a child whose school or place of care is closed or unavailable due to COVID-19 on the premises.

However, you are not eligible to take paid leave under EPSL because your child’s school is not “closed” due to COVID–19 related reasons; it is open for your child to attend. EPSL leave is not available to take care of a child whose school is open for in-person attendance. If your child is home not because his or her school is closed, but because you have chosen for the child to remain home, you are not entitled to EPSL paid leave. However, if, because of COVID-19, your child is under a quarantine order or has been advised by a health care provider to self-isolate or self-quarantine, you may be eligible to take paid leave to care for him or her.

8. Will the 80 hours of sick/healthcare leave be advanced to cover spring break/summer/holiday school closures? (updated 8/24/20)

This emergency measure is intended to cover unforeseen childcare issues related to COVID-19. The need to use an advancement of sick/healthcare leave will vary based on individual employee’s circumstances.

Please see further “Leave Usage Questions” for information about additional leaves an employee may qualify for if absences are for a qualifying reason related to COVID-19.

9. How do employees code absences that are a result of COVID-19? (updated 12/29/20)

Additional Pay Codes have been created pertaining to COVID-19 absences. Previously created “CV*” codes can be used in the order listed below. These codes were created for employees to use for COVID-19 related absence (e.g. school or childcare closure, caring for a family member with COVID-19, self or mandated quarantine, suspected or confirmed COVID-19 illness).

For Regular employees:

Pay Code Title	Pay Code	Definition
Emergency Paid Sick Leave	EPSL	<p>Up to 120 hours of paid sick leave may be taken when an employee is unable to telecommute and is quarantined, seeking a COVID-19 diagnosis, caring for someone quarantined due to a Public Health or Healthcare Provider order, when caring for a child whose school or child-care facility is closed, attending a vaccine appointment or cannot work or telework due to vaccine-related symptoms. Part-time employee allotment of hours will be pro-rated based on their regular schedule.</p> <p>EPSL balances will be reflected on all employee pay stubs, but may only be used after employee eligibility for leave and qualifying reason have been determined.</p> <p>In accordance with SB 95, the County’s current EPSL program will be extended through September 30, 2021.</p>
Emergency Family Medical Leave Expired on December 31, 2020.	EFMLA	<p>Employees who are unable to telecommute and must provide care for a child whose school or child-care facility is closed may be entitled to up to 12 weeks of protected leave. The first two weeks of EFMLA are unpaid, after which, qualifying employees will receive 2/3rds of their regular rate for 10 weeks. Employees may post other COVID-19 related pay codes to supplement and achieve 100% of pay. Employees must submit a Leave of Absence request for consideration for EFMLA.</p> <p>Employees designated as a “Health Care Provider” or “Emergency Responder” are exempt from the FFRCA and use of EFMLA is at the Department Head discretion.</p>
Emergency Family Medical Leave Unpaid Expired on December 31, 2020.	EFMLU	<p>This is a tracking pay code (like FMLA) that is posted to track all EFMLA time off an employee uses (including discretionary EFMLA). This code should be posted concurrently with all EFMLA.</p>

Coronavirus Sick Leave/ Healthcare Leave	CVSP	This may be used for Coronavirus absences even if an employee has Annual Leave balances. May be posted until an employee reaches zero balance and then all other leave balances must be posted prior to posting up to 80 hours of advanced Sick Leave/Healthcare Leave Balances.
Coronavirus Annual Leave	CVAL	if applicable
Coronavirus Vacation	CVVAC	if applicable
Coronavirus PIP Time	CVPIP	if applicable
Coronavirus Comp Time	CVCT	if applicable

The CVSP Pay Code may be used for Coronavirus absences even if a regular employee has Annual Leave balances. Upon reaching a zero Sick Leave/Healthcare Leave balance, an employee must exhaust all other accrued balances (CVAL, CVVAC, CVPIP, CVCT) prior to posting up to 80 hours of advanced Sick Leave/Healthcare Leave Balances. NOTE: The hours are advanced as needed, up to the maximum of 80 hours.

Employees do not need to submit a written request for the 80 hours of advance Sick Leave/Healthcare Leave Balances. Employees will simply use the CVSP Pay Code on their timecard as long as it complies with the above guidelines. Future Sick Leave/Healthcare Leave accruals will be used to replenish the advancement of Sick/Healthcare Leave hours.

