MET NET

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MetNet > **COVID-19 FAQ Managers**

Manager FAQ: COVID-19 response

Below are answers for managers and supervisors to frequently asked questions related to COVID-19, also known as coronavirus, and the Met Council's impact and response. This page is a living document and will be updated regularly when we have new information or guidance to share.

If you have questions not answered below, please ask your division head. Or, if you would like to ask anonymously, you can submit your question or comment in **this online form**. Others may be wondering the same thing, and we will review submissions daily and try to address the question or concern in this FAQ or other upcoming communication.

Click on a question below to jump down to its answer, or scroll through the questions and answers on this page.

Updated 4-9-2020

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20. Who can I contact at the Met Council for further guidance?

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1. What should I do as a manager or supervisor to help my employees?

Now is an important time to spend time talking with your employees about how they're feeling and what their concerns are. Prioritize time for this; if possible, try to dedicate time each day to walk around and talk with your employees. Let us know what you hear, and we'll work to find information to address their concerns. You can submit issues you hear through the online COVID-19 form (anonymously or with your name and email to receive a reply), or you can contact your division director.

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2. Will the Met Council implement any changes to our operations?

Met Council operations are in a business-as-usual state; however we have added additional deep cleaning to our buses, trains, and facilities. We are evaluating the situation as it evolves and reviewing pandemic planning and procedures to ensure we have the workforce needed to provide duties.

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3. Should we cancel non-essential meetings or switch to virtual meetings?

Out of an abundance of caution, the Met Council's Pandemic Unified Command decided to make changes to our approach to in-person meetings.

We are directing staff to discontinue planning large-scale public gatherings for the next several weeks as this situation continues to evolve. We also ask that you cancel, delay, or reschedule any planned large meetings that are discretionary through April 15. If you have any questions or would like assistance making that decision, consult your division director.

We also recommend that meetings you can have with Met Council staff at other sites and external partners be virtual meetings whenever possible. We have recently implemented tools across the Met Council such as Webex Meetings and Microsoft Teams that facilitate virtual meetings and collaboration. (Both are embedded within the Microsoft Office calendar invitation function.)

As of March 12, the Metropolitan Council, its standing committees, and advisory committees will continue to hold meetings to accomplish time-sensitive business. These meetings will be limited to critical business decisions. Informational presentations will largely be removed from meeting agendas. If a committee does not have timely business items to act on, we will likely cancel those meetings. In accordance with open meeting laws, we will continue to allow the public to attend any meetings that would typically be governed by the Open Meeting Law but will encourage individuals to view our meetings via streaming services if they wish to do so.

Consult with your division director if you have business items for the Council, Council standing committees, and Council advisory committee consideration.

We recommend that you use virtual meeting and collaboration tools where appropriate, including Webex Meetings and Microsoft Teams.

- Webex Meetings: This tool helps streamline video conferencing, screensharing, and conference calls whether you're in a conference room, at your desk computer, or working remotely. More information on MetNet, including an instruction guide. Please email Webex-Support@metc.state.mn.us if you need help setting up Webex Meetings.
- Microsoft Teams: This application is available on all Met Council computers and replaces Skype for Business for instant messaging and adds much more functionality. More information on MetNet, including training videos and quick start guides. Please email ECM@metc.state.mn.us if you need help with Microsoft Teams.

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4. Can I allow or encourage my team to work from home?

Existing policies related to leave and teleworking are still in place. While we encourage managers to be flexible with their staff where possible, including allowing situational instances where staff work remotely, we are also aware of operational realities where people are not able to work from home. Coordinate with your division directors on telework decisions.

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5. Can I create an alternate work schedule for my staff?

Adjusting work schedules is one way to limit interactions in the workplace and can assist with social distancing. Supervisors are encouraged to consider using staggered schedules where appropriate.

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6. Are we adjusting our leave processes for people staying home sick or caring for family members sick?

(Updated 4-9-20)

If your staff are sick, they should stay home. If employees are concerned about flex time or telework options, they should coordinate with their managers and if you need help, contact Human Resources. We have a plan in place for when this situation evolves and staff are either recovering from COVID-19 or caring for someone who has COVID-19. We are relying on the Department of Health and county public health officials to provide the details about safe recovery conditions and any circumstances where our staff are directly affected by COVID-19. As the situation continues to emerge, any leave related to COVID-19 would be coordinated by the Employee Resource Center in Human Resources (employeeresourcecenter@metc.state.mn.us or 612.349.7558).

