Human Resources Guidance Regarding Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

Issued March 18, 2020

Exposure Reporting Requirements

1. If an employee is in close contact with someone with COVID-19 and/or develops symptoms of COVID-19, they should call the SSU Health Clinic or their healthcare provider and tell them about their symptoms. The healthcare provider will decide whether the employee needs to be tested.

2. If an employee is a resident in a community where there is ongoing spread of COVID-19 and the employee develops COVID-19 symptoms, they should call their healthcare provider and tell them about their symptoms. The healthcare provider will decide whether the employee needs to be tested.

3. Employees working on campus should stay home if COVID-19 symptoms develop and should go home immediately if COVID-19 symptoms occur at work.

4. Employees who are sick should follow normal call-in procedures to notify their supervisor of their condition.

5. The university may prohibit an employee from working if the employee is known to have contracted COVID-19, or to have had close contact with someone who has. The university is obligated to provide a safe workplace and may take necessary and reasonable steps to minimize health risks for its employees, such as requiring that employees not come to work if they have been diagnosed with, or have been exposed to, COVID-19.

Leave Guidelines

Emergency Sick Leave
Effective Monday, March 23, 2020, the University will credit each employee with an additional five days of emergency sick leave. This leave is to be used if you or a family member become ill due to COVID-19 or you need to provide short-term child care because of the state mandated school closures.

Employees may use the emergency sick leave in four or eight hour increments. The leave may be used in addition to accumulated sick leave, vacation, personal leave and, if available, compensatory time. Employees must follow the normal leave request process in BearTrax. For all absences related to COVID-19 (sick, vacation, personal and/or compensatory time) use the absence type "COVID-19." Absences unrelated to COVID-19 should be requested following normal leave procedures.

Employees who choose to be in unpaid status will be considered excused throughout the emergency period.

Employees without sufficient leave balances may follow the guidelines below to stay in paid status:

Scenario 1: Employee or immediate family is diagnosed with COVID-19 through testing.

If an employee or immediate family member is diagnosed with COVID-19 and leave is exhausted (including the 5 additional emergency sick leave days), the following options are available to you:

 i. Use up to 80 hours (10 days) of available donated leave (reference sick leave donation guidelines below); or

 ii. Up to 80 hours (10 days) may be advanced to your sick leave balance. This leave will be repaid as sick leave days are earned.

Scenario 2: Employee is mandated by the university and/or a healthcare provider to be quarantined or isolated due to exposure to COVID-19.

If an employee is subject to quarantine or isolation due to exposure to COVID-19, telework should be considered. If telework is not operationally feasible and all leave sources are exhausted (including the 5 additional emergency sick leave days), the employee may:

 i. Use up to 80 hours (10 days) of available donated leave (reference sick leave donation guidelines below); or

 ii. Up to 80 hours (10 days) may be advanced to your sick leave balance. This leave will be repaid as sick leave days are earned.

Scenario 3: Employee must stay home due to a school closure and/or the unexpected absence of a care provider for child or immediate family member.

The employee may be eligible to telework and should explore that option with supervisor. If telework is not operationally feasible, the employee will be allowed to use available leave (sick, vacation, personal and/or compensatory time), including the additional five days of emergency sick leave, to cover his/her absence from work.

Scenario 4: Employee chooses to stay home to self-quarantine as a precaution.

If an employee chooses to stay home and telework is not operationally feasible, the supervisor will consider the request based on operational needs and determine if other work schedule arrangements, including flexible scheduling, are acceptable.

Supervisors may contact Human Resources for additional guidance on any of the scenarios discussed above, or variations of them.

Family Medical Leave

Family Medical Leave will run concurrent with paid and unpaid leaves if there are complications that create a "serious health condition" as defined by the Family Medical Leave Act.

Emergency Sick Leave Donation Guidelines

During this emergency, the University is permitting the donation of sick leave as follows:

Donators

1. Employees who wish to voluntarily donate sick leave must:

   a. Be actively employed;
   b. Retain a minimum of 480 hours of paid sick leave for their own use; and
   c. Donate leave in increments of eight hours.