Job Injury – Contagious Disease Leave	Jl	This pay code may be used when an employee is compelled by direction of a County-designated physician to be absent from duty due to an on-the-job exposure to a contagious disease (not applicable to AOCDS PO/SP bargaining unit). Not to exceed 80 working hours for a full-time employee or fourteen (14) calendar days for a part-time employee.
--	----	---

Please contact your HR representative to determine when it is applicable to post Jl on a timesheet.

Pre-planned vacation time or time off for illnesses unrelated to COVID-19 should be coded as described in the applicable Memorandum of Understanding.

For Extra Help employees:

Pay Code Title	Pay Code	Definition
Emergency Paid Sick Leave	EESPL	<p>Up to 120 hours of paid sick leave (based on the regular hours regularly scheduled or average hours worked per pay period) may be taken when an employee is unable to telecommute and is quarantined, seeking a COVID-19 diagnosis, caring for someone quarantined, caring for a child whose school or child-care facility is closed, attending a vaccine appointment or cannot work or telework due to vaccine-related symptoms.</p> <p>In accordance with SB 95, the County’s current EPSL program will be extended through September 30, 2021.</p>
Emergency Family Medical Leave Expired on December 31, 2020.	EFMLE	<p>Employees who are unable to telecommute and must provide care for a child whose school or child-care facility is closed may be entitled to up to 12 weeks of protected leave. The first two weeks of EFMLE are unpaid, after which, qualifying employees will receive 2/3rds of their regular rate for 10 weeks. Employees may post other COVID-19 related pay codes to supplement and achieve 100% of pay. Employees must submit a Leave of Absence request for consideration for EFMLE.</p> <p>Employees designated as a “health care provider” or “emergency responder” are exempt from the FFRCA and use of EFMLA is at the Department Head discretion.</p>
Emergency Family Medical Leave Unpaid Expired on December 31, 2020.	EFMLU	<p>This is a tracking pay code (like FMLA) that is posted to track all EFMLE time off an employee uses (including discretionary EFMLA). This code should be posted concurrently with all EFMLE.</p>
Coronavirus Extra Help Sick Leave/Healthcare Leave	CVEHS	<p>This pay code may be used to post all accrued Sick Leave/Healthcare Leave balances accrued for Coronavirus absences.</p>
Coronavirus Vaccination	EHSHT	<p>This pay code is to be used by extra help employees who are approved to take time off to receive the COVID-19 vaccination during their regular work shift. Employees are also to utilize their default Non-Productive Job Number on their timesheet or leave the Job Number blank if their agency does not utilize Job Numbers.</p>

If an Extra Help employee does not have any leave balances or exhausts all their Sick Leave/Healthcare Leave balances, employees may be advanced up to 24 hours of additional Sick Leave/Healthcare Leave. Employees will use the CVEHS Pay Code to post the additional 24 hours. **Future Sick Leave/Healthcare Leave accruals will be used to replenish the advancement of hours.**

10. Should Administrative Managers who work more than 80 hours in a pay period in response to COVID-19 post management overtime (SOT) on their timesheets? (updated 7/5/21)

On April 8, 2020, due to the expectation of a sustained need for managers to work additional hours directly related to the COVID-19 crisis, CEO Frank Kim, authorized the payment of management hours worked in support of the COVID-19 crisis in excess of 80 in a pay period at a straight time rate (SOT) for Administrative Managers represented under the current MOU with OCMA.

CEO Frank Kim has authorized an extension for the payment of management hours worked in support of the COVID-19 Point of Dispensing (POD) sites and Mobile PODs. SOT can be authorized by a department and is now extended from the deadline of June 17, 2021 to the revised deadline of **September 9, 2021**.

It is important that this SOT is coded against your department specific job number related to COVID-19 to ensure costs are properly captured. SOT hours should be directly related to the COVID-19 response and can only be paid for hours above 80 regular hours posted in a pay period.

For example, if a manager worked 10 hours on COVID-19 related work as part of a total of 85 hours posted within a pay period, then the manager would record 75 regular hours posted to their usual job codes, 5 hours of regular hours posted to a COVID-19 job code, and 5 hours SOT posted to a COVID-19 job code (per their department coding).

