

# **City of Roeland Park**

## **COVID-19 Questions & Answers Related to Policy Directives**

Updated March 20, 2020

### **General Information**

#### ***What is COVID-19?***

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) indicates it is a respiratory disease caused by a new coronavirus first identified in 2019. The virus causing coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is not the same as the coronaviruses that commonly circulate among humans and cause mild illness like the common cold.

#### ***What are the symptoms of COVID-19?***

Symptoms include fever, cough (dry) and shortness of breath.

#### ***When do symptoms appear?***

The CDC believes symptoms will appear between two and fourteen days after exposure to the virus.

#### ***How is it spread?***

According to the CDC, the virus is thought to spread primarily from person to person:

- Between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet) and
- Through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes.

#### ***What can be done to prevent the spread of the virus?***

- Practice social distancing, trying to maintain at least 6 feet between you and others in public spaces.
- Avoid close contact with those who are sick. Close contact is considered within six feet for ten minutes or more.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Stay home when sick.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with tissue, immediately discard the tissue and wash your hands.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects with household cleaners or disinfectant wipes. These include workspaces, counters, phones, keyboards, steering wheels, etc.
- Frequently wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. When water is not available, use hand sanitizer with an alcohol content of 60% or more.

#### ***Should masks be worn?***

As a rule, masks are not needed. Masks are intended to be used for those who are sick, and the routine use by healthy individuals depletes the supply for those who need them. Having said that, certain employees may be required to wear masks and other personal protective equipment (PPE) and other employees may wear a mask or other PPE if they so choose, unless it is inconsistent with their job duties. Supervisors should consult the Department of Human Resources (City Clerk) before denying an employee's request to wear a mask or other PPE

as the employee may have an underlying health condition that would require the use of such items as an accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

#### ***What people are at high risk?***

- People age 60 and older
- People with underlying health conditions including heart disease or diabetes;
- People who have weakened immune systems; and
- People who are pregnant.

Employees at higher risk of severe illness should stay home and away from large groups of people as much as possible, including public places with lots of people and large gatherings where there will be close contact with others. Employees who meet these criteria should work with their supervisors to address their concerns. The City encourages these employees to work from home when possible. Those who cannot work from home and elect to stay home may use accrued leave.

Supervisors and managers may not ask employees if they have a condition that increases their risk of illness. If the employee volunteers such information, the supervisor or manager must keep the information confidential.

#### ***What are current high-risk areas?***

The virus is more prevalent in some areas of the world and the United States than other areas. The CDC maintains a list of high-risk areas at the CDC Website:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019ncov/travelers/index.html>.

In addition, because of the unusual nature of the novel coronavirus outbreak, the US government is advising US travelers, particularly those with underlying health issues, to defer cruise ship travel.

While the CDC does rate the threat risk within the United States, it tracks and reports the number for cases by state. In order to maintain a safe work environment and help prevent the community spread of this illness, the City considers any state with 100 or more cases a high-risk area.

## ***Quarantine and Isolation***

#### ***What do the terms quarantine and isolation mean in the context of COVID-19?***

Quarantine means separating a person or group of people who have been exposed to a contagious disease but have not developed illness (symptoms) from others who have not been exposed in order to prevent the possible spread of that disease. Quarantine is usually established for the incubation period of the communicable disease, which is the span of time during which people have developed illness after exposure. For COVID-19, the period of quarantine is 14 days from the last date of exposure. Someone who has been released from COVID-19 quarantine is not considered a risk for spreading the virus to others because they did not develop the illness during the incubation period.

As of 3/18/2020, KDHE is now recommending 14-day home quarantine for Kansans who have:

- Travelled to a state with known widespread community transmission (over 100 cases) on or after March 15.  
(This includes, alphabetically, California, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, \*Illinois, Louisiana, Massachusetts, \*New Jersey, New York, Washington)
- Traveled on a cruise ship on or after March 15.