2. Donations will be accumulated in a pool and will not be returned to the donating employee.

3. The identity of the donors will remain anonymous to the extent permitted by law.

4. To donate leave employees must complete the [COVID-19 Leave Donation Form](#).

Request for Sick Leave Donations

1. Donated sick leave is available to an employee:

   a. Under isolation due to diagnosis of COVID-19;
   b. Symptomatic due to exposure to COVID-19;
   c. Must care for an immediate family member who is symptomatic due to exposure to COVID-19; or
   d. Must care for an immediate family member due to a school closure and/or the unexpected absence of a care provider.

2. Upon exhaustion of available leave, employees who meet the above conditions may apply for donated sick leave through this program if they are in need of paid leave. Employees may not apply for leave through this program for any other reason.

3. An employee is limited to a maximum of 80 sick leave hours under this program.

4. If an employee is eligible, but unable to apply due to their health condition, a family member or other authorized representative may apply on behalf of the employee.

5. The employee's right to privacy regarding the nature of their condition will remain confidential to the extent allowed by law.

6. To request sick leave donations employees must complete the [COVID-19 Leave Donation – Recipient Request Form](#).

Telecommuting (Telework) Guidelines

In response to COVID-19, work from home (telework) options will be the primary method of performing work assignments (services and operations) for eligible employees. Managers will determine which work assignments are to be performed at the usual work site (on-campus location).

Definition: Telework is a work arrangement that authorizes an employee to complete work assignments at a location away from the campus workplace. Normally, telework assignments are consistent with the employee's job description and scheduled work hours. Some variation may be necessary.

Eligibility:
- Actively employed full and part time administrators, ATSS, staff (hourly paid), faculty and adjunct faculty
- Temporary employees (depends upon nature of work assignments)
- Student employees, including College Work Study
- In addition to an employee's regular work tasks, other meaningful work assignments should be made available. Examples include but are not limited to:
  - Process and quality improvement projects
  - Develop user manuals
  - Update policies and procedures
  - Generate and update job aids
  - Research best practices for specific functions
  - Professional development (e.g., view web-based training for new technologies, complete online compliance trainings, etc.)

How do supervisors determine if telework is operationally feasible?

1. Employees in positions needing in-person contact/customer service or that rely upon specific equipment or supplies may need to work on campus. In such case, the supervisor will work with the employee to identify whether a flexible schedule is possible and provide support to protect the employee and those with whom he/she will come into contact.

2. With direct supervisor approval, employees, including student employees, may be permitted to work on campus for short periods of time if a critical task must be completed within a definitive time period.

3. Management and supervisors are expected to report periodically as needed or directed on campus for planning purposes and to ensure projects and functions are progressing satisfactorily.

4. Supervisors are expected to utilize technology (i.e., Blackboard Collaborate, Microsoft Teams, etc.) for regular communications with staff. The use of SharePoint for document exchange and the expanded use of DocuSign should be promoted where possible.

5. Supervisors should consider the following factors to determine if telework is possible:

   a. Availability of on-site work stations
   b. Operational or direct service requirements
   c. Security of work data
   d. Technological capabilities and equipment necessary to perform job duties

6. An assessment of IT resources, equipment, VPN access, etc. needed to perform remotely will be required by ITS before University-provided equipment will be permitted.

What should supervisors and employees do to establish a telework arrangement?

1. The telework arrangement must be documented using the [Telecommuting (Telework) Worksheet/Agreement](#) with appropriate approvals.

2. If the supervisor determines telework is not appropriate or operationally feasible, the employee will continue to work on campus and seek other options as needed (e.g., flexible work schedule, request available leave etc.).

Supervisor Checklist for Telecommuting (Telework)

Telework works best when employees and supervisors communicate clearly about expectations. The following checklist will help employees and supervisors establish a foundation for effective teamwork, continued productivity, and service to the university.