Gov. Walz signed Executive Order 20-07 providing paid leave for state employees who are not able to work for reasons related to COVID-19 and suspended the waiting period for insurance coverage for new employees. In response, the Met Council also instituted a policy creating **paid COVID-19 leave** for employees directly affected by the COVID-19 outbreak.

Under the new policy, effective March 20, employees can use paid COVID-19 leave if they must be absent from work for reasons related to COVID-19 and cannot or are not allowed to telework. Certain employees assigned to provide critical services may require additional authorization before taking this leave.

On April 1, Human Resource staff updated the Met Council's procedures for paid COVID-19-related leave, given a new federal law that expands Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) benefits to those affected by the outbreak.

Read the updated (4-1-20) policy for full details and how to arrange for this paid leave (PDF).

Managers should complete and submit the COVID-19 leave form (Excel) (updated 4-9-20) and provide documentation to the Employee Resource Center (employeeresourcecenter@metc.state.mn.us) for their employee.

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7. May a manager ask an employee if they are traveling to a region that is being affected by COVID-19 or whether they have been possibly exposed to the virus during travel?

Yes, managers may inquire about whether an employee has traveled to a COVID-19-affected region or about possible exposure to the virus during travel. However, if these inquiries are made, they must be directed to all employees

known or believed to have recently traveled to these areas; such inquiries cannot be directed only to employees of certain races, ethnicities, national origins, or other protected categories.

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8. May a manager require an employee who traveled from or through a COVID 19-affected region to stay home?

If an employee has traveled from or through a CDC-designated Level 3 area, the person should have been identified at their port of entry into the United States and placed into self-quarantine for 14 days since leaving the area. This means, to the extent possible, staying at home or in a comparable setting, avoidance of settings where people congregate, limiting public activities, and practicing social distancing. This also means that the traveler, in almost all cases, should not go to the workplace.

The employee may telecommute if feasible or use accrued leave per the applicable collective bargaining agreement or Met Council policies.

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9. What should managers do if an employee becomes ill at work with influenza-like symptoms?

Managers may send home employees who display symptoms of contagious diseases but must be careful to send all employees home who display similar symptoms. If an employee goes home because they are displaying symptoms of a contagious disease, continue to follow normal policies and procedures for FMLA and other leave.

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10. What if an employee refuses to come to work out of fear of getting sick?

Unless directed otherwise by a health care provider or the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH), employees who are well should report to work or telework.

The employee must continue to follow normal policies and procedures for requesting leave and may be subject to disciplinary action for failing to show up for work or for failing to comply with normal leave policies and procedures.

Supervisors and managers should work to address the employee's concerns with the help of Human Resources as needed, including the application of current recommendations of social distancing in the workplace. If the employee requests time off they need to use accrued leave per the Met Council's normal leave policies and procedures. Employees feeling anxious about COVID-19 should get accurate information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, MDH, and/or consider contacting Sand Creek, the Met Council's employee assistance program.

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11. What if an employee suspects they may have COVID-19?

If they are seeking medical care, they should visit their primary care or urgent care clinic. Employees who think they have COVID-19 should follow the CDC's instructions if you are sick before visiting a medical clinic for care.

If they think they have COVID-19, they should not use the Well@Work clinic. The HealthPartners Well@Work clinics do not have testing equipment and will not be able to test for the disease.

For employees who have a HealthPartners medical plan, HealthPartners has published information related to COVID-19 care and testing, including what costs are covered, on their website at healthpartners.com/coronavirus. Their page will have the most up-to-date information from HealthPartners.

For members experiencing cold and cough symptoms and who think they've been exposed to COVID-19, HealthPartners created a short assessment using CDC guidelines to help determine if they should be tested. You can take the screening assessment online at virtuwell. It's available 24/7 and at no cost to you. If you have additional concerns, call your primary care clinic before going in.

HealthPartners members can also use the CareLine at no cost. It is available 24/7, 365 days a year. Call 612.339.3663 or 800.551.0859.

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12. What should a manager do if an employee has been confirmed to have COVID-19?

Contact Human Resources to determine appropriate steps to take with the employee and report the absence to the Employee Resource Center (employeeresourcecenter@metc.state.mn.us or 612.349.7558).

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13. What should a manager do if MDH or the employee's physician prohibits an employee from reporting to work?

