

# Employer Guidance - COVID 19

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## Human Resources Guidance on COVID-19 concerns

**REVISED March 30, 2020**

*Bexar County has an obligation to continue to provide services to the community and remains committed to doing so. To that end, Offices and Departments are encouraged to be as flexible as is reasonable and appropriate in their application of the County's leave policies during this time.*

*The following provides an overview of common questions associated with the impact of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) as it relates to employee leave, telecommuting and travel. This situation is rapidly developing and modifications may come quickly. This information may be updated often accordingly. Questions regarding this policy, or about responding to COVID-19 issues generally, may be directed to the County's **COVID-19 Response Coordination Officer, Thomas Guevara, at [tguevara@bexar.org](mailto:tguevara@bexar.org) or at (210)335-0180.***

### **What if an employee, or someone living with the employee, tests positive for COVID-19?**

If an employee, or someone living with the employee, tests positive for COVID-19, the employee should stay home from work, contact the **San Antonio Metropolitan Health District COVID-19 Hotline at (210) 207-5779**, and report the information to his or her Supervisor as soon as possible. The Supervisor should immediately report the information to the Elected or Appointed Official or Department Head, who should then inform the County Manager's Office at [tguevara@bexar.org](mailto:tguevara@bexar.org) or (210) 335-0180. If the employee is able, he or she should telecommute. If telecommuting is not an option, the employee may take advantage of Employee Online Training options. If that is not possible, the employee should use available sick leave or other available leave. After March 31, 2020, the employee may have the option to use emergency paid sick leave available through the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA). Employees and Supervisors may contact Human Resources for more information related to FFCRA medical certification will be required upon return to work.

### **What if an employee, or someone living with the employee, has symptoms of COVID-19?**

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website, symptoms of COVID-19 include fever, cough and shortness of breath. If an employee, or someone living with an employee, has symptoms of COVID\_19, the employee should stay home from work, notify the supervisor and contact call the **San Antonio Metropolitan Health District COVID-19 Hotline at (210) 207-5779** for guidance. If the employee is advised to self-quarantine, the employee should telecommute. If telecommuting is not an option, the employee may take advantage of Employee Online Training options. If that is not possible, the employee should use available sick leave or other available leave until such time that he or she is cleared to return to work in writing by a health care provider. After March 31, 2020, the employee may have the option to use emergency paid sick leave available through the Families First Coronavirus Response Act. A medical certification may be required upon return to work.

## What if an employee has been exposed to COVID-19?

If an employee believes he or she has been exposed to COVID-19, the employee should stay home, inform his or her supervisor, and call the **San Antonio Metropolitan Health District COVID-19 Hotline at (210) 207-5779** for guidance. If Metro Health indicates the employee is clear to return to work, the employee should inform his or her supervisor and return to work. If the employee is directed to self-quarantine, the employee should stay home and telecommute. If telecommuting is not possible, the employee should stay home and utilize the Employee Online Training options available to Bexar County employees. If that is not possible, the employee may be granted administrative leave. After March 31, 2020, the employee may have the option to use emergency paid sick leave available through the Families First Coronavirus Response Act. A medical certification may be required upon return to work.

## What health care options do employees have?

All Bexar County employees have access to the **Employee Health Clinic** located at 211 S. Flores, San Antonio, TX 78204. Hours of operation are from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. The Clinic is closed from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. for the lunch hour. Employees can call (210) 335-4935 to make an appointment.

Employees on the County's health care plans to utilize **Teledoc** to minimize contact with others. Employees can visit Teledoc.com, call (800) 835-2362 to access this service or they can download the Teladoc app. Employee out-of-pocket costs for the Teledoc service will be waived in those cases where COVID-19 infection is suspected. COVID-19 testing is available to County employees at no cost.

Other options include Aetna's **24-hour Nurse Hotline** (800) 556-1555 or employees may contact their **Primary Care Physicians**.

## Should I require my employee to obtain a doctor's note?

No doctor's note is required for absences of three (3) consecutive days or less. In appropriate circumstances, may be waived by supervisor or elected/appointed official.

## Does an employee with COVID-19 qualify for the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)?

COVID-19 may be an FMLA qualifying event if it meets the serious health condition criteria (for example, in-patient hospitalization or complications resulting from the illness) for those employees which qualify for FMLA. In addition, the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (H.R. 6201) takes effect on April 1, 2020. Its two primary employment provisions expand Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) leave eligibility under the Emergency Family and Medical Leave Expansion Act (EFMLEA) and make emergency paid sick leave available to some workers under the Emergency Paid Sick Leave Act (EPSLA). These provisions will remain in effect until Dec. 31, 2020 and apply to all Bexar County employees with the exception of health and public safety employees, who are exempt. For implementation guidance, please go to [Bexar Sidekick.org](http://Bexar Sidekick.org).

## **What if my employee is unable to attend work due to school or day care closure?**

If an Employee has to take leave due to the closure of a day care or school and the employee is able to telecommute, the Elected or Appointed Official, Department Head, or his or designee, must approve telecommuting in writing. If the employee is unable to telecommute, the employee will be required to use existing leave balances and may be eligible for additional leave under the EPSLA discussed above.

## **What if my employee has travel plans?**

If an employee (or member of his or her household) chooses to travel, especially if by air or a cruise, the employee should self-quarantine upon return and call a health care provider for guidance. If the employee is able to telecommute, the Elected or Appointed Official, Department Head, or his or her designee, must approve telecommuting in writing. If telecommuting is not possible, the employee will be expected to use his or her own leave during self-quarantine and may be required to be cleared by a health care provider before returning to work. Administrative leave will not be granted in these cases.

## **What if my employee files a Workers Compensation claim?**

If the employee files a Workers Compensation claim, the County will evaluate the claim within the Workers Compensation policies and guidelines before determining if an issue is work-related.

## **What about telecommuting or alternative work schedules?**

Telecommuting and alternative work schedules must be pre-approved by supervisors and/or elected officials. Please contact the Human Resources Department for guidance on telecommuting and alternative work schedules.