If you have any questions related to coding SOT, please contact your supervisor or Department HR representative. Contact information for your Department HR Team can be found here: [*Human Resources Contact List by Department*](#)

11. Can I request Catastrophic Leave donations if I have exhausted all paid leave and still must be off work due to a school or childcare closure? (updated 7/5/21)

You may qualify to request a Catastrophic Leave donation drive due to “other serious circumstances” if you will be off work for more than 14 days after you have exhausted all paid leave balances, including all Emergency Paid Sick Leave and have used 80 hours of advanced Sick/Healthcare Leave. Requests for Catastrophic Leave drive due to “other serious circumstances” will be governed by the County of Orange “Catastrophic Leave Procedures” found at:

https://ocgov.sharepoint.com/sites/HRS/Collaborations/hrs_pol_proc_wg/Policies%20%20Procedure/Catastrophic%20Leave%20Procedures.pdf#search=Catastrophic%20Leave

Catastrophic leaves in this category are considered taxable for the donor by the IRS.

12. How should overtime (OT) worked in response to COVID-19 be posted for non-management employees?

Overtime worked in response to the COVID-19 crisis should be posted to time sheets using one of the COVID-19 emergency job codes created by their department along with the OTPD pay code. The OTPD pay code will automatically pay out overtime. The direct payment of overtime worked, rather than the placement of time into a comp time bank, will allow the County to seek reimbursement through the Federal CARES Act.

V. Disaster Services Worker Questions

1. As a County employee what are my responsibilities now?

On February 26, 2020, the Orange County Board of Supervisors declared a local health emergency. Pursuant to Government Code § 3100 and Orange County Codified Ordinance § 3-1-6(b)(3), all County employees are considered disaster workers and are subject to such disaster services as may be assigned to them by their superiors or by law.

In this time of emergency, the citizens of Orange County are counting on all of us to help them through this crisis. It is important that we all take individual responsibility to perform our current assignments as directed by our supervisors and be ready to support the completion of an emergency-related task if asked by our supervisor to do so. As we complete our work, we should all support each other and communicate any hazardous situations to ensure our safety.

2. What is the DSW Program?

State law and the County of Orange (County) Policy establish that all public employees, including County employees, are DSWs. In addition, the Orange County Code permits the County to mobilize its workforce to provide emergency services in the event of an emergency. The DSW Program facilitates deployment of public employees to perform activities outside of their regular employment to promote the protection of lives or mitigate the effects of a disaster. The DSW designation is important not only to help mobilize the County workforce to respond to an emergency, but because it also allows the County to comply with State and Federal emergency management guidelines and allows for future Federal emergency management funding.

3. What does the County consider when creating DSW assignments?

The County's DSW needs during a disaster are generally dictated by the impact of the emergency. There are two DSW duty categories: General (e.g. administrative, support staff, fiscal or logistics) and Specialized (e.g. something that requires a specialized license, experience or training). Where possible and as needed, the County will assign employees to a DSW position that most closely aligns with their customary job duties or skill sets. Depending on the emergency, employees will also be directed to work in assignments that may be different from their usual and customary duties and may also be in different locations throughout the County. DSWs will be provided with adequate, on-site, or "just-in-time" training to ensure they can complete their assigned duties safely and effectively. Employees who currently work in classifications with verifiable, certified skills will be expected to fulfill specialized DSW duties or in support of essential functions throughout the County.

4. How are Disaster Service Worker assignments determined?

The County's DSW needs during a disaster are generally dictated by the impact of the emergency. When the Board of Supervisors declares an emergency, the County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) is activated. Departments that provide critical services in responding to the emergency may need additional resources to provide emergency services and request DSW support through the EOC. The EOC will work with the requesting department to determine staffing needs, and either the department or HR then secures County DSWs to support the need and provides a list to EOC. EOC then gives that list to the requesting department so it can carry out its mission with the additional DSW resources. The department or agency that requested the DSW support becomes responsible for managing the DSWs assigned to support its mission.

5. What are some examples of DSW assignments in the County of Orange?

Examples of DSW responsibilities related to the COVID-19 crisis may include: Registering or assisting people at a housing shelter; translating for non-English-speaking individuals; answering phones for a COVID-19 hotline; helping to operate temporary facilities; delivering or serving meals, etc.

6. Who can be a DSW? Which authorities designate County employees as DSWs?

Pursuant to Government Code § 3100, all public employees are declared to be disaster services workers and are subject to such disaster service activities that may be assigned to them by their superiors or by law. Under the Government Code County employees are obligated to perform disaster service duties if ordered as a result of an emergency or a disaster event. A disaster event could be any emergency situation that stems from natural, human-made, or terrorism events. County employees may not opt out of DSW participation.