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- o People who have previously been told by Public Health to quarantine because of their cruise ship travel should finish out their quarantine.
- Traveled internationally on or after March 15.
  - o People who have previously been told by Public Health to quarantine because of their international travel should finish out their quarantine.
- Received notification from public health officials (state or local) that you are a close contact of a laboratory-confirmed case of COVID-19. You should quarantine at home for 14 days since your last contact with the case. (A close contact is defined as someone who has been closer than 6 feet for more than 10 minutes while the patient is symptomatic.)

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*Isolation* occurs when someone has developed symptoms or has a confirmed COVID-19 diagnosis and can occur in a home, hospital or other appropriate place.

***What should employees do who return from high risk areas?***

Employees returning from a Level 3 area (as designated by the CDC), a cruise ship or a state with 100 or more cases should inform their supervisor and Human Resources (City Clerk) and stay home for 14 days from the time they left the Level 3 area, state or cruise ship and practice social distancing. Refer to the Centers for Disease Control, [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov), for the latest information on confirmed cases. This rule applies where employees utilizing air travel have changed planes in high-risk areas. Such employees may work from home if feasible or use available leave during the absence.

***What should employees do if they have had close contact with a person with a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19 and do not have any symptoms?***

The employee should not be in the workplace for 14 days after their last contact with the diagnosed person. The employee may return to work after 14 days so long as they do not have any symptoms. The employee may work from home if possible or use available leave.

***What should employees do if they have had close contact with a person with a confirmed diagnosis for COVID-19 and the employee has symptoms?***

The employee should not be in the workplace until they have been symptom-free for at least five days. The employee may work from home if feasible and they feel well enough to work. Otherwise, available leave may be used.

***What should employees do if they have had contact with a person who is quarantined, but asymptomatic?***

The employee need not be quarantined.

***What should employees do if they have not had close contact with someone with diagnosed COVID19, but the employee has symptoms?***

The employee should not be in the workplace until they have been symptom free for at least 72 hours. Employees may use available leave for these absences.

***An employee reported that an individual living in their house must self-quarantine or isolate. Can the employee work?***

No. The employee will be out of the workplace during the period of isolation or quarantine. The employee may work from home if possible.

***What should an employee or manager do if they believe there was exposure to COVID-19 in the course of an employee's job duties?***

In cases where we can confirm exposure or an employee has been asked to self-quarantine as the result of a potential exposure during the performance of City duties, Human Resources (City Clerk) should be contacted immediately. Managers should not inform other employees of the identity of any employee who has been exposed or asked to self-quarantine but may inform employees that there has been a potential exposure. Managers should contact Human Resources (City Clerk) for assistance in communicating this information.

## ***Leave Benefits and Usage and Other Pay Issues***

***Can an employee with symptoms use paid leave?***

Yes, employees may use available paid leave for virus related symptoms and are strongly encouraged to stay home when they are ill.

***Can an employee who is self-quarantined or in isolation for 14 days use paid leave?***

Yes. If the employee is showing symptoms and has recently visited a high-risk area or is symptomatic and has been exposed to a person with diagnosed COVID-19, it is reasonable to self-quarantine. If feasible, the employee may work from home as an alternative to paid leave.

***Can employees use paid leave because they are fearful of coming to work?***

Generally, employees cannot use sick leave merely because they are concerned about the virus. However, some employees may stay home because they have a compromised immune system or are otherwise identified as vulnerable or because fear of contracting the virus exacerbates another condition. In those cases, please have the employee contact Human Resources (City Clerk) and we will work through each on a case-by-case basis. Supervisors and managers should not ask employees about the underlying health condition.

***If an employee is self-quarantined or isolated and does not have any leave to cover the time, does the employee have to be paid?***

Non-exempt employees do not have to be paid for any time the employee does not work.

Generally, exempt employees must be paid. Certain exceptions apply under the Fair Labor Standards Act. Call Human Resources (City Clerk) if there are questions.

