

**To:** Connecticut State Agencies

**From:** The Office of Policy & Management and the Department of Administrative Services

**Re:** Guidance regarding absences, requests for telework and/or changes in work schedules due to COVID-19

**Date:** March 13, 2020

---

As the State of Connecticut continues to respond to the rapidly changing circumstances presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, state agencies must make every effort to continue their operations and provide the services and programs that are relied upon by the citizens and businesses of Connecticut. The following information is provided to assist agencies plan for coverage and continuity of operations.

**1. Employees are impacted by COVID-19 in different ways. How should the agency respond?**

The agency's response depends upon the specific circumstances as set forth below:

| <b>Level A</b>                                | <b>Level B</b>  | <b>Level C</b>  | <b>Level D</b>   |
|---|---|---|--|
| <b>EMPLOYEE SHALL NOT COME TO WORK</b>        | <b>EMPLOYEE SHALL NOT COME TO WORK</b>  | <b>EMPLOYEE IS NOT PROHIBITED FROM COMING TO WORK</b>   | <b>EMPLOYEE IS NOT PROHIBITED FROM COMING TO WORK</b>  |
| Actually sick with COVID-19 symptoms          | Employee is returning from a country designated by the CDC as a <b>Level 3</b> country          | Employee needs to stay at home to care for children or other dependents because school, daycare or eldercare has closed | Employee is returning from a Level 2 country or has engaged in inter-state travel within the United States   |
| Caring for sick family with COVID-19 symptoms | Employee has been directed by a medical provider or government official to self-monitor at home | Employee cannot get to work because of transportation disruptions   | Employee who is domiciled with or had contact with a person who has been directed by a medical provider or government official to self-monitor at home |
|   |   |   | Employee had contact with someone who had contact with a person who has been directed by a medical provider or   |

|   |   |   |  |
|---|---|---|--|
|   |   |   | government official to self-monitor at home  |
|   |   |   | Employee who has concerns about exposure through contact with persons in public settings, including the workplace. |
|   |   |   | Employee is medically fragile (per medical documentation on file at the agency) but has had no apparent exposure   |
| <b>GUIDANCE</b>   | <b>GUIDANCE</b>   | <b>GUIDANCE</b>   | <b>GUIDANCE</b>  |
| Telework, if approved by agency AND medically appropriate (People who are too sick to work or are caring for seriously ill family members should <b>not</b> be expected to work)  | Telework, if approved by agency   | Telework or flex schedule, if approved by agency  | Come to work as usual.   |
| If telework is not possible, employee will be paid for the scheduled, non-worked hours within a 14 day calendar period under 5-248(a). (If employee teleworks part-time, the 5-248(a) leave will provide wages for the balance of hours scheduled to work.) | If telework is not possible, employee will be paid for the scheduled, non-worked hours within a 14 day calendar period under 5-248(a). (If employee teleworks part-time, the 5-248(a) leave will provide wages for the balance of hours scheduled to work.) | If telework is not possible, employee will be paid for the scheduled, non-worked hours within a 14 day calendar period under 5-248(a). (If employee teleworks part-time, the 5-248(a) leave will provide wages for the balance of hours scheduled to work.) | Employee may request to use accruals to take time away from work consistent with standard policies                 |
| If the employee's illness or need to care for sick family   |   | If employee's inability to come to work because of  | Consistent with the Governor's directives regarding social   |

|  |  |   |   |
|--|--|---|---|
| <p>members continues beyond the 14 calendar days, employee may use earned accruals or choose to go unpaid, <b>provided that sick employees must use their sick leave accruals first.</b> Once the employee has exhausted sick leave accruals they can use other accruals, take unpaid leave, or apply for additional benefits as provided by state policy or collective bargaining agreement</p> |  | <p>COVID-19-related disruptions continues beyond the 14 calendar days, the employee has choice of using any of earned accruals , including sick leave, or take unpaid leave</p> | <p>distancing, the agency may consider whether granting an employee’s request to telework or have a flex schedule is possible in light of the agency’s overall operational needs, existing resources (including IT resources) and the individual’s job.</p> |
|  |  |   |   |

**2. Does an agency need to submit each individual request to DAS and OLR before approving telework or a change to the employee’s work schedule?**

No. In deciding whether to grant a temporary, situational approval of telework or a change in the work schedule, the agency has the discretion to make decisions on the basis of its operational needs and existing resources (including IT resources) without getting preapproval from DAS and OLR provided the agency follows the guidelines set forth in this document.