Additionally, Orange County Codified Ordinance § 3-1-6(b)(3) provides that the County, through its Director of Emergency Services, is empowered to require emergency services of any County officer or employee.

As DSWs, employees will perform duties that may be different from their regular work assignments and may also be assigned to different work locations. Any public employee can be considered a DSW and may be directed to perform emergency services as required under State and local law.

7. Can Departments request “first takers” for available DSW assignments?

When a DSW need is communicated, employees may, and are encouraged to, come forward to take an assignment. However, doing so does NOT mean the DSW position is a "volunteer" assignment that can be worked and/or terminated at an employee's choice. If departments choose to solicit "first takers" rather than make assignments, the department must ensure that the employee is ready and able to be deployed to the emergency assignment.

8. What if Departments seek “first takers” for DSW assignments and get no response?

Given the emergency need, the County's expectation is that departments will affirmatively assign employees to DSW posts until the need is met. Department Heads have the ultimate authority to make work reassignments as needed. In an emergency, public employees may be released from their usual duties so that they can be assigned to assist any agency or organization carrying out its emergency response duties.

9. How should a DSW assignment be communicated to an employee?

Employees may be given verbal or written direction to report to a DSW assignment; however, if practicable employees should be given formal notice acknowledging the assignment. These notices may be issued by the department, assigned project managers, EOC Management or HRS.

COVID-19: Disaster Service Worker Reassignment templates are available through your Department HR representative. If issued, a copy of this notice should be retained in the employee's personnel file. Contact information for your Department HR Team can be found here: [**Human Resources Contact List by Department**](#)

HRS and/or the EOC will also contact assigned employees directly to provide assignment details and reporting instructions.

10. Can an employee refuse to take a DSW assignment?

All County employees are designated by State law as DSWs and are expected to report to duty when called upon. If an employee is assigned and otherwise available but refuses to accept a DSW assignment, the department should meet with the employee to address any concerns about the assignment. If an employee identifies work restrictions that prevent DSW service, that issue must be managed as any other work restriction, including holding an Interactive Process Meeting if necessary. If the employee is unable to work the assignment, the department should consider whether there is an alternate and more appropriate assignment. If the employee is deemed able to work the assignment but continues to refuse, the department should issue the employee a direct order in writing. The direct order should inform the employee of the department's expectations and consequences should they fail to adhere to the order. If the employee does not adhere to the order, the department may take further administrative action.

11. Are Departments responsible for managing their employees assigned as DSWs?

When assigned to an emergency assignment, the site manager will have primary responsibility for managing and monitoring each of their assigned DSWs. Departments will remain responsible for administrative responsibilities associated with their employee, including but not limited to the processing of timesheets and any possible workers' compensation claims. Communication about a DSW's assignment should be directly between the employee's home department and the DSW assignment site/department. However, HRS remains available to help resolve any HR-related issues.

12. Are employees compensated for time over their regular hours?

Overtime and other compensation are provided in accordance with established law, MOUs and County policy.

13. How should employees code DSW work time?

A project code is assigned to each emergency event by the County Emergency Operations Center (EOC). Task orders will be determined by each department based on the task to which the employee(s) are assigned. It is possible that a given department will generate multiple task codes per each project code established by the EOC. Department administration teams will determine task codes as needed. The EOC finance section will be able to provide guidance to departments on DSW work time coding.

14. Will DSWs remain on their assigned work schedules?

Assignment managers will make every effort to keep employees on their current work schedules or shifts. Decisions whether employees will be required to alter existing schedules, work weekends, overtime or evenings will depend on the nature of the assignment.

15. Should work restrictions be considered when reassigning an employee as a DSW?

When Departments are provided descriptions of emergency assignments requiring DSWs, they should consider the appropriateness of the assignment for its employees. If there are any questions regarding the expectations of an assignment or whether an employee is appropriate for a particular emergency position, the Department should contact HR for additional guidance.

16. What if an employee is injured or becomes ill while performing DSW duties?

Claims sustained by public employees while performing disaster services shall be filed as workers' compensation claims under the same authorities and guidelines as with all County employees within their Department or agency.

17. Who should I contact with additional questions about DSW assignments?

For additional questions, please contact your supervisor or Department HR representative. Contact information for your Department HR Team can be found here: [*Human Resources Contact List by Department*](#)

18. When an employee is deployed as a DSW to fill an evening/night shift, are staff eligible for night shift differential pay, based on their respective MOUs?