1. **Review technology needs and resources.**
   Identify technology tools staff use in their daily work and determine whether the resources will be accessible when working from home. Also, ensure employees know how to access the appropriate technical support should they need assistance.

   a. Confirm that employees know how to set up call forwarding and how to access their voicemail from home.

   b. Determine which platform(s) you will use to communicate as a team (e.g., Blackboard Collaborate, Microsoft Teams).

   c. Clarify expectations for online availability and confirm everyone has access to the technology tool(s) and support resources.

2. **Review work schedules.**
   Be clear about your expectations with employees for maintaining their current work schedule or if you are open to flexible scheduling based on employee needs.

3. **Draft a work plan.**
   Review the questions below with staff and work through answers together.

   a. What routine responsibilities/tasks cannot be fulfilled while working remotely and how will it impact operations or other people? How can you reduce the impact?

   b. What routine responsibilities/tasks require regular communication and collaboration with others? Confirm how you will communicate while everyone is working.

   c. Oftentimes employees experience fewer interruptions while teleworking. Are there any special projects or tasks that you can advance while working remotely.

   d. How will you communicate your plans with partners and customers?

   e. Are there upcoming events or meetings that may need to be postponed or canceled?

4. **Make a communication and accountability plan.**
   Supervisors should tell employees how often to send updates on work plan progress and what those updates should include. Supervisors should also communicate how quickly they expect the employee to respond while teleworking and the best ways for the employee to contact the supervisor while working remotely. Current performance standards are expected to be maintained by employees.

   a. If you normally make daily rounds to visit employees at their desks, you can give them a call during this period. Maintain team meetings and one-to-one check-ins, altering the schedule if needed to accommodate any alternative schedules that have been approved.

b. Conduct regular check-ins. Start each workday with a phone, video or instant message chat. Your employees will be eager for connection and information during the disruption and the structure will help everyone create a positive routine. Every other day or weekly may be fine, so long as you are in contact frequently enough that your employees are in sync with you and/or with one another.

5. **Enable and encourage ongoing communication.**
    Ongoing communication is the most important part of effective remote teamwork. Working online can be isolating without regular contact with supervisors and colleagues. By creating the expectation that an entire team will communicate regularly with one another, members will feel connected regardless of where they are.

6. **Be positive and trust employees will work productively.**
    A positive attitude toward teleworking and a willingness to trust employees to telework effectively is key to making such arrangements successful and productive. Teleworking presents an opportunity for managers to become better supervisors. Instead of focusing on how many hours your employees are working, re-emphasize a focus on measuring results and reaching objectives—regardless of work arrangement. The employee's completed work product is the indicator of success, rather than direct observation. By focusing on the employee's work product, telemanagers will improve their organizational abilities and their own skill in managing by objectives.

7. **Debrief after normal operations resume.**
    Employees and supervisors should review work plans when work returns to normal, assess progress on the employee's work plan and prioritize any unresolved or new work that resulted from temporary operational disruption.

Employee Tips for Telecommuting (Telework)

Employees who telework often learn that working remotely is different than they expected and that it requires specific skills and habits. The following tips will help you get to work while at home.

1. **Define your workspace.**
   Experienced teleworkers will tell you that it's often difficult to stay focused at home. We are creatures of habit and most of us are used to our normal home routines. Establishing a workspace, even if it is your kitchen table, gives your brain a cue that it is time for work. Wearing attire that you may wear to the office even if it is your "casual Friday" attire may cue the brain. You should remain capable of reporting to work if your presence is requested by your supervisor.

2. **Master the basics.**
   a. Set up call forwarding and how to access your voicemail from home.

   b. Know how to remote into the university's network and other online tools you use regularly.

   c. Use Blackboard Collaborate, Microsoft Teams or another instant messaging client to stay connected to colleagues.

   d. Plan for video calls/meetings by making sure you know how to turn on your computer's camera and microphone and being aware that your colleagues may be able to see the background behind you.

