



City of Newport News HUMAN RESOURCES COVID-19 FAQs-#4



Thank you for reviewing these Frequently Asked Questions. Please note the guidance provided in these or a previous edition of FAQs is subject to change based on the most up-to-date information provided by the Centers for Disease Control and/or Virginia Department of Health.

COVID-19 EMPLOYEE DAILY SCREENING AND EXPOSURE SCENARIOS

Q: How do I know if I have been “exposed” to COVID-19 for daily screening purposes? :

A: *To be considered exposed to COVID-19, you have to have had close contact with someone with COVID-19. The highest risk contact includes:*

- *Living in the same house as a person diagnosed with COVID-19*
- *Caring for a person diagnosed with COVID-19*
- *Being within 6 feet of a person diagnosed with COVID-19 for 10 minutes or more, or*
- *Being in direct contact with secretions from a person diagnosed with COVID-19 (e.g., being coughed or sneezed on, kissing, sharing utensils, etc.).*
- *Being exposed to a clinically compatible case in a region with widespread community transmission*
- *Being exposed to a person with symptomatic COVID-19 during period from 48 hours before symptoms onset until meets criteria for discontinuing home isolation.*

Q: Can I be in the same room with someone who has COVID-19 and not get it?

A: *Being indoors, such as a classroom or hospital waiting room, with a person diagnosed with COVID-19 and remaining more than 6 feet away, does not put you at a higher risk of getting sick. Additionally, briefly walking by or being briefly in the same room as a person diagnosed with COVID-19 does not put you at a higher risk of getting sick.*

Q: What steps can I take to protect myself and my family from becoming infected with COVID -19?

A: *Staying home, telecommuting, and self-isolation is the best defense for limiting the spread of COVID-19. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) advises healthy individuals to wear mouth and nose face coverings — including homemade masks, scarves or bandanas — when they go to a public area, such as the grocery store or a pharmacy. The City of Newport News has advised all employees to wear masks at all times, unless the employee is in their own work space or vehicle.*

Q: If I have coronavirus, what can the City tell others about my condition?

A: *All medical information on an employee is confidential. The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act provides protections concerning disclosure of medical information. In accordance with this Act and for*

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the safety of the workplace, an employer may disclose this information to individuals charged with protecting the health or safety of the public as necessary to prevent or minimize the threat of imminent exposure.

Q: If I test positive for COVID-19, how soon can I return to work?

A: *If an employee tests positive for COVID-19, he/she may return to work after 14 days from the date of the positive test results **and** showing no symptoms including a fever.*

COVID-19 EMPLOYEE LEAVE and CARRYOVER

Q: If I am an emergency responder or essential personnel and am unable to take the required 80 hours of paid personal leave, will I lose it if I can't take time off before June 30, 2020?

A: *This is a great question. The City recognizes the ability for emergency responders and essential personnel to take leave has been impacted by the emergency. Based on the duration of the declared state of emergency, the City will determine options to suspend, waive, or extend the June 30 deadline date for the use of PPL. Communication will be sent to impacted employees when this decision has been reached.*

COVID-19 EMPLOYEE STRESS and COPING RESOURCES

Q: When is this whole thing going to end and when can we relax and get back to normal?

A: *While no one can answer that question yet, we can point you in the direction of resources for you and your family to use on a daily basis to make the most of your new normal.*

- [Dedicated City of Newport News Optima EAP Website \(Company Username: nngov\)](#)
- [TED Talk - How To Be Your Best Self In Times of Crisis](#)
- [Managing Mental Health during COVID-19](#)
- [Managing Stress During a Crisis for Supervisors](#)
- [StorylineOnline: A collection of free videos, featuring your favorite celebrities reading stories for younger listeners \(provided by the SAG-AFTRA Foundation\)](#)
- [PBS KIDS Daily](#)
- [Scholastic Learn At Home Program](#)
- [Mindfulness Resources for Teens](#)
- [15 Mindfulness and Relaxation Apps for Kids with Anxiety](#)

CARES Act

Information to share with family members who may experience lack of work or closures:

Q: Because of COVID-19, my family member's employer has temporarily closed, and they do not have paid leave or will not receive a paycheck. What can they do?

A: *Your family member may file a claim for Unemployment Insurance (UI) benefits with the Virginia Employment Commission (VEC). If VEC approves the claim, they will receive a weekly benefit payment that*

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is dependent on past earnings. The maximum benefit amount is \$378 for up to 26 weeks. Congress has authorized additional benefits that will be added when Virginia completes implementation of the new program.

For more information about unemployment insurance and to file a claim, please visit <http://www.vec.virginia.gov/node/11699>. A detailed guide to applying is available at <https://www.vec.virginia.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Information-on-claims-related-to-layoff-March-2020.pdf> Please be sure to put "Lack of Work" as the reason for separation from employment on the application. Prepare ahead of time, have all previous employment documentation ready and have patience in navigating the site as VEC is experiencing a high volume of claims.

Q: My family member's employer has cut hours back due to the coronavirus. What can we do?

A: If their weekly earnings fall below what would be the weekly unemployment insurance benefit, you may file a claim for partial Unemployment Insurance (UI) benefits with the Virginia Employment Commission (VEC).

For more information about unemployment insurance and to file a claim, please visit <http://www.vec.virginia.gov/node/11699>. A detailed guide to applying is available at <https://www.vec.virginia.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Information-on-claims-related-to-layoff-March-2020.pdf> Please be sure to put "Lack of Work" as the reason for separation from employment on the application. Prepare ahead of time, have all previous employment documentation ready and have patience in navigating the site as VEC is experiencing a high volume of claims.

Q: My family member's unemployment insurance ran out shortly before the public health crisis, and am now no longer eligible. Has Virginia extended benefits for people in this situation?

A: Under the Federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, individuals who have exhausted their unemployment insurance benefits may be eligible to receive Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) for up to 13 weeks. They will also qualify for an additional \$600 per week for 13 weeks. VEC will notify eligible candidates who have exhausted their benefits.

For more information about unemployment insurance and to file a claim, please visit <http://www.vec.virginia.gov/node/11699>. A detailed guide to applying is available at <https://www.vec.virginia.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Information-on-claims-related-to-layoff-March-2020.pdf> Please be sure to put "Lack of Work" as the reason for separation from employment on the application. Prepare ahead of time, have all previous employment documentation ready and have patience in navigating the site as VEC is experiencing a high volume of claims.

Q: Retirement Plan questions?

A: Please see the Special CARES Act Edition that references Retirement Plan provisions