

County of Sutter

GUIDANCE FOR COVID-19 (Novel coronavirus)

Updated: April 29, 2020



THIS DOCUMENT PROVIDES GUIDANCE SUTTER TO COUNTY EMPLOYEES FOR POTENTIAL EMPLOYMENT ISSUES RELATED TO COVID-19 (NOVEL CORONAVIRUS).

I. CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

i *Coronavirus (COVID-19) is a new virus that causes respiratory illness in people and is spread from person-to-person.*

While the risk of contracting COVID-19 remains low in Sutter and Yuba Counties, it is important for people to be aware of how the virus spreads and the symptoms. COVID 19 is commonly spread from an infected person to others through:

- The air by coughing and sneezing
- Face to face contact for a prolonged period of time
- Touching an object or surface with the virus on it, then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes

For most people, human coronaviruses such as COVID-19 cause mild to moderate respiratory illnesses and the symptoms are very similar to flu. These include:

- Fever (100.4° or higher)
- Chills
- Repeated shaking with chills
- Sore throat
- Cough
- Shortness of breath
- Muscle pain (combined with other symptoms)
- Headache (combined with other symptoms)
- New loss of taste or smell

People who have been diagnosed with COVID-19 have reported symptoms that may appear in as few as 2 days or as long as 14 days after exposure to the virus. However, it is possible for carriers of the Coronavirus to be asymptomatic.

Currently, there are no vaccines available to prevent COVID-19 infections. Most people with illness not requiring hospitalization, are able to recover on their own by drinking plenty of fluids, resting, and taking pain and fever medications. However, a small percentage of cases develop pneumonia requiring medical care and may require hospitalization.

If you have been exposed to an individual with confirmed COVID-19 or you have symptoms, please contact your Primary Care Physician for further direction. If you do not have a Primary Care Physician, you may contact the Sutter County Health and Wellness Clinic at (530) 763-4625.

2. Staying Healthy

i *The health and safety of our employees remains our primary concern and we encourage everyone to protect themselves and those around them.*

Dr. Luu, the Bi-County Health Officer, recommends that all employees continue to do the following to protect themselves from flu, colds and other transmittable illnesses:

- Continue to practice good hand hygiene by washing hands often with soap and water, especially before eating
- Avoid touching your face, especially your eyes, nose, and mouth
- Cover your mouth/nose with a tissue or sleeve when coughing or sneezing
- Avoid contact with people who are sick
- Stay home while you are sick and avoid close contact with others.
- If you have a fever, do not return to work for at least 72 hours after the fever has subsided (without the use of fever reducing medication).
- Practice good health habits: get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids, and eat nutritious food.
- Maintain social distance of 6 or more feet from others.
- Wear a face covering when you may come into contact with other people outside of your residence.

N95 masks are not recommended outside a healthcare setting. Surgical masks should be reserved for healthcare workers. Face coverings should be worn in the workplace, but employees who are sick should stay at home rather than come to work wearing a face covering.

Events or gatherings of more than 10 people are not permitted under the current state and county orders. Work in an office of more than 10 people can occur provided that there is sufficient social distancing.

3. Department Operations Center

i *Yuba and Sutter County Public Health Departments joined forces and opened a bi-county public health Department Operations Center (DOC).*

- Public messaging from the DOC is updated daily and available on the www.BePreparedSutter.org website.
- A public information hotline is available at (530) 749-7700.

4. Workplace Safety and Security Measures



The County's top priority is ensuring the health and safety of our employees as we work to resume County operations.

- All employees reporting to an onsite work location must go through a health screening before proceeding to their work area each day. Health screenings are performed on work time. In some departments, health screenings are performed by the employee on themselves using the instructions provided at the health screening station for their worksite. If there is a line at the screening station, employees should maintain a minimum of six feet from the next person and wear their face covering.
- If an employee must visit another department (for example, to make a deposit), they may do so. However, they should wear a face covering and only go to the department after they have first come to their own worksite for their health screening and should maintain social distance and handwashing/sanitizing procedures. They may be asked by the department they're visiting to demonstrate that they have had a health screening.
- Any time an employee is in an area where they may come into contact with other employees, they must wear a face covering. When in a private office, cubicle, or workstation where 6 feet of distance can continuously be maintained, face coverings are not required.
- Social distancing is a key to preventing the spread of COVID-19, and strict social distancing protocols must be maintained in the workplace. Employees should not congregate in common areas such as a workroom or kitchen. In some cases, the department head may have to close off a common area to ensure that employees aren't congregating. Use of common equipment such as a copier or printer, or presence in a common work area such as a file room should be staggered to ensure that employees are maintaining social distancing.
- Commonly touched items such as copiers, printers, door handles, light switches and fixtures should be wiped down with disinfecting wipes at the end of each day at a minimum and, depending on use in the office, more frequently throughout the day.
- Unless absolutely necessary, two or more employees should not ride in a single vehicle at the same time. Exceptions may be requested, and will be considered by the department head based on the needs of the position. If approved, all occupants should wear face coverings and maintain as much distance as is safe and practical. Items that are touched, such as steering wheels and door handles should be wiped down with disinfecting wipes after each use.

