Office of the Vice Chancellor, Human Resources Division

Guidelines for Employee Absences Related to COVID-19

The following provisions are considered temporary concessions to regular sick leave provisions and are to be used during the local declaration of a public health emergency for the COVID-19 pandemic.

1. Should employees stay home if they are sick?

Yes. If you are sick, stay home and contact your local healthcare provider for direction.

2. What is an employee’s pay status if an employee stays home?

If an employee who is regular classified or regular academic stays home because of an illness, the employee shall use illness days to cover the duration of their time absent from work. Employees can also use vacation time in lieu of illness days if they have first exhausted all illness days. In addition, employees can use half pay illness days after the exhaustion of full pay sick leave, if otherwise eligible.

Adjuncts shall use illness days, if a balance is available. (If illness days are not available, please reference catastrophic leave language below.) Unclassified employees and temporary classified employees with sick days earned through the Healthy Workplaces Healthy Family Act shall use their illness days, if a balance is available.

The District is also considering developing catastrophic leave banks for classified and faculty employees who have exhausted their illness quota. To be eligible for catastrophic illness, employees will be asked to opt into the bank by donating at least one-half illness day for faculty and one-half illness day or vacation day for classified. Criteria for how to access these catastrophic illness days is currently under review.
3. Can an employee be asked to leave work and go home?

Yes. Any employee can be required by their direct supervisor or higher-level authority to go home if the employee is showing symptoms of a communicable illness based upon the illness criteria information established by the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health. Current symptoms of a communicable illness like COVID-19 may include, but are not limited to, fever, coughing or shortness of breath.

The employee’s illness or vacation days will not be charged for the remainder of the day that they are required to go home. For any subsequent days, the employee shall use illness days, or vacation days as outlined above to cover the leave for the duration of the time they are home sick. Leaves related to COVID-19 quarantine are applied for no more than 14 days. During a quarantine leave, no employee shall go into less than full paid status if illness days are insufficient to cover the leave period.

4. What happens if an employee is diagnosed with COVID-19?

If an employee’s treating physician or healthcare provider determines the employee tests positive for COVID-19, the employee will qualify for FMLA/CFRA leave because the condition is considered a “serious health condition.” Should the employee be diagnosed with COVID-19, the District will designate the leave as FMLA/CFRA leave. In addition, classified and academic employees will use half pay illness days after the exhaustion of full pay sick leave, and vacation days, if otherwise eligible.

5. Can an employee be required to self-quarantine?

Yes. If any of the following conditions are met, the employee will be placed on a 14-calendar day, non-voluntary quarantine:

- Travel to a Level 3 Travel Health Notice country per the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention with a return to the U.S. less than 14 calendar days ago
- Known contact with an individual who has tested positive for COVID-19

Quarantine leaves related to COVID-19 are applied for up to 14 days. During the quarantine leave, no employee shall go into less than full paid status if illness days are insufficient to cover the leave period.
6. Can an employee request to self-quarantine on a voluntary basis?

Yes. An employee may wish to self-quarantine for 14 days, particularly if any of the following conditions are met:

- Experiencing symptoms similar to COVID-19 including fever, coughing and shortness of breath
- Travel within the last 14 days to, or through, an area with known community spread
- Suspected contact with an individual who has tested positive for COVID-19

Employees choosing to self-quarantine on a voluntary basis shall use their illness days or vacation to cover the 14-calendar day quarantine period.

7. How do I address an employee’s request to work from home?

Employees with verified medical conditions or certain disabilities may be considered to be at higher risk if exposed to the COVID-19 virus and may be eligible to request to work from home as a temporary reasonable accommodation. Any such request to work remotely as a reasonable accommodation will be addressed through an interactive process conducted by the site ADA Coordinator pursuant to LACCD Administrative Regulation B-32.

The ADA Coordinator should grant temporary requests from employees to work remotely after verifying that the request is reasonably related to a medical condition; the accommodation allows the employee to still perform the essential functions of their job, and the accommodation does not create an undue hardship (i.e. significant disruption to operations) on the employee’s department. Employee accommodations requested due to an elevated risk related to COVID-19 must be handled on a case-by-case basis and shall be approved for an appropriate specific period of time based on current conditions.
8. What if the employee insists their symptoms are just due to a common cold or allergies?

The District will be not be able to distinguish between symptoms associated with allergic reactions versus those associated with communicable conditions, such as cold, influenza, or COVID-19. Therefore, in order to ensure safe and healthy working conditions for all employees and a safe environment for students, the District will act in a consistent manner of sending sick employees home and will apply the same standard to all employees who are symptomatic.

If an employee provides a certification from their treating physician or healthcare provider that the symptoms are non-communicable, the District may reasonably rely on such assurances and allow the employee to return to work. However, without such certification, the District will require that the employee remain at home until they are asymptomatic with no signs of fever, coughing or shortness of breath.

9. If sent home, when can an employee return to work?

A symptomatic employee sent home from work should contact a medical professional for further advice as soon as possible. The employee should engage in self-monitoring while away from work providing to seeing their doctor or healthcare provider.

The District will instruct the employee not to return to work unless the employee is asymptomatic. The District may require that the employee provide a note from the employee’s treating physician or healthcare provider that clears the employee to return to work. An employee who returns to work after an illness and still exhibits symptoms of a communicable disease will immediately be sent home. If the employee was diagnosed with COVID-19 the District must accept the physician’s certification before an employee can return to work.