



March 7, 2020

Subject: DHR Alert COVID-19 Update for City Employees

Dear City and County Employees:

San Francisco now has its first confirmed cases of COVID-19 (novel coronavirus). San Franciscans who tested positive for COVID-19 are being treated at local hospitals. As this public health emergency progresses, we expect further disruptions and impacts on the City and its employees.

As a reminder, all City employees are Disaster Service Workers (DSWs) and may be called to serve the City at this time. We rely on our City workers to step up in time of need.

The Department of Public Health has issued new guidance to improve the safety of individuals who are particularly vulnerable to COVID-19 infection. This guidance includes instructions on minimizing exposure for vulnerable populations.

Vulnerable individuals are those who:

- are 60 years old and older; or
- have health conditions such as heart disease, lung disease, diabetes, kidney disease and weakened immune systems.

The guidance advises vulnerable individuals to limit outings, avoid large gatherings, telecommute if possible, stay home if they are sick, and avoid people who are sick.

If you have a health condition and are unsure whether it places you in the vulnerable population, ask your personal health care provider. If your health care provider advises you to stay away from work and you cannot work remotely, you may use any accrued leave. If you are a vulnerable individual and believe you have a job you can do from home, please discuss this option with your supervisor. You should not disclose your medical condition or other personal information, only that you believe you are in a vulnerable group, and that you are requesting permission to work remotely.

The City will do all it can to minimize health risk for our employees, consistent with DPH recommendations and occupational health standards. Where a department determines it is possible, employees who can perform their work remotely are encouraged to telecommute. Some employees, including those in the vulnerable population, may not be able to telecommute because they need to be at work in order to provide critical city services, for example, health care workers, transit operators, or those serving as Disaster Service Workers. The City will take measures to in the workplace to mitigate risks.

The City is encouraging departments to temporarily expand the use of telecommuting, and to consider offering flexible start and end times for shifts during this period. As you know, not all City employees have jobs that are suited to telecommuting. Review the City telecommute policy and process here: <https://sfdhr.org/telecommute>. If your telecommuting arrangement is approved, you may be able to start telecommuting as soon as next week.

Please remember to keep yourself safe:

- Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds (the time it takes to hum “Happy Birthday” twice).
- Cover your cough or sneeze (use your elbow or shoulder, not your hands).
- Notify your supervisor and stay home if you are sick.
- Get your flu shot to protect against flu or symptoms similar to COVID-19.

During the course of this public health emergency, the City will not require employees who have been sick with flu or flu-like symptoms to provide a doctor’s note when they return to work, even if the employees are on sick leave restriction or returning after an absence of more than five days.

San Francisco is open for business, and we thank each of you for your continued dedication to making our City a great place to live and work.

Stay up to date on this rapidly evolving situation by visiting <https://www.sfdph.org/dph/default.asp> or <https://www.sf72.org/> and the CDC’s website: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov>.

Sincerely,

Micki Callahan  
Human Resources Director