**3. What documentation does the agency require in order to consider a temporary change to an employee’s work schedule or telework in order to address a COVID-19 related situation?**

In this temporary emergency situation formal telework applications are not necessary; however, the request must include the employee name(s), title, bargaining unit, employee’s IT resources, proposed schedule, a brief statement of duties to be performed and factors by which the agency can verify that the employee is performing the required duties.

A declaration page from their homeowners insurance does not need to be immediately provided and can be submitted at a later date.

In this temporary emergency situation, pre-approval IT Security review by BEST is not required if the employee is using one of the following options:

- o State provided laptop and VPN,

- Microsoft Teams,
- Other previously BEST-Approved protocol for offsite work.

Agencies shall retain all documentation provided by the employees.

Agencies shall create an Excel spreadsheet of all employees who have been approved for temporary, situational telework or changes in the work schedule. The agency spreadsheet must include the department code, employee(s) name, employee id, job code, title, bargaining unit and for employees whose schedules are modified, the current schedule and revised schedule. This spreadsheet must be submitted to DAS on a weekly basis.

#### **4. What factors should be considered in order to approve a change to an employee's work schedule or telework?**

Agencies need to consider their overall operational needs, including the level of on-site staffing needed to provide their services and programs, as well as their existing resources, including IT resources, when considering such requests. Agencies should continue to consider the factors set forth in the Interim Telework Guidelines/General Letter 32 when assessing agency operational needs.

In this temporary emergency situation, the following exceptions to the Interim Telework Guidelines/General Letter 32 are allowed:

- Authorize employees to telecommute even if they do not have a previously approved telecommuting plan. (NOTE: Telework is not appropriate for level 1 employees except in extraordinary circumstances.)
- Authorize employees to telecommute even if they are not in a job classification listed in Appendix A of the Interim Telework Guidelines, however, under no circumstances can an employee in a hazardous duty job be allowed to telework.
  - Non-hazardous duty managers, supervisors, confidential employees and appointed officials are permitted to telework pursuant to Item No. 2719-E.
- Allow employees to telecommute for 50% or more of their scheduled workweek.
- Allow employees to telecommute because they need to be home for childcare or eldercare reasons.
- Authorize modifications to employees' work schedules in order to reduce the total number of employees in the workplace at any given time. (NOTE: Flexible scheduling is not appropriate for level 1 employees except in extraordinary circumstances).
- Consider allowing employees in a working test period to telecommute as long as performance can be assessed with measurable outcomes. Agencies may need to

consider an extension of a working test period if an employee in their working test period is approved to telework.

5. **Do we require an employee to self-monitor at home if they live in or travel from a state or country that has not been designated as a Level 3 by the CDC?**

No. According to the CDC guidance issued on March 12, 2020, individuals returning from a Level 3 country should self-monitor at home for 14 days from the date they left the country. Individuals who are returning from *Level 2 countries are no longer directed to self-monitor at home for 14 days.*

6. **Can an employee be approved for VSRP in lieu of taking COVID-19 leave (paid or unpaid)?**

No

7. **If an employee cannot provide a medical certification, what alternative documentation should the employee provide?**

If an employee cannot provide medical certification, the employee shall provide a written explanation to their agency Human Resources professional describing their symptoms, the directions they have received from medical providers or government officials (if any), and any other supporting documentation they may possess.

8. **How should an employee code COVID-19 related leaves or telework in CORE-CT?**

Depending on the reason for the leave, the following codes must be used.

ON THE TIMESHEETS

**Authorized Paid Leave Pursuant to 5-248(a):** LOPD, used in conjunction with override reason code PDC19

**Telework:** REGTC, used in conjunction with override reason code TCC19

**Personal Illness (when not using leave pursuant to 5-248(a)):** Appropriate sick leave code and other accrual codes as necessary, used in conjunction with override reason code SCV19

**Caregiver of a family member who is sick with COVID-19 (when not teleworking or using leave pursuant to 5-248(a)):** Appropriate sick leave code and other accrual codes as necessary, used in conjunction with override reason code SFC19

**School, Daycare or Transportation closure (when not teleworking or when not using leave pursuant to 5-248(a)):** Appropriate leave code, used in conjunction with override reason code BCC19

IN JOB DATA

For COVID-19 related absences of more than five (5) days.

**Authorized Paid Leave Pursuant to 5-248(a):**

Action: Paid Leave of Absence                      Reason: Paid Leave Authorized

**All other situations standard leave codes/reasons apply.**