If an employee is scheduled and works a day shift but is required to extend their shift into the evening as Overtime the employee would not be eligible for Night Shift premium pay. If an employee is normally scheduled to work a day shift but has been scheduled to work an alternate shift that qualifies for Night Shift premium, the employee should post and be paid Night Shift premium.

19. Are there any circumstances that allows Disaster Services Workers (DSW's) to claim travel time to the deployment location as working hours?

If the deployment is Overtime on a day that they are not normally scheduled to work the DSW would be eligible for pay for travel time to their first work location.

Example: Employee works Monday through Friday at 800 N. Eckhoff St. in Orange. The employee is being deployed to Joplin in Silverado Canyon to work an Overtime shift on a Saturday. Employee's paid time includes the travel time from their home to Joplin and travel home in addition to their scheduled shift.

20. How are DSWs to claim mileage reimbursement if they are using their personal vehicles and reporting to locations that are different than their regularly assigned work location?

As outlined in the County Business Travel and Meeting Policy, employees who are being deployed as DSWs can claim the difference in their mileage between their normal 'home to work mileage' and their 'home to deployment site mileage' while during their assigned shift. If, however, the deployment is Overtime on a day they are not scheduled to work, they can claim the whole mileage from home to deployment site.

Employees who are reassigned to a new work location on an on-going basis may not claim the difference in mileage.

Example: Employee is being deployed to Joplin in Silverado Canyon. Employee normally drives 10 miles to work every day, however, Joplin is 30 miles. The employee can claim 20 miles that day for the trip to the location and 20 miles for the trip home.

Example: Employee is being deployed to Joplin in Silverado Canyon to work Overtime on a regular day off. Employee normally drives 10 miles to work every day, however, Joplin is 30 miles. The employee can claim the 30 miles each way because the employee is working Overtime.

[Return to Top](#)

VI. Telecommuting Resources/Learning & Organizational Development Questions

1. *How do I track my timesheet if I am teleworking and get ill or have childcare issues?*

If you are unable to work all your scheduled hours, it is important to accurately utilize leave balances in accordance with your designated Memorandum of Understanding and/or related policies for the remainder of the day.

2. *How will I submit my time each pay period if I am telecommuting or out of the office?*

Employees who are able to connect to County servers via VPN should be able to access VTI to enter their time. Employees who are out of the office and do not have access to VTI should communicate their timesheet information to a supervisor or manager who will be responsible for ensuring timesheets are submitted. Each department is responsible for setting deadlines for timesheet submission.

3. *What expenses will the County be reimbursing employees for while they are telecommuting? (updated 12/29/20)*

In general, the County will not reimburse employees for expenses incurred as a result of telecommuting (e.g. telephone, electricity, internet access) but employees should check their Department's telecommuting agreement and policies for specific inquiries. Employees who are voluntarily telecommuting are expected to have a safe area to work in their home and to provide their own ergonomic equipment if required. Employees should discuss individual questions and needs regarding telecommuting with their Department.

4. *What training options are available to me if I am telecommuting and not able to perform all my core work functions? (updated 12/29/20)*

HRS Learning & Organizational Development (L&OD) has created several free playlists of resources. If circumstances have interrupted your primary work, consider these opportunities to improve your skills during this time. Please work with your supervisor to determine whether these playlists are an appropriate option during your workday.

These playlists are available in the "Featured" carousel of your Learner Home page that you can access from any computer at: <https://ocgov.csod.com/>

Your username is your Employee ID (same number used in VTI). If you don't remember your password, click "Forgot Password" and a reset link will be sent to your County email or click "Need Help" to contact your Department Eureka Administrator.

5. *How can my supervisor and I ensure that we continue to communicate well and that I understand their expectations in a telecommuting environment? (updated 12/29/20)*

COVID-19 has significantly changed our work environment, whether it is working from home or in the office with fewer people. HRS Learning and Organizational Development (L&OD) created a guide for leading remote teams that is also helpful for co-located teams, as well. It provides easy-to-use tools and resources to ensure your teams stay connected and focused on heading forward together.

