

Supervisor FAQ's – Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Updated March 09, 2020

As of March 9, the British Columbia Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC) has confirmed 32 cases of novel coronavirus in BC. Over the weekend, one of the infected individuals – a resident of the Lynn Valley care home – had passed away as a result of the virus. BC Health officials are continuing to focus their efforts on containing the spread of the virus in BC. Currently, the risk to British Columbians continues to be assessed as low.

As a supervisor/manager, you may be getting questions from your staff regarding COVID-19. The following FAQs have been prepared to help you respond to staff questions and concerns. It is recommended that you use this to facilitate conversations with your teams and inform yourself of The City's processes; it is not intended to be forwarded.

Part 1: General

Q1: The novel coronavirus (now officially named COVID – 19) has dominated the media headlines lately. How does this virus compare to others like influenza (the flu)?

A1: Influenza and COVID-19 are different viruses, but both can result in similar symptoms of fever, headache, cough, sore throat, runny nose. Symptoms in both cases can range in severity from mild to severe. Like influenza, some groups may be at increased risk for more severe illness—even death—such as older adults or those with underlying health conditions. Both illnesses are droplet-spread so preventative measures such as washing your hands; not touching your eyes, nose and mouth with your hands, and covering up a cough/sneeze are effective methods.

Q2: Is there a vaccine for the COVID -19?

A2: No, not at this time; however, researchers are working on it.

Q3: Where can I get more information on current City of Surrey protocols for COVID -19?

A3: A Pandemic Planning Leadership Group is meeting regularly to monitor the evolving situation. An information page is available through [CityNet](#) (coronavirus update page) and will be updated as required.

Q4: What if the situation with COVID- 19 changes?

A4: The Pandemic Planning Leadership Group will update these FAQs and our information page as required.

Part 2: Exposure Due to Travel

Q5: I have an employee returning to work who recently visited a country where there is a risk of the COVID-19 virus. They have called the office to check if it was okay to return to work. What should I do?

A5: You should first ask your employee about their health status. If the worker is sick (regardless of cause), they should not come to work, and they will be placed on sick leave or unscheduled in the case of Auxiliary employees.

If the worker is sick, they should contact their health care provider, 8-1-1, or local public health authority for further instructions.

If the worker is well health-wise and has no symptoms, you should ask them what country/region they visited. At this time, the BC Centre for Disease control has only made recommendations to **self-isolate** and notify the local Medical Health Officer for those incoming travelers from Hubei province, **China** or **Iran** (14 days following last exposure, e.g. leaving affected area).

If the employee is returning from other countries with active travel health notices (<https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/health-safety/travel-health-notice>) the Public Health Agency of Canada recommends that for 14 days after the day they left to:

- self-monitor their health for fever, cough, and difficult breathing; and,
- avoid crowded public spaces and places.

If your employee is required to self-isolate, ask them if they have been medically cleared to return to work and have them provide a written note from their health care provider stating they are fit to return to work. Any person being medically followed under the relevant procedures will be provided with appropriate clearance by those medical authorities. Employees who have been directed to self-isolate will be placed on sick leave or unscheduled (Auxiliary employees).

Q6: The employee I supervise is not sick and has no respiratory symptoms but has travelled to areas where there is a risk of the COVID-19 virus. My employee would like to self-quarantine for 14 days as they heard it may help keep others in the workplace safe in case, they have contracted COVID-19 but don't show symptoms. What should I do?

A6: You should advise your employee that quarantine has not been a recommendation for asymptomatic (no symptoms) individuals except for individuals returning from Hubei Province, China and from Iran.

The Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) recommends returning travelers, "monitor your health for fever, cough and difficulty breathing for 14 days after you arrive in Canada; if you do have these symptoms, call the public health authority (i.e. local public health)."

Monitoring your health does not equate to self-isolation. You should advise your employee that they are not eligible for sick leave, however, they can use other forms of leave (e.g. vacation) if they wish.

Part 3: Non-Travel Related Exposure

Q7: I supervise an employee who is sick with a fever and respiratory symptoms (e.g. cough, runny nose). There is no travel history to an affected region and no history of exposure to someone who was ill and travelled to an affected region. What do I do with this employee?

A7: If the employee is sick, they should be placed on sick leave. The common cold or seasonal influenza is far more common than COVID-19, and employees should seek treatment advice from their health care provider or call 8-1-1.

Q8: I supervise an employee who tells me they have been medically advised to stay home as they are sick with a communicable disease (COVID-19). Are they eligible for sick leave?

A8: Yes. If an employee has been advised by a medical professional to remain at home on self-isolation because they are sick (or is in hospital for treatment), they are eligible for sick leave.

Q9: I have an employee who will be coming back to work after recovering from an active COVID-19 infection. That employee feels well and is not having any

further symptoms. What should I do?

A9: Presently, all COVID-19 cases in BC are being medically followed by Public Health and are self-isolated from others. Once individuals recovering from COVID-19 infection have demonstrated they no longer require self-isolation (two negative test samples), Public Health will advise these individuals they can return to their usual routines.

Ask your employee if they have been medically cleared to return to work and have the employee provide a written note from their health care provider stating they are fit to return to work. The relevant procedures will be provided with appropriate clearance by those medical authorities.

Q10: I have an employee who was given a medical recommendation to self-isolate for 14 days as a precautionary measure for COVID-19. That employee is doing well, with no symptoms, and would like to return to work. What should I do?

A10: Individuals who have been medically recommended by a health care professional to self-isolate, will be closely monitored for symptoms during their self-isolation and will have daily checklists to complete. At the end of the 14 days of self-isolation, and in the absence of symptoms, the health care provider/Public Health will end the 14-day self-isolation and the worker can return to their usual routines.

Ask your employee if they have been medically cleared to return to work and have the employee provide a written note from their health care provider stating they are fit to return to work. The relevant procedures will be provided with appropriate clearance by those medical authorities.

Q11: An employee I supervise came to the office wearing a mask generating concerns among staff. What should I do?

A11: You should first ask the employee about their health status in a respectful and private way. If the employee is sick or has cold/flu symptoms (regardless of any link to COVID-19), they should be asked to go home and be placed on sick leave.

If the employee is well health-wise and would like to wear the mask as a preventive measure, you should inform them that there has been no general recommendation for everyone to wear personal protective equipment (PPE) such as surgical masks and N95 respirators; as we do not know if wearing a mask will prevent infection.

People wearing a mask may also touch their faces more often, potentially increasing the risk of having the eyes, nose or mouth come into contact with the

virus.

Q12: I supervise an employee who tells me that someone in their household has been told to self-monitor or self-isolate. What should I do?

A12: The employee should be asked to call their health care provider or 8-1-1- to discuss any need for testing and follow-up.

Q13: My employee has asked me to work from home due to fear of infection. Is this permissible?

A13: Since the risk is still categorized as low, working from home is not necessary at this time.

Please note that any absences related to COVID-19 exposure will be excluded from the Attendance Support Program.

Questions about your health? Where can I get more information?

Please refer to official sources regarding the coronavirus, as misinformation has been circulating on social media:

- BC Centre for Disease Control website – [Coronavirus Information](#)
- Fraser Health website – [FAQs for Residents](#)
- [HealthLinkBC website](#) – Coronavirus

If you have concerns about your personal health situation, please contact your health care provider, local public health office or call HealthLink BC <https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/> or call 811.