(Updated 4-1-20)

If the employee is able to work, consider alternative or flexible work options under the applicable collective bargaining agreement or Met Council policies, if feasible. If an employee is unable to work, even with an alternative or flexible work option, follow the procedure for Paid COVID-19 Leave (PDF) (updated 4-1-20).

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14. How should managers report COVID-19-related absences?

(Updated 4-9-20)

Managers need to report the following employee absences to the Met Council's Employee Resource Center (employeeresourcecenter@metc.state.mn.us):

- Employees out sick with COVID-19
- Employees in quarantine (self or doctor-directed)
- Employees out caring for a family member sick with COVID-19

Record these absences in the COVID-19 employee absence form and email the log to employeeresourcecenter@metc.state.mn.us. The form should be sent whenever a new absence occurs with the anticipated return date. The form should be sent again when the employee returns to work.

Download a copy of the employee absence form (updated 4-9-20; please use this new version).

Bus Operations will report these employee absences to the ERC using their leave of absence form with a clear note about the reason for their absence.

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15. How will leave be covered if an employee is sick with COVID-19 or is out caring for a family member who is sick with COVID-19?

(Updated 4-9-20)

If an employee is ill with COVID-19 or is caring for a family member who is ill with COVID-19, submit the COVID-19 Leave form (Excel) (updated 4-9-20) to the Employee Resource Center (employeeresourcecenter@metc.state.mn.us) and include any available documentation.

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16. Should Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) paperwork be sent to the employee if they miss more than three days of work due to COVID-19?

(Updated 4-9-20)

No. Submit the COVID-19 Leave form (Excel) (updated 4-9-20) to the Employee Resource Center and include any available documentation.

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17. When should an employee be allowed to return to work after being sick with COVID-19?

Employees should follow the guidance of their medical provider but may not be required to provide medical certification of fitness for duty upon their return from leave.

If an employee presents with symptoms consistent with COVID-19, HealthPartners advises that they stay home until:

- At least 3 days (72 hours) have passed since resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications; AND
- Improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath); AND
- At least 7 days have passed since symptoms first appeared.

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18. Do we need to track the time or costs we've been putting in to prepare for or respond to the impacts of COVID-19?

Yes, we have been directed to track costs (time and expenses) associated with this public health event. This is only for employees who have spent more than 10 hours working directly on our organization's preparation for and response to COVID-19.

If you have time and/or costs that need to be tracked due to COVID-19 tasks, please contact your division finance director and they will help you with next steps.

Marie Henderson, Deputy CFO – Regional Administration – 612.602.1387

Ed Petrie, Director, Finance – Metro Transit – 612.349.7624

Steve True, Senior Manager, Finance – Metro Transit – 612.349.7701

Heather Aagesen-Huebner, Director, Finance & Admin – Community Development, Metropolitan Transportation Services – 651.602.1728

Ned Smith, Director, Finance – Environmental Services – 651.602.1162

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19. If we are hiring an intern for the summer, is there anything we should do differently this year?

As you are aware, the Met Council is currently taking appropriate action to safeguard its employees from COVID-19 and one of the actions is social distancing. To that end, intern hiring managers will be urged to interview remotely (via

phone or Webex Meetings). If interviews must be done in person, hiring managers should be using rooms large enough to allow six feet between candidates and panel members.

The intern start date remains Tuesday, May 26. You will be notified if this date is delayed due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

If you already have an intern on board, please consider the following suggestions to allow for social distancing:

- Telework – typically interns are not allowed to telework. However, you may want to consider allowing your intern to telework if their tasks/activities are conducive to working remotely.
- Work schedules – intern work schedules may be adjusted by increasing (if part time) or decreasing hours (if full time), depending on the business needs of the work unit.

If you have any questions, contact Luis Martinez (Luis.Martinez@metc.state.mn.us).

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20. Who can I contact at the Met Council for further guidance?

We encourage you to connect with your direct supervisor or division director if you have questions about critical services and how your work is being prioritized. You can also submit questions through this online form.

For additional information or guidance, contact the following teams in Human Resources:

- General questions: An HR Business Partner (Becky Grams, Walt Joy, Nathan Smith) or any HR manager for help
- Regarding Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA): Employee Resource Center
- Regarding work accommodations: Occupational Health

The Human Resources directory on MetNet has more contact information for staff.

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If there is an issue with content on the site contact: Claire.Lukens@metc.state.mn.us