L&OD also conducted a brief webinar to provide a quick tour of the guide, checklists, and tips for leading high performing remote teams. You can access the recorded webinar along with the guide and tools in the Eureka "Working From Home" (COVID-19 Series) Playlist. The playlist can be found in

the “Featured” carousel of your Learner Home page that you can access from any computer at: <https://ocgov.csod.com/>

6. *Is there an end date for my authorization to telecommute? (updated 7/5/21)*

It is each Department Head’s responsibility to implement plans that meet the operational needs of their department. When implementing the “new normal” of conducting County business, it may be necessary to have employees return to the workplace who have been given the option to telecommute during the current pandemic.

Telecommuting remains strongly recommended for employees that are able to perform their essential job duties from home for the near future as we all continue to navigate through the COVID-19 pandemic. Departments will evaluate work demands and it is understood that telecommuting will not work in several areas of County services. While the dates for the return of employees to the workplace will vary by department, planning for the return process is in progress, and many employees have returned to the office. Employees who are currently telecommuting are encouraged to contact their supervisors or managers with questions about continued telecommuting.

[Return to Top](#)

VII. Benefits Questions

1. *Are services available to employees to help them cope with concerns related to COVID-19?*

Yes. The County offers the Employee Assistance Program (EAP). EAP can be contacted at 1-800-221-0945 or online at www.resourcesforliving.com, Username: Orange County ca, Password: eap.

The Employee Health website at www.ochealthinfo.com/ehs includes resources, and the OC Healthy Steps website has a variety of resources at: http://www.ocgov.com/gov/hr/eb/employee_wellness.

The County Wellness Center website has been updated to reflect many virtual wellness resources: <https://countywellnesscenter.weebly.com/>.

2. *Where can I get more information about resources and updates to my Benefits resulting from the COVID-19 crisis?*

Employee Benefits has created a web page with resources and updates for employees. This page will be updated frequently as new resources become available. Visit the Employee Benefits and Resources related to COVID-19 page at:

https://www.ocgov.com/gov/hr/eb/covid_info_and_resources

3. *How can I make changes to my Dependent Care Reimbursement Account (DCRA) because my DCRA needs have changed due to COVID-19 school and daycare closures? (updated 12/29/20)*

If you are currently enrolled in a pre-tax Dependent Care Reimbursement Account (DCRA), you may be eligible to change your DCRA goal amount or cancel your DCRA election for the rest of the year. If you want to make a change to or cancel your current DCRA election, you have 30 days from the announced closure or change to adjust your Dependent Care Reimbursement elections. For example, if your school district or childcare provider notified you on January 4, 2021 of a long-term closure, closures due to Governor Newsom’s order, then you would have 30 days, or until February 2, 2021 to call and make a change to your DCRA election for 2021. If you want to make a change or cancel, call the County of Orange Benefits Center at 833-476-2347 (800) 858-7266. Tell the Benefits Specialist

that you have had a Qualifying Life Event/Dependent Care Change and that you would like to change or cancel your annual DCRA election.

You will be able to re-enroll in DCRA or change your goal amount again when your schools and day care programs re-open later this year as long as you call to make the change within 30 days of your school or day care program re-opening. Please note the IRS rules for DCRA funds have not changed. Unused funds will not roll over and can be used for the 2021 plan year only.

4. *Are there new options available to access my Defined Contribution 457 or 401a Plan account funds due to the COVID-19 crisis? (updated 12/29/20)*

Yes. The CARES Act signed into law on March 27, 2020 provided special loan provisions, current loan payment deferral options, and special in-service distribution rules. For more information see the detailed FAQ on the COVID-19 Information and Resources page on the Employee Benefits website at: https://www.ocgov.com/gov/hr/eb/covid_info_and_resources or contact Empower at (866) 457-2254. Please note that the deadline to enter into loans permitted under the CARES Act expired on September 22, 2020. The CARES Act also provided provisions related to loan payment deferrals, special in-service distribution rules, and waivers of required minimum distributions. The new COVID-19 relief bill passed by Congress on December 22, 2020 did not include extensions of these CARES Act provisions beyond the original expiration dates.

[Return to Top](#)

VIII. Vaccination Questions

1. *I do not want to receive the COVID-19 vaccination. Do I need to get it to keep my job with the County?*

No. It is not a condition of employment for any County employee to receive the COVID-19 vaccination. According to the Cal/OSHA COVID-19 Emergency Temporary Standards, unvaccinated employees are still required to wear a face covering indoors in the workplace except when alone in a room or vehicle, or when eating/drinking and six feet apart, or for brief times when a work task is not feasible with a face covering. Further exemptions include:

- Anyone who has trouble breathing, or who is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the face-covering without assistance; or
- Persons with a medical or mental health condition or development disability that prevents wearing a face-covering.
- Persons for whom wearing a face covering would create a risk to the person related to their work, as determined by local, state, or federal regulators or workplace safety guidelines.
- Note: Persons exempted from wearing a face covering due to a medical condition who are employed in a job involving regular contact with others must wear a non-restrictive alternative, such as a face shield with a drape on the bottom edge, as long as their condition permits it.

