



## Frequently Asked Questions- Coronavirus (COVID-19)

West Liberty University is closely monitoring the rapidly changing situation with the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) and is actively working to plan and prepare for a potential outbreak. Given the potential impact, Human Resources (HR) has compiled a list of frequently asked questions and asks that all employees review this information. Additionally, the University has created a webpage that contains important information regarding the COVID-19 (Coronavirus). Please click <https://westliberty.edu/health-services/> to visit the page.

### **Q1. When should I seek medical help regarding COVID-19?**

**A.** Please call a medical professional if, in the last 14 days, you:

- Have traveled to an affected geographic area and have a fever and signs or symptoms of a lower respiratory illness (cough, shortness of breath), or
- Have a fever with a severe acute lower respiratory illness that requires hospitalization and doesn't have an alternative explanatory diagnosis (e.g., influenza) and no known source of your exposure, or
- Were in close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 and have a fever or signs or symptoms of a lower respiratory illness (cough, shortness of breath)

When you call, please inform them of your symptoms and recent travel or potential exposure before going to the health facility.

### **Q2. What should I do if I have symptoms of COVID-19?**

**A.** If you experience symptoms, isolate yourself, **do not** come to work, and seek medical attention by calling a medical professional. Inform medical professionals of your symptoms and any recent travel or potential exposure *before* going to the health facility.

As with all contagious illnesses, limit the potential for exposure to other people and **do not** come to work. Take the following actions:

- Notify your supervisor that you are ill and will not be able to work.
- Isolate yourself to keep from potentially exposing other people.
- Seek medical advice from a medical professional by calling ahead *before* visiting a health facility.

### **Q3. I meet with students (customers, employees, etc.) frequently as part of my job responsibilities. What should I do if I encounter someone who is obviously sick?**

**A.** As with other forms of Influenza or contagious illnesses such as colds, maintaining a reasonable distance from the person is a starting point. Do not shake hands or make other physical contact. Offer the individual a mask if you have one or a tissue and ask the person to cover their mouth and nose if they should need to cough or sneeze. Use a sanitary wipe after the person has left to wipe those areas of your workstation that the person has touched. There may be situations in which a meeting can be rescheduled to a time when the person is feeling better or



the business can be conducted by phone or e-mail. Do not hesitate to offer this suggestion if it is appropriate.

**Q4. When can I return to work if I have had Influenza or another contagious illness?**

**A.** The current message from health care providers and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) is to stay home and do not return to work until you have not had a fever for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications. Anyone diagnosed with COVID-19 should closely follow the instructions of medical professionals.

**Q5. Should an employee stay home even if they are sick with a common cold?**

**A.** Generally speaking, staying home when you are sick is good advice for all employees. This is to prevent the transmission of any illness. Supervisors are encouraged to get this message out to employees. If employees are sick, they should stay home until the symptoms have subsided for 24 hours and/or contact their physician for guidance. The normal protocol for notification of the absence to the supervisor and use of accrued sick leave would apply.

**Q6. Does the University have the right to send sick employees home?**

**A.** If an employee reports to work and presents with symptoms of being ill, we cannot diagnose what the illness is since we are not medical professionals but we may ask the employee to provide a physician's release to work. It is best to err on the side of caution and advise the employee that it is in their best interest to go home and suggest that they seek medical care. Please consult with the campus Human Resources office before sending an employee home.

**Q7. If an employee is asked to go home from work due to illness, how will he/she be paid?**

**A.** The following options are available, although not all options will be available in all situations depending upon the nature of the job responsibilities and the extent of the illness:

- Use accrued paid-time-off hours; annual or sick leave or a combination of both
- Make up the work on an hour-for-hour basis during the same workweek with supervisor approval
- Work from home with President Cabinet Administrator approval
- Request an absence without pay and without paid-time-off accruals

Temporary and student employees do not receive pay for time not worked or any paid time off benefits.

**Q10. May I choose to go home if I don't want to be exposed to a sick coworker who isn't sent home?**

**A.** Yes, with supervisory approval you may leave work; however, you must use your own paid time off or request an absence without pay and without paid-time-off accruals. With your supervisor's approval, making up the work in the same workweek, working a different schedule, or working from home may be options available to you.



**Q11. What should I do if I or one of my employees is exhibiting symptoms?**

A. Our best defense against the virus is prevention. If you are or one of your employees is exhibiting symptoms consistent with COVID-19 (fever, cough, shortness of breath), please contact your doctor and remain off campus until you have confirmed your diagnosis. Employees should notify their supervisor of the concern so that sick leave can be requested and approved.

**Q12. Is telecommuting an option for an employee who is ill?**

A. Telecommuting may be an option if an employee is ill but should not be the first option for an employee who simply wants to avoid contact with the general public. If the employee is ill and job duties can be completed by telecommuting, the supervisor and/or department head (President's Cabinet Administrator, in consultation with the employee, can develop work hours and a work plan for the impacted employee. Supervisory approval is necessary to work from home, but not all requests to telecommute can be approved. Keep in mind that not every position is suited for telecommuting due to specific job duties that cannot be performed at home or operating requirements of the unit.

**Q13. How does the telecommuting need to be reported for timekeeping purposes?**

A. If telecommuting is approved; the hours should be designated as time worked for any time spent performing work duties.

**Q14. Can an employee stay home if he or she has a general concern about being exposed to the virus?**

A. The University understands the concern about potential exposure, but at this time the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has advised that the overall immediate threat to the public remains low. The University will continue to evaluate the situation as information is made available. At this time, employees are expected to report to work, and are still required to follow their department's attendance and leave procedures. An employee may request to take annual and/or sick leave; however, your supervisor is not required to approve your time off request if your department is short on staff or due to business necessity.