Employees who have been exposed to the virus or have symptoms are strongly urged to stay home. This is a difficult time and we do not want employees to choose between coming to work ill and financial concerns. Therefore, the City Administrator has authorized the advancing of sick leave (40 hours) and vacation leave (40 hours) for a total of up to 80 hours. In addition, employees who are caring for someone who is ill or self-quarantined or isolated may qualify for advanced sick leave or vacation leave. Employees must use all compensatory time and other available paid leave before being advanced sick leave or vacation. Requests for advanced leave shall be submitted for approval to Human Resources (City Clerk) by supervisors. At this time advanced leave is to be re-paid within 12 months of being used.

***As a supervisor what should I do when I become aware of a need to have an employee self-quarantine?***

When a supervisor becomes aware of a need to quarantine an employee due to possible COVID-19 exposure, they are asked to call Human Resources (City Clerk). Employees who begin to show symptoms should not report to work and should immediately notify their supervisor and health care professionals in accordance with KDHE and

**Commented [MK1]:** The County has created a "Caregiver Leave" that an employee MAY qualify for.

CDL guidelines. Employees must be symptom free for a minimum of five days before they are able to return to work.

***How do we handle employees who are not ill, but are caring for a family member who is self quarantined or isolated?***

Employees may use available leave, and may qualify for advanced sick leave and vacation, if appropriate. Alternatively, if feasible, employees may work from home.

***Have any accommodations been made for employees who are ineligible for paid leave?***

At this time no paid leave accommodations have been made. Where possible part time staff are continuing to work on tasks not impacted by operational changes related to COVID-19 modifications or being reassigned to other tasks.

***What leave is available for an employee asked to self-quarantine as the result of potential exposure in the workplace or through the course of their job duties?***

Human Resources (City Clerk) will determine when injury leave is appropriate and will contact the employee and manager.

***Managers may need to communicate with non-exempt employees during non-work hours. Is that time compensable?***

Every effort should be made to ensure staff are paid for time worked. A short call to notify the employee of an assignment change need not be recorded. However, calls of seven minutes or more must be recorded. In addition, if an employee is contacted multiple times over a short period, the time should be recorded.

## ***Identifying a Need for Leave***

***What should I do if an employee comes to the workplace with virus symptoms?***

An employee who displays virus symptoms should be encouraged to use paid leave. If, in the judgment of the employee's supervisor, the employee is too sick to remain in the workplace, the supervisor may send the employee home. The employee may work from home if feasible or use available leave.

If an employee appears to be ill, a manager may ask whether the employee has a fever, dry cough, or is short of breath. Example: "You don't appear to feel well. I noticed you've been coughing a lot. Are you running a fever? (answers yes) Are you short of breath? (answers no). I think it would be best if you go home for the remainder of the day. Please contact me in the morning to let me know how you are feeling. We want you to stay home if you are not well."

A manager may not ask the employee to identify the condition causing the symptoms, whether the employee has any specific medical condition, or whether the employee has any health condition, including pregnancy, that would put the employee at increased risk for COVID-19. Example: "I noticed you are coughing a lot, what's wrong with you? You don't have coronavirus, do you?"

***An employee appears to be ill and is in the workplace. Can I take their temperature to see if it is safe for them to be at work?***

No. Please follow the guidance above related to handling an employee who comes to work with virus symptoms.

### ***How should I handle an employee who doesn't want to come to work because of fear of contracting COVID-19?***

Employees are expected to make every effort to come to work to serve the public unless they have approved leave. Having said that, working from home may be an option that is beneficial to both the employee and the organization and should be explored. Healthy employees afraid of catching COVID-19 may request vacation, or comp time. However, as always leave requests may be denied.

Leave request from employees designated as essential personnel may not be approved, other than for health condition otherwise protected by law, during an outbreak.

Unapproved absences may result in disciplinary action.

Employees at higher risk for complications from COVID-19 are encouraged to contact their health care provider at the first signs of illness for advice. Employees at higher risk for complications, especially those in positions designated as Essential Personnel during a potential outbreak, are encouraged to contact Human Resources (City Clerk) immediately to confidentially discuss leave, reassignment or accommodation options based on a qualifying medical condition. Employees may also work with their managers on work from home options.