2. *What do I do if I hear an employee voluntarily disclosing that they are not vaccinated and I observe they are not wearing a face-covering at work?*

Cal/OSHA COVID-19 Emergency Temporary Standards requires all employees that are not fully vaccinated to wear a face-covering (with some exceptions in the workplace). The County must ensure a safe and healthy workplace for everyone. Not wearing a face-covering and unvaccinated from COVID-19 may be considered a violation of Cal/OSHA health and safety rules at work and place other employees at risk. Please report the issue immediately to your supervisor and your Human Resources representative.

3. *Can I get the COVID-19 vaccine on County time and be compensated for mileage if I have to drive to the vaccination site? (updated 7/5/21)*

On March 19, 2021, Governor Newsom signed into law Senate Bill 95 (SB 95), known as 2021 COVID-19 Supplemental Paid Sick Leave, mandating that public agency employers provide COVID-19 supplemental paid sick leave to eligible employees. This new law went into effect on March 29, 2021 and is retroactively effective on January 1, 2021. In accordance with SB 95, the County's current EPSL program will be extended through September 30, 2021.

Employees may use EPSL when they are unable to work or telework and have qualifying reasons for such leave, including:

- Vaccine-Related: The covered employee is attending a vaccine appointment or cannot work or telework due to vaccine-related symptoms.

Employees may request the use of EPSL by completing an "Emergency Paid Sick Leave Certification" or "Emergency Paid Sick Leave School/Daycare Closure Certification" Form and submit it to their department's human resources representative. The forms are located at:

<https://www.ocgov.com/gov/ceo/covid19employeeinfo>

The County is not compensating employees for mileage to receive COVID-19 vaccination.

4. *I am fully vaccinated from COVID-19. Do I still have to wear a face-covering, maintain social distancing, and adhere to all other COVID-19 safety measures at work?*

It depends where you work and the job you perform. The County adheres to all Cal/OSHA COVID-19 standards regarding workplace safety. The requirements for social distancing practices under the Cal/OSHA COVID-19 Emergency Temporary Standards (in most circumstances) have ended. Further, the County is to evaluate the need for personal protective equipment (PPE) to prevent exposure to COVID-19 hazards, such as gloves, goggles, and face shields, and provide such personal protective equipment as needed. Each Department is to determine its need to provide PPE based on work performed by its employees.

"Fully vaccinated" means you have received either the second dose in a two-dose series COVID-19 vaccine (e.g., Pfizer or Moderna) or a single dose of a one-dose vaccine (e.g., Johnson & Johnson/Janssen) at least 14 days prior to signing this document. The vaccine must be FDA-approved or have emergency use authorization from the FDA or World Health Organization (WHO), if vaccinated out of the country.

Employees who work in the following settings must continue to wear a face covering even if they are fully vaccinated from COVID-19:

- On public transit (examples: airplanes, ships, ferries, trains, subways, buses, taxis, and ride-shares) and in transportation hubs (examples: airport, bus terminal, marina, train station, seaport or other port, subway station, or any other area that provides transportation)
- Indoors in K-12 schools, childcare and other youth settings.
- Healthcare settings (including long term care facilities)
- State and local correctional facilities and detention centers
- Homeless shelters, emergency shelters, and cooling centers

Please check with your supervisor or human resources representative if you have any questions regarding if you work in any of these settings.

Consistent with Cal/OSHA guidance, fully COVID-19 vaccinated employees may choose to not to wear face coverings, except for certain situations such as during COVID-19 outbreaks and in settings where the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) requires all persons to wear them (see above), if they voluntary self-attest to being fully vaccinated from COVID-19. Employees have an opportunity to attest if they are fully vaccinated by submitting a confidential electronic form that will be sent directly to Employee Health Services. The voluntary attestation form is located at:

[Employee Self-Attestation For COVID-19 Vaccination](#)

Employees are required to provide accurate information about vaccination status and may be required to provide documentation that they have been fully vaccinated (e.g., a copy of a vaccine card or other official document confirming vaccination status) upon request. Vaccination status will be kept confidential but may be shared with limited County staff as deemed necessary to comply with the ETS and/or other state and local regulations.