5. Support for Employees



The County is dedicated to keeping our community safe during this time, and we want to make sure our employees know we are here to support you.

- Please call your supervisor or manager if you aren't feeling well and stay home if you are sick. Employees should remain at home until they are asymptomatic (i.e., showing no signs of fever, coughing or shortness of breath).
- If you have a fever, do not return to work for at least 72 hours after the fever has subsided (without the use of fever reducing medication).
- Any employees who are ill and need medical attention should first call their medical provider who can provide specific guidance.
- Online medical services are available through Kaiser, and through Livehealth Online at www.livehealthonline.com for Anthem Blue Cross members
 - Receive immediate doctor visits through live video
 - Private, secure and convenient online visits
 - Your choice of U.S. board-certified doctors
 - Subject to medical plan deductibles, office copays and coinsurance
- Employees experiencing the effects of the Coronavirus outbreak are encouraged to use the County's Employee Assistance Program (EAP) HBA for support. To contact HBA call: 1-800-937-7770 or complete a Request for Services Form on the website and fax it to HBA. The phone is answered 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. All faxed requests for services are completely confidential and are responded to on the first business day after their transmittal.
- Employees who believe they may have contracted COVID-19 during the course and scope of employment, may file a claim for Worker's Compensation. Claims will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis depending on the employee's occupation, job duties, and how, when and where the virus was contracted.

6. Leave from Work

i *The County has established the following guidelines for employees who experience absences from work, whether voluntary or involuntary, due to COVID-19.*

- a. Employees who report to work with symptoms of acute respiratory illness (fever, cough, shortness of breath) will be directed to stay home and not come to work until they are free of fever and other symptoms for at least 72 hours, without the use of fever-reducing or other symptom-altering medicines (e.g. cough suppressants). Employees will be allowed to use any available leave balances to cover the period of the absence.
- b. Employees who have recently traveled to a high-risk area identified by the CDC will be directed to stay home for a minimum period of 14 calendar days, unless a health care provider indicates that the employee may return earlier.

- c. An employee who is sick or who has a sick family member, may stay home or go home without risk of disciplinary action.
- d. Employees who must stay home in the event of school closures or unavailability of childcare, may use available leave balances, including sick leave, and/or emergency paid sick leave and emergency family and medical leave, if applicable, to cover the absence.
- f. Employees may use available leave balances to cover the period of any absence from work or may choose to take the approved time off without pay. Employees who exhaust their leave balances and federal leave entitlements, if applicable, and who continue to be unable to return to work, shall be allowed to borrow up to 80 hours from their sick leave bank. Any borrowed sick leave hours are considered a loan from the County and shall be repaid through an employee's future sick leave accruals and/or from his or her final paycheck upon separation of employment. The ability for employees to borrow from his or her sick leave bank shall end upon action taken by the Board of Supervisors to declare the end of the emergency.
- g. Employees using their own leave balances or requesting leave without pay will not be required to provide a doctor's note to verify the need for leave.
- h. Employees who are well but who have a sick family member at home with Coronavirus should notify their supervisor or manager so that co-workers can be notified of potential exposure. You will not be personally identified in any communications to employees. Information regarding medical conditions will be kept strictly confidential and employees will not suffer retaliation for reporting that they are ill or if they need to be absent from work.

7. Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA)

i *The FFCRA is a federal leave entitlement that requires public agencies to provide 1) 80 hours of emergency paid sick leave (reduced for part-time employees) for immediate use for six COVID-19 related reasons; and 2) up to 12 weeks of paid FMLA leave for employees who need to be off work due to school closures or where childcare is not available.*

- a. The Act provides that certain employees may be excluded from the new paid sick leave and/or expanded family and medical leave. These employees include "health care providers" and "emergency responders." In order to ensure continuity of service, the following departments and classifications will be exempt:
 - 1) Health and Human Services department employees
 - 2) Probation department employees
 - 3) Sheriff's department employees
 - 4) Fire department employees
 - 5) Emergency Operations Manager
 - 6) Building Maintenance and Custodian classifications
 - 7) Road Maintenance classifications

All other employees are entitled to the Act's benefits. Please note that the County may designate additional departments and/or classifications as exempt depending on operational needs and requirements to provide continued service to the public.