### ***Can an employee take time off work to care for a child due to schools or daycare centers closing related to the COVID-19 outbreak?***

Governor Laura Kelly has closed all schools in Kansas for the remainder of the school year. Daycare centers may also close to prevent the spread of infection. Employees are encouraged to pre-plan as much as possible for the care of children in the event of school or childcare closures. This is especially important for employees in positions designated as Essential Personnel.

Employees may use sick leave, vacation or comp time to cover these absences. Advanced leave may be used for this purpose. Use of sick leave is intended for use in the short term while arrangements are being secured for long term childcare. The use of sick leave will therefore be permitted for this purpose from 3/20/20 through 4/24/20.

**Commented [MK2]:** Other communities are allowing staff to use sick leave. Or creating a COVID 19 paid leave that can be used for illness or for care giving thus preserving an employee's accrued vacation and sick time.

### ***What questions can managers ask employees when employees report an absence related to illness?***

The same rules apply as before the coronavirus. Managers may not ask employees to identify the specific health condition. Managers may ask employees when they anticipate returning to work. If an employee indicates that the absence is due to exposure to or diagnosis of COVID-19, the manager should immediately contact Human Resources (City Clerk) for guidance.

## ***Americans with Disabilities Act and Medical Documentation Implications***

### ***Will employees be required to provide a doctor's note or other medical documentation?***

Human Resources (City Clerk) is responsible for determining when documentation may be needed, such as:

- Any absence of more than three days for illness or injury other than flu-like illness.
- When a supervisor has reason to believe the absence may not be bona fide.

### ***What should a supervisor do if an employee with a workplace accommodation requests to work from home?***

Employees with workplace accommodations may also need an accommodation in order to effectively work from home. Please contact your Human Resources (City Clerk) Partner immediately to discuss options.

***Will an employee be required to provide a release in order to return to the workplace for leave associated with virus symptoms?***

Employees will generally not be required to obtain a release to return from leave. Employees should not return to work until they have been symptom free for 72 hours.

***What may I tell employees if a co-worker has been diagnosed with COVID-19?***

A manager or supervisor may not disclose any employee's health condition to another employee.

## ***Working from Home***

***Who should work offsite?***

Staff populations within a building greater than 10 people with those populations primarily Non-Essential personnel, will be considered prospects for working from home or developing rotating shifts. Managers should work with their teams to assess what ongoing, rather than sporadic, telecommuting might look like. Regardless of where an employee is engaged in work, the expectation of productive work remains. Managers and employees should identify objectives, tasks and outcomes sooner rather than later. Employees who work from home must be available and responsive.

Under normal circumstances, working from home would not be reasonable where the employee could not perform all essential job functions from home. That requirement may be relaxed temporarily during this extraordinary situation.

***A non-essential employee has asked to work from home. Is that allowed?***

To the extent that resources and appropriate work is available, employees may work from home. Please keep in mind there are many jobs where this is not possible. Assuming those are not issues, employees and managers can work together to determine frequency or length of a work from home arrangement as well as work objectives, tasks and results.

***An employee designated as essential personnel has asked to work from home. Is that allowed?***

We need essential personnel to work and will allocate the necessary resources to them for that work. It is up to the manager to determine if the essential duties can be performed at home or if we need the employee onsite.

***Are there any guidelines for working safely at home?***

Yes, we need to ensure that employees are utilizing good safety practices and are aware of ergonomics, regardless of where they are working.

***Can the City require employees to work from home?***

Currently, there is no mandate for working from home or other remote assignments. If this changes, we will communicate as far in advance as possible.

***How can teams stay connected when working remotely?***

Employees may use instant messaging, virtual meetings, phones, e-mail and other technology to remain in touch during long periods of remote work.