If an employee does not complete the voluntary self-attestation form, then they are considered unvaccinated from COVID-19. Unvaccinated employees and those who do not complete the self-attestation form are still required to wear a face covering indoors in the workplace except when alone in a room or vehicle, or when eating/drinking and six feet apart, or for brief times when a work task is not feasible with a face covering. Further exemptions include:

- Anyone who has trouble breathing, or who is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the face-covering without assistance; or
- Persons with a medical or mental health condition or development disability that prevents wearing a face-covering.
- Persons for whom wearing a face covering would create a risk to the person related to their work, as determined by local, state, or federal regulators or workplace safety guidelines.
- Note: Persons exempted from wearing a face covering due to a medical condition who are employed in a job involving regular contact with others must wear a non-restrictive alternative, such as a face shield with a drape on the bottom edge, as long as their condition permits it.

5. How should I respond if another employee or a supervisor asks me whether I have been vaccinated?

A person's vaccination status is considered private medical information and should not be discussed in the workplace. Please inform the individual asking you that it is confidential medical information. If you are being questioned about your vaccination status, please contact the County Equal Employment Opportunity Office at: (855) 387-4432 or EEO.Support@ocgov.com or [your Human Resources Representative](#).

6. What should I do if am questioned about my religious beliefs, or hear other employee's talking about a coworker's religious beliefs, related to their vaccination status?

Religious beliefs and vaccination status are not to be discussed in the workplace. Please inform the individual asking you that religious beliefs and vaccination status are not to be discussed in the workplace. Please contact the County Equal Employment Opportunity Office at: (855) 387-4432 or EEO.Support@ocgov.com or your Human Resources Representative and report the situation.

7. What do I do if an employee complains that the vaccine received by a coworker (or me) is not as effective as the brand they received themselves?

A person's vaccination status is considered private medical information and should not be discussed in the workplace. Please inform the individual talking with you that vaccination status is not to be discussed in the workplace. Please contact the County Equal Employment Opportunity Office at: (855) 387-4432 or EEO.Support@ocgov.com or your Human Resources Representative and report the situation.

[Return to Top](#)

IX. Additional Resources

For more information from the County's Public Health website regarding the Current County Health Officer Orders and Strong Recommendations, please visit:

<https://occovid19.ocaliforniahealthinfo.com/article/oc-health-officers-orders-recommendations>

For more information from the County's Public Health website regarding COVID-19, please visit:

https://www.ocaliforniahealthinfo.com/phs/about/epidasmt/epi/dip/prevention/novel_coronavirus

For questions about the Governor's Stay At Home Order, please see:

<https://covid19.ca.gov/stay-home-except-for-essential-needs/>

For more information on Essential Critical Infrastructure Workers Guidance (March 20, 2020):

<https://covid19.ca.gov/img/EssentialCriticalInfrastructureWorkers.pdf>

[Return to Top](#)

X. Human Resources Contact List by Department

Auditor-Controller/Clerk-Recorder/TTC

Hilda Juarez

Office Phone: (714) 834-2353

Health Care Agency

Jennifer Kaye

Office Phone: (714)834-2869

Child Support Services

Diane Greek

Office Phone: (714)347-5974

Social Services Agency

Hetal Patel

Office Phone: (714)541-7771

John Wayne Airport

Paul Wright

Office Phone: (949)252-5180

Probation

Dianne Martinez

Office Phone: (714)645-7030

OC Community Resources

Emma Tameez

Office Phone: (714)480-2858

OC Waste and Recycling

Madai Chavez

Office Phone: (714)834-3337

OC Public Works

Cindy Munoz

Office Phone: (714)667-9601

Treasurer-Tax Collector

Katherine Hays

Office Phone: (714) 834-3259

Shared Services

CEO, OCERS, ROV, ETHICS COMMISSION, ASSESSOR, INTERNAL AUDIT, COCO, BOS, COB, OIR

Sandra Florez

Office Phone: (714)834-7360

Public Defender

Margaret Briggs

Office Phone: (657) 251-8844

District Attorney

Matt Petit

Office Phone: (714) 347-8440

Sheriff's Department

Richard Sanchez

Office Phone: (714) 834-5111

HCA Employee Health Services

Attendant

Office Phone: (714) 565-3780

[Return to Top](#)