**Q15. My child's school (day care) is closed due to illnesses, and my child is not sick. I have no other child care arrangements. Can I bring them to work with me?**

A. Bringing a child to work is prohibited.

**Q16. What if my child's school or day care is closed due to illness, and my child is not sick? I have no other child care arrangements and must stay home with him. How will I be paid?**

A. Promptly notify your supervisor of the reason for your absence and your anticipated return to work date. In this situation, the following options are available although not all options will be available in all situations depending upon the nature of your job responsibilities:

- Use accrued annual leave
- Make up the work on an hour-for-hour basis during the same workweek with supervisory approval



- Work from home with President's Cabinet Administrator approval
- Request an absence without pay and without paid-time-off accruals

Temporary and student employees do not receive pay for time not worked or any paid time off benefits.

**Q17. During a COVID-19 outbreak, can my supervisor cancel my vacation time off request that has already been approved?**

**A.** Yes, your supervisor has the authority to cancel any pre-approved vacation request, especially in circumstances where there are serious staff shortages as a result of illness. Your vacation also could be cancelled if you have been designated as critical staff due to the nature of your job responsibilities. An critical employee is an employee in a position, previously designated by management, in which they are required to work on campus during an adverse event in order to meet immediate and necessary campus or university functions.

**Q18. If the building I work in is closed, can I work if I am not sick?**

**A.** If you are affected by a building or unit closure or cancellation of classes, you will be assigned an alternative work assignment or location, if possible. If no alternative work assignment or location is available, the time for the affected staff employees will be considered regular work time for pay purposes and will not require that the time be charged to annual leave nor will there be a requirement that the time be made up. If an alternative work assignment or location is available and you choose not to accept it, you will have to cover the time away from work with accrued paid-time-off hours or be absent-without-pay and without paid time off accruals, if your paid-time-off hours are exhausted. Temporary and student employees do not receive pay for time not worked or any paid time off benefits.

**Q19. If the entire campus is closed due to a COVID-19 outbreak, how will I be paid?**

**A.** Work time lost by any employee during a declared emergency will be considered regular work time for pay purposes and will not require that the time be charged to annual leave nor will there be a requirement that the time be made up. Staff who were not scheduled to work or were not at work because of such reasons such as vacation, holiday, sick time, funeral, or leave of any type whether paid or unpaid, will continue in that status and their absence will be coded according to the particular reason for the absence. Temporary and student employees, do not receive pay for time not worked.

**Q20. How do I know if I've been identified as a critical employee?**

**A.** President Cabinet Administrators have been instructed to determine their critical staff who would be required to work in this type of emergency situation and to have an internal notification system in place. Ask your supervisor if you have been identified as an critical employee. An critical employee is required to work on campus during a campus closure to provide immediate and necessary functions.



**Q21. If I haven't been identified previously as a critical employee, but my supervisor asks me to work, how will I be paid?**

**A.** Non-exempt Staff, excluding temporary and student employees, who are required to work when the campus is closed receive pay for the hours worked plus the additional pay for the closure.

**Q22. I have an employee who has not been previously identified as a critical employee and was not required to work. They were not aware the campus was closed, and came into work. What should I do?**

**A.** The campus is closed to all those who are not required to work and the employee is to be sent home. Staff employees will be paid for the day without charging the absence to paid-time-off hours; however, this does not apply to Temporary and student employees.

**Q23. I have an employee who was identified as a critical employee, but they did not report to work when needed. What can I do?**

**A.** If the employee was aware he or she had been designated as a critical staff person and the expectations involved with this designation, talk with them to find out why they didn't come to work as required. If they have a reasonable explanation, remind them of their responsibilities as a critical staff person. If their explanation is not reasonable given the situation, corrective/disciplinary action may be an option. Contact your HR office.

**Q24. Can I come into work even though the campus is closed?**

**A.** Closing the campus is an exceptionally rare event that occurs only in extreme circumstances. It is a decision that is made to protect the health and safety of faculty, staff, and students. Do not come into work unless you have been identified as a critical employee who is required to work during this type of emergency event. If you are not a critical employee and do come into work, you will be sent home.

**Q25. I have been identified as a critical employee, and I am required to work when the campus is closed during a COVID-19 outbreak. How will I be paid?**

**A.** Non-exempt Staff, excluding temporary and student employees, who are required to work when the campus is closed receive pay for the hours worked plus the additional pay for the closure.

**Q26. I have been identified as a critical employee, and I am required to work when the campus is closed during a COVID-19 outbreak. If I work from home, how will I be paid?**

**A.** All Staff, temporary, and student employees who are telecommuting during a declared pandemic emergency will receive their normal pay for the time worked.

**Q27. Can my supervisor schedule me to work hours or shifts that I normally do not work?**



A. Yes, you may be asked to work more hours or different hours than normal, especially if you have been designated as a critical employee or the university is short staffed as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak. We will attempt to provide advance notice if possible.

**Q28. If there is a large number of employees who are unable to come to work because of a COVID-19 outbreak, is there a maximum number of overtime hours my supervisor can require me to work?**

A. In the event of a serious COVID-19 outbreak, we all may be needed to work differently to ensure the university continues to function. You may be asked to work more hours or different hours than normal, especially if you have been designated as a critical employee or the university is short staffed as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak. Supervisors will make efforts to permit employees to take rest periods and may use their discretion in scheduling additional breaks for employees working additional hours.