



# City of Newport News

## HUMAN RESOURCES

### COVID-19 FAQs-#8



*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 RETURN TO WORK QUESTIONS

**Q:** How does the Governor's Executive Order 63 requiring face coverings affect the City's Face Coverings and Employee Screening Policy?

**A:** All employees are expected to comply with [City Policy](#) and [Executive Order 63](#). This order requires that patrons of state or local government buildings, when accessed for the purpose of securing public services, cover their mouth and nose with a face covering as described and recommended by the CDC. As mentioned previously, please wear your mask every day in public or common areas, while working with other employees and upon entry and exit from all public facilities. Face coverings and physical distancing will continue until further notice. You may have already noticed the City of Newport News branded signs adorning walls, windows, elevators and floors encouraging face coverings and social distancing. [COVID-19-signage](#)

Please visit this link to read an article that articulates how face coverings and social distancing can make a serious impact on reducing the spread of COVID-19. [Article: Face masks may reduce COVID-19 spread by 85%](#) To see examples

**Q:** How does the Governor's Executive Order 65 and Phase II, beginning June 5, 2020, affect my position? Will City offices open to the public?

**A:** The City Manager's Office is working with the COVID-19 Recovery Team to outline intentional steps to prepare for Phase II and reopening facilities to the public. Rest assured, as these steps are finalized, employees in public-facing and support positions will be informed of how the City will move forward and how each employee will be affected. You can expect further guidance from your Director or Management Team next week. [Virginia-Forward-Phase-Two-Guidelines](#).

**Q:** Once the City does re-open, will employee screenings remain in effect? Will citizens and visitors be screened with temperature checks upon entry?

**A:** Employee temperature and screening checks will remain in affect along with the face-covering policy through at least Phase II. Once the City re-opens, all visitors will be asked to don face coverings prior to entry and adhere to social distancing guidelines. Visitors will not be subjected to individual temperature and screening checks.

## COVID-19 FAQs

**Q:** I am very nervous about returning to work, interacting with the general public and am fearful of citizens who refuse to wear face coverings or social distance. How will adherence to the City guidelines be managed?

**A:** *The City Manager's Office is currently working on protocols to handle and address any situations like this that may arise. Security Services and Management will be well-versed in how to handle non-compliant visitors which should relieve the burden of front-line employees handling such issues.*

**Q:** Is the City going to let me continue to Telework once offices and buildings are reopened? I've been able to meet my supervisor's and department's expectations while working from home so can't we implement a Telework policy?

**A:** *As we transition through Phase II and Phase III of the reopening, there may be opportunities for employees to continue teleworking or alternating their time between the office and home. Supervisors will work with individual work groups and employees to determine appropriate scheduling, staggering shifts, lunch schedules and return to work days.*

*Additionally, we have learned many things together through the experiences of the past few months, and have seen firsthand that City of Newport News employees can rise to the challenge and do great things together! The city leadership team is carefully considering the potential benefits and impacts of these changes and will keep employees informed as plans are developed that may affect the ability to telework in the coming months.*

**Q:** Is the City still on a "hiring freeze?"

**A:** *At the onset of the pandemic and in preparation for the financial impacts of the Governor's stay at home orders, the City Manager implemented a hiring freeze for non-essential City positions. The freeze is in effect until further notice and as we progress through the next several months staffing levels and financial forecasts will be carefully and thoughtfully reviewed to determine how best to manage all City operations. As situations and operational needs change during this timeframe, department management teams will work closely with the City Manager's Office, Budget and Human Resources to ensure essential functions and citizen services will be maintained with appropriate staffing levels.*

### COVID-19 EMPLOYEE LEAVE and CARRYOVER

**Q:** I've heard that changes have been made to the PPL usage and carryover requirements. What are the details?

**A:** *You may have seen the Memo from the City Manager referencing the PPL usage and carryover provisions. Due to COVID-19, and the pro-longed emergency status, the City Manager is waiving the 80 hour PPL usage requirement (112 for 24-hour Fire employees) during Fiscal Year 2020. In addition, the City Manager will allow up to 40 additional carryover hours for employees (56 for 24-hour Fire employees) who are over their Fiscal Year 2020 maximum to be used during Fiscal Year 2021. These additional carryover hours will be housed in LTS, have no cash value and will convert to PML, if not used by June 30, 2021.*

*More details itemizing these changes will be sent in the coming weeks to HR and Payroll Liaisons and will be placed on the [Human Resources COVID-19 webpage](#).*

## COVID-19 FAQs

### COVID-19 EXPOSURE QUESTIONS

**Q:** What happens if COVID-19 cases begin to spike in Virginia or our area?

**A:** *The frequency of reported COVID-19 cases is closely monitored by the Virginia Department of Health and reported daily to the Governor's Office and to local government officials. As we begin Phase II of the reopening, it is anticipated and understood that there may be a rise in exposures and verified cases of COVID-19. The Governor's decisions have taken these factors into account and work closely with the State's medical providers to ensure that citizens will have the necessary resources to ensure any care or treatment needed will be provided.*

**Q:** What measures are taken when COVID positive employees may have exposed other employees?

**A:** *The City is equally committed to maintaining the confidentiality of employee PHI and protecting the health and wellbeing of employees. When made aware of a potential COVID exposure, department leadership is advised to notify all potentially exposed employees, sanitize compromised areas and vehicles, and remind employees of the City's temperature and screening protocols and safety measures.*

#### **Reminder:**

**Q:** If I am exposed to a COVID-19 positive individual while wearing PPE, is that an exposure situation that should be recorded on the symptomatic spreadsheet?

**A:** *No, if an employee is wearing PPE, and is exposed to a known COVID-19 positive person, as long as the employee has donned and doffed the PPE in the recommended manner, this would not "count" as exposure to prevent an employee from working the next day.*

**Q:** If I am exposed to a COVID-19 positive individual while social distancing, (such as being present in a building with a known COVID-19 positive individual, but not being anywhere near them or their workspace) is that an exposure situation that should be recorded on the symptomatic spreadsheet?

**A:** *No, if an employee is exposed to a known COVID-19 positive person, but maintained the appropriate social distancing guidelines per CDC recommendation, this would not "count" as exposure to prevent an employee from working the next day. The chances are, the employee would have a greater risk of exposure in their outside day-to-day activities.*

**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 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.*