

Subject: Temporary Employee Wellness Policy

Effective Dates: March 13, 2020 – Until further notice

Last Revised: March 21, 2022

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

The City of Durham is committed to providing authoritative information about the nature and spread of infectious diseases, including symptoms and signs to watch for, as well as required steps to be taken on the job/at work in the event of an illness or outbreak. Outside of work, employees are encouraged to follow local, state, and CDC guidelines with respect to treatment and prevention of the spread of infectious diseases.

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

Policy

Staying Home When Sick

Many times, with the best of intentions, employees report to work even though they feel ill. The City provides paid sick time and other benefits to compensate employees who are unable to work due to illness.

1. During an infectious disease outbreak, it is critical that employees do not report to work while they are ill, diagnosed with a communicable illness, and/or experiencing the following symptoms:
 - a. Flu/COVID-19 symptoms (fever, chills, body aches, congestion, cough, sore throat, etc.)
 - b. Nausea/vomiting/diarrhea
 - c. New loss of taste or smell (COVID-19)
 - d. Other unexplained/worsening symptoms not related to seasonal allergies

Employees who report to work showing visible signs of illness may be asked to go home and may be subject to discipline.

2. Employees who stay home or are sent home due to a suspected communicable illness as assessed by a review of the above symptoms must contact HR Connect at 919-560-4214 or via email at HRConnect@durhamnc.gov to obtain a link to the Online Personal Illness form, which must be completed within two hours of reporting symptoms. If the employee is physically unable to complete the form, it can be completed by an employee's designee. Upon receipt of the Online Personal Illness form, the appropriate Human Resources personnel will communicate instructions to the employee based on their specific situation.
3. Employees who stay home or who are sent home due to a suspected communicable illness, as assessed by a review of the above symptoms, are encouraged to seek immediate medical attention (e.g. urgent care, primary care physician, telemedicine, etc.). Medical clearance may be required before the employee can return to work.

4. Acceptable forms of clearance may change as circumstances change, but requirements may include a negative test for any infectious disease. Employees should contact HR Connect to obtain current medical clearance protocols.
5. Employees who stay home for any reason must contact their supervisors via established departmental protocols.
6. Council members are encouraged to stay home when ill.

Cleaning Your Workspace

Viruses and bacteria can land and live on both hard and soft surfaces. While the risk of transmission by a contaminated surface is low, it is possible to spread infectious diseases by transferring germs from surfaces to the body through the nose, eyes, or mouth. Cleaning and disinfecting surfaces can reduce the risk of infection and help stop the spread of diseases in City facilities.

1. General Services will ensure a clean environment, including the regular cleaning of objects and areas that are frequently used by the public, such as bathrooms, breakrooms, conference rooms, door handles, and railings.
2. All employees shall take steps to reduce the transmission of infectious diseases in the workplace by:
 - a. Frequent handwashing with warm, soapy water for at least 20 seconds
 - b. Using hand sanitizer when wash stations are not available
 - c. Disposing of trash daily
 - d. Routinely cleaning and disinfecting workspaces, equipment, and vehicles with special attention paid to equipment that is shared by multiple employees (tools, copiers, breakroom appliances, etc.).

Safety Protocols

The following safety protocols have proven to be effective in mitigating the spread of infectious diseases throughout the organization. These protocols are optional unless otherwise indicated by City leadership. Apart from masking, Directors may require these safety protocols at their discretion to optimize service levels and maintain adequate staffing.

1. Masking – All employees are permitted to wear a face mask at work. Mask use is a personal choice for every employee unless otherwise mandated by City leadership. **Individual employees, including Directors and departmental management, cannot require the use of a face mask by another staff member, nor should employees be questioned regarding their choice to wear/not wear a face mask at work.** Voluntary use of N-95 respirators is permitted with prior approval from Risk Management by contacting Risk@durhamnc.gov.
2. Teams/Zoom meetings
3. Staggered start times
4. Maintaining work crews/pods
5. Increasing ventilation in shared vehicles
6. Holding meetings in larger spaces to allow for social distancing

Related Policies

1. All employees hired before May 1, 2020, have been given COVID Leave equivalent to 5 weeks of regular work based on their work schedules. The hourly conversion for employees is as follows:
 - a. 37.5-hour employees = 187.50 hours
 - b. 40.0 hour employees = 200.00 hours
 - c. Sworn Police = 240.00 hours
 - d. Sworn Fire = 360.00 hours
 - e. Part-time = based on their average work schedule
2. COVID Leave is not retroactive, will not expire, and is not compensable upon separation.
3. The Sick Leave Policy will be relaxed to allow employees to use sick leave to manage COVID-related issues. Please contact HR Connect to confirm whether liberal leave applies to your situation.
4. New hires eligible for management leave will have management leave granted according to the provisions of the Management Leave policy.