

Human Resources Policy Guidance
COVID-19
(as of March 12, 2020)

This Human Resources Policy Guidance builds on pertinent Columbia University Human Resources policies and will generally pertain to all full-time and part-time employees (Faculty and Staff – Officers and Support Staff). Other employee groups will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. For unionized employees, please contact Labor Relations for additional guidance. *Updates will be provided as needed.*

Leave Time (Vacation, Sick or Personal)

- a. Self-Isolation (not reporting to work)** – The guiding principle is that employees should not report to work if their attendance at work is contrary to University guidelines.
- If an employee (or member of the employee’s immediate household) has been advised **by the Department of Health, their personal physician, or the University** to self-isolate (not report to work) for any reason, for up to 14 days, they are expected to work remotely, if approved. Written proof is required. The recommended process to follow is outlined on page 2.
 - If an employee **does not** become ill during this period, they will continue to receive pay and will not be required to use Vacation, Sick or Personal time.
 - If an employee **does** become ill during this period, the portion of the time when the employee is ill and unable to perform work should be treated as a standard Sick time absence and the employee should work with CUHR Leave Management.

All healthcare workers who were exposed to a patient or staff member under investigation for COVID-19 in an NYP facility and who develops a fever, cough or shortness of breath must call the Workforce Health and Safety (WHS) hotline: 7 days a week, 6:00 a.m.-11:00 p.m., Phone: 646-697-9470.

All healthcare workers who were contacted by DOH because of a confirmed community exposure or believe they may have been exposed to someone outside of NYP with COVID-19 must call the Workforce Health and Safety (WHS) hotline: 7 days a week, 6:00 a.m.-11:00 p.m., Phone: 646-697-9470.

A Workforce Health & Safety provider will contact the Department of Health as required on behalf of staff members and staff will be provided with instructions and guided through the process by WHS.

- **Returning to Work**
 - i. An employee who follows an advised period of self-isolation—and has no symptoms—should contact Workforce Health and Safety after the advised period of self-isolation and confirm their clearance with CUHR Leave Management.
 - ii. An employee who tests positive for COVID-19 or is placed off duty because of a confirmed health exposure to COVID-19 must obtain clearance from the Workforce Health and Safety hotline: 7 days a week, 6:00 a.m.- 11:00 p.m., Phone: 646-697-9470. Staff will be screened by phone for symptoms and if no symptoms are present, staff will be directed to go in person to their local WHS to be cleared for work.

- **Non-Essential Employees Choosing Not to Report to Work**
 - i. If an employee chooses not to report to work because, for example, they are uncomfortable commuting (via commuter train, bus or subway), they must request and receive approval from their manager to work remotely or use Vacation or Personal time. Employee must charge leave time—Vacation or Personal Days—if not working remotely.
 - ii. If appropriate, managers should recommend working remotely however this arrangement can be changed on very short notice.

b. Columbia University Remains Open and Government Agencies Declare a Public Health Emergency

- If applicable, NYC Sick Leave provides 40 hours per academic year of paid leave for emergencies such as an employee who has to care for family members as a result of a public health emergency.
- After exhausting NYC Sick Leave entitlement, an employee who is not working remotely is required to charge Vacation or Personal Days. If leave time is not available, **pay is not provided**. Any exceptions must be approved by CUHR.
- If the government takes other steps that result in an employee remaining at home—e.g., a child’s school closes—Schools and Departments may arrange for remote work options where possible. **c. School/Department or Columbia University Closure**
 - Schools and Departments have the responsibility to notify its employees whether they are considered Non-Essential or Essential personnel (refer to section below) for purposes of contingency planning.
 - Non-Essential personnel do not report to work and should work remotely, if possible.
 - Essential personnel are required to report to work and will receive full pay.

c. Personal Travel

- Any employee that now travels to any CDC-designated at-risk area may be required to self-isolate for up to 14 days before returning to work. Employee may be required to charge leave time—Vacation or Personal Days.

Essential Personnel

During an emergency, Essential Personnel provide services that relate directly to the health, safety, and welfare of the University, ensure continuity of key operations, and maintain and protect University properties.

- a. Each School and Department is responsible for final determinations as to which of its personnel are Essential. Essential Personnel are generally defined as the Faculty and Staff who are required to report to their designated work location, to ensure the operation of essential functions or departments during an emergency or when the University has suspended operations.
- b. There are some individuals who may be required to perform essential services remotely and those individuals will be identified in advance and notified by their managers.
- c. If unable to report to work, appropriate leave time—Vacation or Personal Days—must be taken. If leave time is not available, **pay is not provided**. Exceptions to this guidance must be approved by the Senior Business Officer (SBO) of the School or Department.
- d. Essential Personnel are **expected to work in emergency situations** unless they are specifically excused by their departments. **Failure to report to work as directed may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.**

Telecommuting and Alternate Work Schedules

Telecommuting and remote work arrangements are intended to provide employees with the ability to fulfill the requirements of their job while remaining at home. These arrangements are approved at the discretion of the SBO or designee of the School or Department. Operational needs and feasibility for the full scope of work expected of the position must be considered.

The SBO or designee will determine the operational circumstances in which telecommuting can be approved, including staff eligibility criteria. An employee's manager should be expected to continue management activities with an employee via remote technology channels (email, phone, virtual meeting software, etc.)

Considerations when reviewing telecommuting requests should include an assessment of the technology and/or equipment needed for remote work to be completed (e.g. privacy/security of remote workspace, University technology resources that need to be provided in order for an employee to telecommute etc.).

Alternate Work Schedules can be utilized to help employees avoid commuting during peak travel times and managers should consider using these when possible.

Self-Isolation Guidance

If an employee has been advised by the Department of Health, their personal physician or the University to self-isolate, the following steps should be taken:

- Employee should stay home (not go to work, events, or other social gatherings).
- Employee should immediately contact their manager and local Human Resources officer. The local HR officer should immediately notify CUHR Leave Management. ○ Employee should contact their primary care provider to let them know that they are self-isolating. ○ Employee should monitor their temperature twice a day.
- If Employee experiences fever, cough and difficulty breathing, they should contact their primary care provider immediately.
- If Employee lives with others, they should not spend time in shared living spaces and should limit contact. The sharing of household items (drinking glasses, towels, eating utensils, bedding, etc.) should be avoided.
- Employee should arrange for food to be delivered via friends, grocery delivery services, etc.
- High touch surfaces (e.g. doorknobs, telephones, remote controls, and bathroom surfaces) should be cleaned often with a standard household disinfectant such as Clorox® wipes.
- Employee is expected to work remotely, if able, and asked to stay in daily contact with their manager and local HR.
- Information regarding their self-isolation is confidential and should only be shared on a need-to-know basis.
- Local HR should provide EAP benefit information to remind employee about the availability of this resource.

Please visit <https://www.columbia.edu/content/coronavirus> for more information and up-to-date guidelines.

NOTE: THIS GUIDANCE MAY BE MODIFIED AS CIRCUMSTANCES RELATING TO COVID-19 CHANGE

Reference

- **COVID-19 Guidance for the Columbia Community** - <https://www.columbia.edu/content/coronavirus>
- **Essential Personnel** - <https://policylibrary.columbia.edu/guidelines-establishing-essentialnonessentialpersonnel-case-campus-emergency>
- **Time Away from Work** - <https://policylibrary.columbia.edu/category/humanresources/time-away-work>
- **Telecommuting** - <https://policylibrary.columbia.edu/telecommuting-policy>