**Commented [MK3]:** Roeland Park City Hall building has 6 staff on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor each with their own work-space. PD has 4 staff in the building most of the day with an addition 4 in and out during the day. Public works has 7 staff. The Community Center has 4 to 6 staff daily.

***Can I work from home on a personal computer?***

Yes, however this is not ideal from a security and open records perspective and employees authorized to do so will be provided specific guidance on the steps necessary to maintain records.

## ***Essential Employees***

***How do employees know if they are designated as an Essential Employee?***

The Police Department staff and Department Directors are designated as Essential Employees currently.

***Can the City change the essential/non-essential designation at any time?***

Yes. When operational or community needs change, designations may change. Changes will be communicated as far in advance as possible.

***What will the City do if an Essential Employee is demonstrating COVID-19 symptoms and/or compromised health?***

No employee is expected to work when they are ill. Depending on the nature and extent of the illness, the employee may be removed from the list of essential personnel. In the event additional resources are needed immediately, a manager may designate an additional person as essential.

***What plans are in place to ensure essential personnel have necessary technology resources?***

Department Directors are identifying the mobile resources available within the organization as well as determining our system and licensing capacity.

***May a department be asked to share technology resources?***

It is critical that we provide appropriate resources to essential personnel. If an essential employee does not have a laptop and needs to work remotely, we will first try to identify a resource within the department. If one cannot be secured, a device from another department will be assigned to that person.

***As a non-essential employee, how do I know when I should return to work?***

Employees may be called to duty at any time. Employees will be contacted when work is available and when we return to normal operations.

## ***Travel***

***Are employees banned from business travel?***

Yes, employees may not travel outside of Kansas or Missouri on City business through at least April 30, 2020, at which time this will be revisited. In the event a Department/Agency/Office leader feels travel is urgent or essential, the City Administrator must be consulted and approve the travel.

Employees with planned business travel during this period should immediately cancel reservations and registrations and try to recover as much money as possible.

***What precautions should we take regarding planned business travel?***

Managers should immediately identify planned business travel beyond April 30, 2020 and engage in discussions with employees scheduled to travel. Employees may self-select out of travel. It is important to have as much notice as possible to preserve as many resources as possible. If another employee cannot be substituted, work should begin to cancel reservations and registrations immediately.

***What are the requirements for employees with personal travel plans?***

The City is not prohibiting any personal travel, but employees must notify their manager and Human Resources (City Clerk) in advance if traveling outside of Kansas or Missouri. The following information will be requested: departure date, travel location, method of travel, all locations traveling through/layovers, expected return date from travel, expected return date to work, and personal cell phone and email address. Employees returning from a Level 3 area (as designated by the CDC), a cruise, or a state with 100 or more cases should inform their supervisor. This includes employees utilizing air travel that have changed planes in a high-risk area. The determination to return to work will be based on latest data suggested by the CDC or State Health authorities. If an employee chooses to travel to a known high-risk area in the future, the employee will be required to use sick or vacation time to cover any resulting quarantine time.

## ***Provision of Service, Facility Closing and Event Cancellation***

***Does the City plan to cancel meetings or events?***

Directors should use good judgment in determining which public meetings are essential and limit attendance when possible. Consideration should be given to teleconferencing when practical. Events should be considered on a case-by-case basis. Before cancelling or postponing a public facing meeting or event, please coordinate with the City Administrator.

***Can a department suspend a service?***

In the interest of public or employee safety, services may be suspended. Before suspending a service, please coordinate with the City Administrator.

***Will employees be paid when events are canceled, or services are suspended?***

We are making every effort to ensure that work is available even when services are canceled. However, we cannot guarantee that. Non-exempt employees may use paid leave to cover such absences.

Generally, exempt employees must be paid for the entire week if they perform any work during the week in which services or events are cancelled.

Part-time non-benefitted, on-call, seasonal and temporary employees will be paid for hours worked.

***We have a number of mail and web-based services for our citizens, will steps be taken to promote these?***

The Public Information Office will highlight services such as animal licenses, business licenses, building permits, pool memberships, etc. that can be done via mail or the web in order to minimize the number of citizens in our facilities.

