



Tuesday, March 17, 2020

FAQ'S ON COVID-19 AND EMPLOYEE LEAVE

County Executive Pittman shared the Administration's approach as to how we can all work together to help make our public health crisis less dangerous. This approach provides flexibility to both our employees and directors, while keeping critical county government services open and operational.

The county's employee leave policies are still in effect, and you may be required to use disability, annual or personal leave if you are absent from work. The Office of Personnel shares these FAQs to provide guidance on how our leave policies apply during the current health crisis. You will be notified of any update to these FAQs via an "@Anne" email.

If you have any questions about these FAQs, please contact the Office of Personnel at (410) 222-7595 or email PersonnelAnnouncements@aacounty.org. Specific questions about your job duties should be addressed with your supervisor.

LEAVE ISSUES

What leave is available if I am infected with COVID-19?

If you are feeling ill, contact your supervisor and do not report to work. You will be expected to use any accrued Disability (*i.e.*, sick), Annual, or Personal leave or any accrued comp time to cover the absence.

If you do not have accrued leave, or if you exhaust your accrued paid leave, you may be eligible for up to 15 days of Advanced Disability Leave. Contact your supervisor to request Advanced Disability Leave.



What if I am not sick but am taking care of a family member who is ill?

If you are taking care of a family member who is ill, you may use any accrued Disability, Annual, or Personal leave or any accrued comp time to cover the absence. If you do not have any accrued paid leave or have exhausted all your leave, you may be eligible for up to 15 days of Advanced Disability Leave.

Who is considered a “family member” under this guidance?

The term “family member” includes: an employee’s child (biological, adopted, foster or stepchild); a parent (biological, adopted, foster or stepparent), legal guardian, or someone who stood in loco parentis of an employee or the employee’s spouse; a grandparent (biological, adopted, foster or step-grandparent) of an employee; a grandchild (biological, adopted, foster or step-grandchild) of an employee; or an employee’s sibling (biological, adopted, foster or step-sibling).

What leave is available if I am advised to self-quarantine by a healthcare provider or other health department official?

You should follow the direction of the health professional to self-quarantine usually for a 14 day period. Depending on your job duties, you may be asked to telework during that period or may be eligible to receive paid Administrative Leave at the discretion of your department head.

Is there any leave available if the County closes?

We do not anticipate that county government will close. If the situation changes and county government does close, you should confirm with your supervisor whether work is available or if your work unit is open. If you are available to work, but your work unit is closed by the County or there is no work available, you may receive paid Administrative Leave for any regularly scheduled work time missed due to the closure. Otherwise, you will be expected to report to work (either in-person or telework) as directed by your department.

Will I have to provide medical documentation before I return to work after being sick or after caring for a family member who was sick?

Yes. You must provide medical certification that you are able to return to work.

What should I do if I came in contact with someone infected with COVID-19?

You should contact your healthcare provider and notify your supervisor. The County may require employees who have known exposure to a person who tested positive for COVID-19 to remain out of the workplace for at least 14 days after the date of exposure. Depending on your job duties, you may be asked to telework during the period of absence or may be eligible for Administrative Leave at the discretion of your department head.



What benefits are available for testing or provider visits under County health insurance plans?

If you have symptoms, you should first call your healthcare provider to discuss your symptoms and treatment options. Carefirst members also have two 24/7 options to receive care outside of a provider's office – a 24-hour Nurse Advice Line and CareFirst Video Visit.

- **24-hour Nurse Advice Line** – Members can call 800-535-9700 anytime to speak with a registered nurse to discuss their symptoms and get recommendations for the most appropriate care.
- **CareFirst Video Visit** – Members can also register for CareFirst Video Visit to securely connect with a doctor, day or night, through smartphone, tablet or computer – and no appointment necessary.

CareFirst has also made important benefit updates to remove cost and other barriers to ensure access to necessary care.

- CareFirst will cover medically necessary diagnostic tests that are consistent with CDC guidance related to COVID-19 without employee cost share.
- CareFirst has eliminated prior authorization requirements for diagnostic tests and covered services that are medically necessary and consistent with CDC guidance for members diagnosed with COVID-19.

You can call the customer service phone number on the back of your Carefirst member ID card for help with questions related to medical services.

TELEWORK

Who decides whether I can telework?

The County Executive has encouraged department heads to allow employees to telework if possible during the COVID-19 crisis. You may be directed to telework depending on the requirements of your position and needs of the department. Not all jobs are suitable for teleworking, however, and your department managers will determine whether you are eligible.

What if I am not allowed to telework?

If you work in a position not suitable for telework, you may be expected to report to work as directed. If you or a family member becomes ill, or you are advised to self-quarantine, you should follow the guidance in the sections above. If the County closes your work unit, or if there is no work available for you, you will be paid Administrative Leave for any regularly

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scheduled work time missed due to the closure. However, during this crisis employees may be assigned to other duties as necessary, prior to granting administrative leave.

Who do I contact with questions?

For questions about leave, pay, or benefits, contact the Office of Personnel at (410) 222-7595 or via email at PersonnelAnnouncements@aacounty.org.

For questions about teleworking or scheduling, contact your direct supervisor.

For general questions about COVID-19, please check the Anne Arundel County Department of Health website at www.ahealth.org or you may call the information line at (410) 222-7256.