3. **Set daily goals, track them and share your progress.**
   You may be surprised by how differently the workday passes without the comings and goings of an office to break things up or influence what you do next. Start each day of telework by writing down what you need to achieve and then track your progress. Pay attention to how long tasks take you and start adjusting your daily goals to match your current rhythm. Communicate with your supervisor and/or colleagues if you think your telework plan needs to be adjusted.

4. **Eliminate distractions.**
   Home can mean pets, children or a favorite hobby are only a few feet away. Depending on your living arrangement, you may need to hang a "do not disturb" sign so your family members don't interrupt you. Pets often need a closed door to keep them away and you might need headphones to block the noise.

5. **Prioritize privacy.**
   Whether you are in your home or a common area, take five minutes to assess the privacy of your workspace. Can someone standing behind you read your computer screen? Are your windows open so your neighbor can hear your phone call? What information do you need to secure before grabbing a cup of coffee or heading to the restroom? Your personal privacy matters too, so see if there is anything around you that you would not want visible during a video conference with your boss or colleague.

6. **Continue to employ security best practices.**
   Situations like this are prime phishing opportunities. Remain vigilant for security concerns and be sure to report suspicious emails to ITService@shawnee.edu.

7. **Stay connected.**
   Many people say they do not call or instant message colleagues who are working remotely because they don't want to bother them. Remember, they are working, not vacationing at home! You should feel confident about calling or messaging an employee who is teleworking anytime you would walk to their office or call them if you were working on-site.

Technology Support for Telecommuting (Telework)

Blackboard Collaborate Ultra – Remote Meetings

In support of remote meetings you can use Blackboard Collaborate to stay in touch with your staff. You can find the getting started guide here:
https://help.blackboard.com/Collaborate/Ultra/Moderator/Get_Started

This is a link to a workshop/training video Shawnee State University Workshop - recording_1 for a more in-depth review.

The login page is: https://us.bbcollab.com/collab/ui/scheduler/login

Tele-Commuting over VPN access

The University is extending remote network access to designated employees by establishing a Virtual Private Network (VPN) connection to the employees campus computer. VPN access will be authorized by the employees' respective Vice President for the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic or until the virus is no longer deemed a threat to the campus.

Keep in mind that access to Blackboard LMS, Microsoft Office 365 (email and applications) and Beartrax (Oracle) cloud services do not require a VPN connection to access. These services can be accessed directly from the services URL from off campus (see below). All VPN access is governed by Computer Use Policy 5.30 (see link below). Users are obligated to abide by all Conditions (see link below) for accessing and using SSU network resources.

O365	https://portal.office.com
BB LMS	https://blackboard.shawnee.edu
BearTrax	https://ednd.login.us2.oraclecloud.com
Policy 5.30	https://www.shawnee.edu/areas-study/clark-memorial-library/information-technology-services/it-documents/campus-computer-and
Conditions	https://www.shawnee.edu/areas-study/clark-memorial-library/information-technology-services/it-documents/conditions-use

Questions should be directed to Information Technology Services at ITService@shawnee.edu or X3538.

Available Resources

Employees should continue to visit shawnee.edu/health for regular updates and information, and refer to the University's daily bulletin to help answer any commonly asked questions.

In addition, employees may obtain educational information or seek online counseling services through our employee assistance program, IMPACT Solutions.

- To help provide employees with information and resources on the COVID-19 pandemic, IMPACT is offering the following webinars:

    o **COVID-19: Facts You Need to Know –** can be found under the News Alert banner on the IMPACT website (www.MyImpactSolution.com).

    o **Calm Is Contagious: Mindfulness Strategies for Responding to COVID-19 -** posted on the IMPACT website (www.MyImpactSolution.com) for viewing at your convenience for the next 30 days.

- Online counseling appointments provide access to highly skilled, licensed mental health professionals at a time when face-to-face counseling may not be advisable. Online counseling sessions can usually be scheduled within 24 to 48 hours.

More information about IMPACT can be accessed at www.MyImpactSolution.com.