

Sample notice to employees related to COVID-19 (3/16/20):

The world health community continues to monitor closely the emergence of the SARS-CoV-2 virus and the disease it causes, named "coronavirus disease 2019" (COVID-19). At this time, no one knows how severe this outbreak will be, but there are now dozens of known cases of it in Minnesota. Given this uncertainty, and the fact that the seasonal influenza (flu) virus is also widespread, the City of [name] is taking proactive steps to address a number of city workplace concerns.

First and foremost, we want to maintain a safe workplace and encourage and/or adopt practices protecting the health of employees, customers, and the public. We also want to ensure the continuity of city operations in the event of a pandemic.

We ask all employees to cooperate in taking steps to reduce the transmission of communicable diseases in the workplace. Based on extensive review, consideration, consultation, and discussion from employment and medical sources, e.g., League of Minnesota Cities (LMC), Society for Human Resources Management (SHRM), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and Minnesota Department of Health (MDH), employees are requested to do the following:

1. **Do not report to or stay at work if: (i) you have sick symptoms; or (ii) for the medically-required timeframe if you were exposed to COVID-19 or traveled to a countries with widespread sustained (ongoing) transmission of COVID-19 as established by the CDC.**
 - A. It is critical that employees **leave work and do not report to work** while they are experiencing **any** symptoms such as fever, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills or fatigue. Currently, CDC recommends that employees remain at home until at least 24 hours after they are free of fever (100 degrees F or 37.8 degrees C) or signs of a fever without the use of fever-reducing medications. Many times, with the best of intentions, employees report to or stay at work even though they feel ill, but employees should not stay at nor report to work if they feel ill based on the current circumstances.
 - B. If you feel ill, please inform your supervisor or designee immediately, leave immediately if you are at work, and do not return to work unless and until you are no longer ill or a pandemic virus has been ruled out. Employees who report to work ill will be sent home in accordance with these health guidelines. We may request appropriate documentation from an employee before such employee may return to work.
 - C. If you were exposed to COVID-19 or traveled to a countries with widespread sustained (ongoing) transmission of COVID-19 as established by the CDC, then you should inform your supervisor or designee immediately, leave work immediately if you are at work, and do not return to work unless and until the timeline established by the CDC and your health care provider has lapsed. Employees who report to work in these circumstances will be sent home in accordance with these health guidelines. We may request appropriate documentation from an employee before such employee may return to work.
 - D. We provide paid sick time and other benefits to compensate employees who are unable to work due to illness. If your paid sick time is exhausted, the city will allow employees on a temporary basis until employees are otherwise notified based on the current unique circumstances to use paid leave time in the following order for such absences

from work: vacation and compensatory time. If you do not have paid time or have exhausted all such time, no specific payment for such absences is compensable.

- E. If you are sick with COVID-19 or suspect you are infected with the virus that causes COVID-19, you should contact your health care provider immediately and take the necessary steps to help prevent the disease from spreading to people in your home, place of employment, and community, which includes staying at home.
 - F. While we currently do not offer formal telework arrangements, the city will consider, on a case-by-case basis, requests from employees to work from home during this time. While not all positions are conducive to telework, those positions with primary job duties that can be effectively performed remotely will be given consideration.
- 2. Wash your hands frequently with warm, soapy water for at least 20 seconds.**
 - A. We will provide alcohol-based hand sanitizers throughout the workplace and in common areas.
 - 3. Cover your mouth with tissues whenever you sneeze, and discard used tissues in the trash.**
 - 4. Clean frequently touched surfaces.**
 - A. Cleaning sprays and wipes will also be provided to clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces such as telephones and keyboards. You should clean these office surfaces daily.
 - 5. Avoid shaking hands and having extended discussions with anyone within 6 feet of that person.**
 - 6. Employees are encouraged to use telephone and video conferencing instead of face-to-face meetings as much as possible during this outbreak.**
 - 7. Avoid people who are sick with the above-symptoms or known to have traveled internationally or in a community in which COVID-19 is widespread.**
 - 8. Wear the appropriate personal protective equipment**

Here is more information on COVID-19 for your reference:

- CDC Fact Sheet: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/2019-ncov-factsheet.pdf>
- MDH Guidance: <https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/index.html>

We will be continually monitoring how to handle related workplace issues and will update you accordingly. In addition, City administration and supervisors will communicate to you any impacted operational issues related to your position.

Nothing in this communication establishes any precedent or practice. The city may change or eliminate these items, or portions thereof, at any time and without notice.

Please contact [title] [name] at [email], [phone], or in-person with any questions or concerns.

Thank you for your cooperation.