

# Okaloosa County Board of County Commissioners



## Administrative Directive

Title: COVID – 19 Employee Responsibilities		
Special Order #: BCC-CAO-21-01	Effective Date: 01/01/2021	Amends: BCC-CAO-20-01
Organizational Unit: All-Countywide BCC	PDMS Index #: BCC-CAO-21-01	Accreditation Standards: N/A
Approved:		
		
Administrator/Deputy Administrator		Chairman of the Board

### I. Purpose:

To reduce the spread of COVID-19 and implement precautions in an effort to protect employees and the public. This directive authorizes the temporary waiver of current policies, procedures, and work processes involving illness, travel, hygiene and social distancing.

### II. Policy:

It is the policy of the Board during periods of pandemic disease/virus to authorize the County Administrator to vary from established policies and procedures to the extent necessary to carry on efficient operations of the county.

The practical application of this variance will be managed by the BCC Administrator during this period and will safeguard the adherence to applicable federal and state laws and guidance from the Florida Department of Health. The Administrator and/or designee will notify the Board if material changes in policy result in substantial impacts to employees or services.

### III. Authority:

Okaloosa County Human Resources Policy Manual Chapter XXIV – HEALTH CRISIS MANAGEMENT POLICY, Section A – Pandemic Disease/Virus

#### **IV: Definitions:**

CDC - Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
DOH - Florida Department of Health  
IT – Okaloosa County Information Technology Department

#### **V. Procedures:**

##### **A. Employee Responsibilities:**

- i. Employees are expected to follow all CDC, DOH and other directives made available to them in the workplace.
- ii. Employees are expected to make informed travel decisions and take personal precautions when not at the workplace.
- iii. Employees are asked to disclose travel that has occurred outside the US by them or any immediate household member since to the Department Director.
- iv. Employees are asked to disclose future travel plans outside the US by them or any immediate household members to the Department Director to include cruises.
- v. Employees are asked to immediately disclose any perceived sickness with themselves or any household member with the symptoms related to COVID-19 (such as: fever, cough, difficulty breathing) to their immediate supervisor, who shall in turn immediately disclose it to the Department Director.
- vi. Employees returning from travel outside the US or those with household members who have traveled outside the US and who are not required to self-isolate and otherwise allowed to work, shall self-monitor following the Department of Health guidelines.
- vii. Every Employee of the County in the workplace is required to follow all personal preventative guidelines issued by DOH to the greatest extent possible, yet still provide service.

#### **VI. Additional References**

##### **OKALOOSA COUNTY COVID-19 Questions & Answers**

With confirmed cases of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) in Florida, we encourage employees to stay informed on how to protect themselves, their families, and their communities from COVID-19. The Department of Health's (DOH) dedicated COVID-19 webpage at [www.FloridaHealth.gov/COVID-19](http://www.FloridaHealth.gov/COVID-19) remains the best reliable resource for information and guidance regarding COVID-19 in Florida.

The County, State and Federal Governments are all actively working to monitor, prepare and prevent the spread of this virus. At the County, we too play a part in lowering the impact within our workplaces by taking every day preventative actions and modifying operations to help to impede the spread of these respiratory diseases. Preventative actions include:

- **Washing your hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds**, especially after going to the bathroom, before eating, and after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- **Avoiding close contact** with people who are sick.
- **Staying home when you are sick.** Employees who have symptoms of acute respiratory illness are recommended to stay home and not come to work until they are free of fever (100.4° F or greater using an oral thermometer), signs of a fever, and any other symptoms for at least 24 hours, without the use of fever-reducing or other symptom-altering medicines (e.g. cough suppressants). Employees should notify their supervisor and stay home if they are sick.
- **Before traveling take certain steps:**
  - Check the CDC's Traveler's Health Notices for the latest guidance and recommendations for each country to which you will travel.
  - Employees who become sick while traveling must understand that they should notify their supervisor and should promptly call a healthcare provider for advice if needed.

**What should employees do if they suspect they are infected or someone they work with may be infected with the virus that causes COVID-19?**

As a safety consideration, management should always consider the physical well-being of all employees in the workplace. Accordingly, while supervisors are not able to make a medical diagnosis, they may reasonably rely on visual observations of an employee's symptoms in making a determination to send home an employee who appears to be sick in the workplace, after consultation with their Department Director.

If an employee notices that they or their coworkers are exhibiting symptoms, they should immediately notify their supervisor or department director. Symptoms of the COVID-19 virus include fever, cough, and/or shortness of breath.

**What happens when an employee is determined to be a close contact of a COVID-19 positive individual, admits to being symptomatic or is deemed symptomatic of COVID-19 by their supervisor and confirmed by their Department Head?**

1. They will be directed to go home and seek immediate medical treatment/evaluation.
2. If an employee seeks medical/evaluation attention and/is directed by a physician for self-isolation or is confirmed positive for COVID-19 the employee shall follow any medical direction to include self-isolation (if not admitted to hospital). The employee will be placed on paid administrative leave for quarantine or isolation periods in accordance with DOH guidelines.
3. If an employee is sent home by their Department Director or by County Administration due to confirmed close contact with a COVID-19 positive individual or has observed symptoms associated with COVID-19, but does not seek immediate medical attention, that employee shall be required to self-isolate in accordance with DOH guidelines and shall use accrued sick/vacation leave or will be placed on administrative leave without pay if no accrued leave is available.
4. If an employee seeks medical attention and is confirmed to have a medical condition other

than COVID-19 or suspicion of COVID-19, that employee shall follow the suggested medical direction given to include any directed self-isolation to prevent the further spread of non-COVID-19 conditions. For any medical conditions other than COVID-19 the employee will be required to utilize accrued sick/vacation leave or be placed on administrative leave without pay.

5. Employees whose position allows them the ability to telework/telecommute during this self-isolation period may be approved to work from home in lieu of sick time or administrative leave. Such approval will be handled on a case-by-case basis as requested by the Department Director, subject to approved protocols of IT, and with final approval by the County Administrator.
6. If an employee traveled against guidance by CDC, DOH, or the County for level 3 or 2 Countries/Activities (Cruises) and is required to enter mandated self-isolation or is initially cleared and then developed symptoms of COVID-19, they shall follow the same procedures above, but they shall not be eligible to qualify for paid administrative leave. However, the employee will still have the ability to utilize annual or sick leave.

#### **How can my County Group Health Insurance Benefits help?**

- If you have a plan specific question, contact your health plan directly. For contact information, please go to <https://www.floridablue.com/> or call 1-800-352-2583.
- As always, please reach out to Kelli Burgess in Risk Management, with any questions or concerns you may have related to your health insurance.

For any other questions related to COVID-19 in Florida, please contact the Department of Health's dedicated COVID-19 Call Center by calling 1-(866) 779-6121 or emailing [COVID-19@flhealth.gov](mailto:COVID-19@flhealth.gov). The Call Center is available Monday through Friday, 8:00am to 8:00pm.