***What precautions will be taken if a person in jail becomes infected and/or quarantined?***

Departments that provide such services are developing internal plans for the protection of both employees and clients and will communicate those to impacted employees. In addition, necessary PPE will be provided.

## ***Reassigning Employees***

### ***Can employees be reassigned?***

Yes. Non-essential personnel may be reassigned at any time in order to maintain operations. Employees will be assigned based on skills and needs. Generally full-time employees will be reassigned first, then part-time.

### ***How do we support services primarily performed by volunteers if they are not available?***

We will determine when it is necessary to continue such services on a case-by-case basis and reassign staff accordingly.

### ***Some employees are assigned to community-based programs and are unable to perform services due to the precautions implemented by other organizations. How do we handle employees in these situations?***

Organizations serving vulnerable populations are expected to take the steps necessary to ensure the safety and wellbeing of those in their care. Managers should work with impacted employees to identify other work they can perform in the absence of regular duties. If there is no work within a department, Human Resources (City Clerk) should be notified to explore reassignment, or the employee may take leave.

### ***What type of work may employees be reassigned?***

We may assign any work considered necessary without regard to the employee's grade or title. However, an employee must have the necessary knowledge and skills to perform the assigned work.

### ***Can employees decline an assignment?***

No, employees are expected to report to the duty assignment provided to them.

## ***Volunteers, Consumers, Vendors and Others in our Workplace***

### ***Can managers discuss with others who share our workspace the guidance on preventing the spread of COVID-19?***

Yes, managers can and should have these conversations.

### ***Can a manager ask a non-employee to leave the workplace if they exhibit symptoms of the virus?***

Yes. As with employees, managers may encourage or direct others to go home or stay home when ill.

## ***Facilities***

### ***What steps are being taken to ensure workspaces are clean and sanitized?***

We are monitoring the CDC, OSHA, and State and County health department recommendations and procedures addressing COVID-19. In addition, we have procured an increased supply of disinfectants, hand sanitizer, and dispensers and these are dispersed to all facilities. All staff are to disinfect daily high touch areas such as door handles, workspaces, counters, etc.

### ***Will signage be posted as reminders to the public? If so, are bilingual signs available?***

The CDC and Johnson County Department of Health and Environment have signs available on their websites that can be posted in public and staff areas - <https://www.jocogov.org/dept/health->

[andenvironment/resources/resource-information](#). Department Directors should post reminders to the public at their respective locations.

***We do not have hand sanitizer available to the public or employees. Will that be made available, particularly for those working in the field or with routine direct contact with the public?***

The City has secured and placed sanitizer at public entrances. Employees are welcome to bring in a personal supply if they wish.

***What options are there for workspaces that do not allow for social distancing?***

When possible, managers should help employees identify ways to maintain a distance of six feet from others. For example, employees could temporarily relocate to available vacant workspace. When feasible, employees may work remotely to minimize the number of employees in shared space at any given time. When working directly with the public, look for ways to move waiting lines back, to create separation between those served and employees, have sanitizer and Kleenex available, etc.

## ***Miscellaneous Items***

***Our department has incurred extra expenses or financial loss due to COVID-19, do we need to track that?***

Yes, we may be able to recoup funds due to the state and county emergency declarations. It is important that we have a detailed record of expenses related to the outbreak. Please work with your Supervisor to determine how this will be handled in your department/agency/office.

***Will there be a mechanism in place to help the City quickly identify attendance trends?***

Yes, the City's time and attendance system (ADP) allows for each department to track the number of employees scheduled to be at work, how many are scheduled off, and how many have reported an unscheduled absence. Department Directors will track the number of staff working remotely through a spreadsheet.

***How frequently can we expect communication from the City?***

We will communicate when we have information to share. This is a fluid situation and details change rapidly. Having said that, it is important to us that employees hear information regarding their workplace from us, not the media and we will strive to ensure that is the case.