- b. An employee is eligible to receive 80 hours of Emergency Paid Sick Leave (EPSL) when he or she is unable to work, including working from home, because:
 - 1) The employee is subject to a quarantine or isolation order related to COVID-19 (this does not include "shelter in place" orders);
 - 2) The employee has been advised by a health care provider to self-quarantine related to COVID-19;
 - 3) The employee is experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 **and is seeking a medical diagnosis**;
 - 4) The employee is caring for an individual subject to a quarantine or isolation order, or who has been advised by a health care provider to self-quarantine;
 - 5) The employee is caring for his or her child whose school or place of care is closed (or childcare provider is unavailable) due to COVID-19 reasons; or
 - 6) The employee is experiencing any other substantially-similar condition as specified by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (none have been identified to date).
- c. Emergency Paid Sick Leave may or may not be paid at an employee's regular rate of pay. For EPSL reasons 1-3 above, the employee receives their regular rate of pay; however, the pay cannot exceed \$511 per day and \$5,110 in total. For EPSL reasons 4-6 above, an employee receives 2/3 of their regular rate of pay; however, the pay cannot exceed \$200 per day and \$2,000 in total. Employees may use their other available paid leaves with EPSL so they receive their full pay.
- d. If an employee is unable to work or work from home due to a need for leave to care for a son or daughter under 18 years of age if the school or place of care has been closed or the childcare provider is unavailable, an employee is eligible for 12 weeks of paid emergency family and medical leave. The first 10 days of an employee's absence is unpaid; however eligible employees may substitute EPSL for the first 10 days. After the first 10 days, an employee is paid 2/3 of his or her regular rate of pay up to a maximum of \$200 per day and \$10,000 in total for the number of hours the employee would have been regularly scheduled to work. An employee may choose to use any available leave balances to make up a full pay check.
- e. The County has developed an [Emergency Paid Sick Leave or Emergency FMLA Request](#) form for eligible employees' use when requesting to be off work. An employee needing leave for a qualifying reason should complete the EPSL Request Form and submit it to his or her supervisor. The Form should also be simultaneously emailed directly to payroll@co.sutter.ca.us and Marlis Alexander in Human Resources at malexander@co.sutter.ca.us.

8. Employee Benefits

i *Employees who continue to be unable to return to work after exhausting their leave balances, sick leave advance and their federal leave entitlements, if applicable, and who are off work on an unpaid leave of absence may be eligible for other salary replacement programs.*

- a. If an employee is unable to work due to exposure or a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19 (certified by a medical professional), he or she can file a Disability Insurance claim with the State of California Employment Development Department (EDD).
- b. If an employee is unable to work because he or she is caring for an ill or quarantined family member with COVID-19 (certified by a medical professional), he or she can file a Paid Family Leave claim.
- c. If an employee's child's school is closed, and an employee is in an unpaid status due to having to miss work to care for his or her child(ren), he or she may be eligible for Unemployment Insurance Benefits.
- d. In most cases, the Governor's Executive Order N-25-20 waives the one-week waiting period required by EDD.
- e. For more information about eligibility for salary replacement programs through the State of California Employment Development Department, go to https://edd.ca.gov/about_edd/coronavirus-2019.htm

9. Disaster Service Workers

i **CALIFORNIA GOVERNMENT CODE SECTION 3100**
*3100. It is hereby declared that the protection of the health and safety and preservation of the lives and property of the people of the state from the effects of natural, manmade, or war-caused emergencies which result in conditions of disaster or in extreme peril to life, property, and resources is of paramount state importance requiring the responsible of public and private agencies and individual citizens. **In furtherance of the exercise of the police power of the state in protection of its citizens and resources, all public employees are hereby declared to be disaster service workers subject to such disaster service activities as may be assigned to them by their superiors or by law.***

On March 10, 2020, the County Public Health Officer, Dr. Phoung Luu, and the Sutter County Board of Supervisors declared a local health emergency for the County. This action was taken to ensure the County will have access to resources to respond to the public health threat. This also means that County employees may be called to serve the County as Disaster Service Workers.

All County employees are designated under California Government Code Section 3100 as Disaster Service Workers (DSW). This means that any time the Board of Supervisors declares a local emergency, employees may be required to return to work or remain at work for a disaster or emergency-related assignment. As Disaster Service Workers, employees may be deployed to different work sites than usual or be asked to perform work duties or tasks that are different from their regular work responsibilities. No one will be assigned duties they are not qualified or trained to perform.

- Make sure that your department has your current contact information and emergency contact information, particularly your home address and cell phone numbers which will be used to communicate with you in the event of an emergency response.
- The easiest way to update this information is to go to the SCNet - Employee Online Portal: <https://finapp.i.suttercounty.org/Finance/edge/Login/Login.aspx?ReturnUrl=/Finance/edge/Default.aspx>
Click on the “Home Address” button, then “Emergency Info” button.

The County does not have any immediate plans to deploy Disaster Service Workers; however, the County relies on our employees to step up in the time of need should their assistance be required.

10. Maintaining a Respectful Workplace

i **A person’s risk for COVID-19 depends on travel history and exposure to infected individuals, not on race, ethnicity, or culture.** Residents of Sutter County remain at low risk of infection from COVID-19. As a reminder, County employees must continue to treat colleagues and members of the public with courtesy and respect. Discrimination of any kind is a violation of the County's Discriminatory Workplace Harassment Policy and will not be tolerated.