



City of Newport News

HUMAN RESOURCES

COVID-19 FAQs-#5



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: I suffer from allergies or other conditions that my require me to answer, “Yes”, to one or more of the questions asked during the employee screening and temperature check; due to this, I have been restricted from accessing my work site. What can I do to avoid this issue?

A: *Employees that are not permitted access to city facilities due to positive symptomatic responses during screen checks should stay home for the day, using PML, and report to work when symptoms are no longer present. If symptoms persist, the employee can contact their physician or use the MDLIVE telemedicine option to obtain a doctor’s note stating that the employee may return to work.*

Q: What type of mask is appropriate for the position I perform?

A: *There are 3 types of masks being circulated to employees around the city.*

- *N95 masks are reserved for first responders, public safety, and specifically identified high-risk positions to be used during interactions in COVID-19 infected areas, or with citizens who are at risk or positive for COVID-19 or other infectious diseases*
- *Surgical masks have been circulated to essential personnel across the city and will be replenished for first responders, public safety and the high risk positions as indicated above for daily use*
- *Cloth face coverings **have been ordered** for all other essential personnel and will be distributed to employees as shipments begin to arrive.*
- *As a reminder: 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: My temperature is registering lower than normal on the thermometers at the screening checkpoints. Is this normal?

A: *Non-contact thermometers typically run one degree less than oral thermometers. The temperature variations with non-contact thermometers are typically due to technique. Most use the forehead; however, hair must be out of the way, oily skin or makeup can alter the reading, and being too far away can create a lower or altered reading. For many of them, you must be within an inch of the skin for the most accurate reading.*

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Reminder:

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. Should an employee produce a doctor note with an earlier return to work date, the employee may return to work in accordance with that note. Employee will be subject to employee symptom and temperature check upon arrival at their respective worksite.*

COVID-19 EMPLOYEE LEAVE and CARRYOVER

Q: If I am an emergency responder or essential personnel may I request PPL in the coming weeks?

A: *We have been operating in an essential personnel status since mid-March. However, due to the longevity of the situation as well as the uncertainty of how long the pandemic period will be in effect, PPL may be requested in small increments at the supervisor's discretion. Supervisors should consider staffing levels and effect on overall operations when considering leave requests during the pandemic.*

Q: As a non-essential employee, may I request PPL?

A: *The Liberal Leave policy (Section 611) is in effect for non-essential positions. When liberal leave has been declared by the City Manager it is expected that employees will use their best judgment to determine if they can report to or remain at work without taking unnecessary risk regarding their safety. In the event an employee determines that they cannot report to or remain at work without taking unnecessary risk, a request for leave can be made to the appropriate level of supervision for review and approval, if appropriate.*

Non-essential employees may continue to request PPL in accordance with the City's time-off policies (Section 701) and their department procedures.

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: *We are continuing to investigate 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. We anticipate providing an answer to this in the next two weeks.*

FAMILIES FIRST CORONAVIRUS RESPONSE ACT (FFCRA)

Reminder:

Q: I've heard about the FFCRA, but what is this and how does it pertain to me or my employees?

A: *The FFCRA provides two different types of paid leave:*

- *Emergency Family and Medical Leave Expansion Act (EFMLA) providing coverage for employees caring for family members as a result of COVID-19 implications. This leave is counted as part of your annual 12 week FMLA designation.*
- *Emergency Paid Sick Leave Act (EPSL) providing coverage for employees who are subject to quarantine isolation order, advised by health professional to self-quarantine, is experiencing*

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COVID-19 symptoms and seeking diagnosis, or is experiencing any other substantially similar condition specified by the US Department of Health and Human Services.

Q: Who is eligible for leave?

A: *In general, any non-emergency responder employees who are unable to work or telework may be eligible for up to two weeks of full or partial EPSL for COVID-19 related reasons AND employees who have been employed for at least 30 days prior to their leave request may be eligible for up to 12 weeks of partially paid expanded family and medical leave if the employee is caring for his or her child whose school or place of care is closed (or child care provider is unavailable) due to COVID-19 related reasons.*

Q: How do I request FFCRA Emergency Paid Sick Leave or Emergency Family Medical Leave?

A: *An employee may request leave under FFCRA by electronically submitting the appropriate request form directly to Human Resources at medicalservices@nnva.gov.*

The FFCRA request forms and instructions on how to properly complete and electronically submit the request may be found on the [Department of Human Resources COVID-19 webpage](#) under the Employee Benefits/Resources heading.

- *The FFCRA Emergency Paid Sick Leave Request Form can be accessed [here](#) for all non-essential personnel.*
- *The FFCRA Expanded FLMA for Childcare Request Form can be accessed [here](#) for all non-essential personnel.*
- *The FFCRA LTS Quick Reference Guide for employees can be accessed through this link: [ORG](#).*