



# Coronavirus Guidance

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Commonwealth of Kentucky Employees

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#### 1. What is novel coronavirus?

COVID-19 is the illness caused by a new strain of coronavirus not previously identified in humans, which can easily be spread from person to person. It is a respiratory disease causing illness that can range from very mild to severe, including illness resulting in death.

Commonwealth of Kentucky public health officials are monitoring the situation very closely and working with federal, state, and local partners.

#### 2. Where can I go for up-to-date information about coronavirus/COVID-19 in Kentucky?

**KY Department for Public Health**

<http://www.kycovid19.ky.gov>

**COVID-19 Public Hotline**

1-800-722-5725

**The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)**

Atlanta, GA

Toll free: 1-800-232-4636

<http://www.cdc.gov/COVID-19>

#### 3. As an employee, what are my options if I am unable to work or telecommute due to one of the following:

- (1) I am subject to a Federal, State, or local quarantine or isolation order related to COVID-19?
- (2) I have been advised by a health care provider to self-quarantine due to concerns related to COVID-19;
- (3) I am experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 and seeking medical diagnosis;
- (4) I am caring for an individual who is subject to a Federal, State, or local quarantine or isolation order related to COVID-19 or an individual who has been advised by a health care provider to self-quarantine due to concerns related to COVID-19;
- (5) I am caring for my child whose school or place of care is closed, or my child care provider is unavailable, due to COVID-19 related reasons; or
- (6) I believe I have been directly exposed to COVID-19.

As a Commonwealth of Kentucky employee, there are several leave options that may be available to assist you. These leave options include the following:

- Kentucky Emergency Paid Sick Leave;
- Families First Coronavirus Response Act Leave:  
[https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/WHD/posters/FFCRA\\_Poster\\_WH1422\\_Non-Federal.pdf](https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/WHD/posters/FFCRA_Poster_WH1422_Non-Federal.pdf);
- Accrued Leave (Annual, Compensatory, Sick);

If you fall into any of the six (6) categories above, please contact your supervisor or agency Human Resource (HR) office.

#### 4. Where can I go for support related to my stress, anxiety, and fears related to the coronavirus?

The current coronavirus outbreak and constant media coverage can be anxiety-producing. While it is important to stay informed, there are things we can do to manage our mental well-being:

- Avoid speculation and get your information from reputable sources such as the official Kentucky Coronavirus website (<http://www.kycovid19.ky.gov/>) or the toll free telephone line (1-800-722-5725).
- Manage how you follow the outbreak in the media. If the news is causing you stress or anxiety, reduce your media intake and refer to the reputable information sources listed in the bullet point above.
- Talk about your fears, anxiety, and stress:
  - The Kentucky Employee Assistance Program provides confidential services for employees. Employees may contact KEAP at 502-564-5788 or (800) 445-5327. Please also review KEAP information at <https://personnel.ky.gov/Pages/KEAP.aspx>.
  - If an employee is a member of the Kentucky Employees' Health Plan, we recommend members use LiveHealth Online Behavioral Health for counseling services. Information about how to access LiveHealth Online Behavioral Health can be found at LiveHealthOnline.com. Employees may also call 1-888-548-3432.
- Exercise self-care:
  - Stay informed. Make sure that you direct your questions toward reliable sources regarding the coronavirus;
  - Too much information may be counterproductive (limit social media);
  - Try to keep a normal routine as much as possible;
  - Most importantly, practice "self-care" by getting enough sleep, outdoor activity, and/or exercise.

## 5. What can I do to protect myself?

The following may help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases:

- If you are exhibiting coronavirus symptoms (fever, shortness of breath, cough, chills, muscle pain, sore throat, new loss of taste or smell) stay home.
- Wash your hands frequently with warm, soapy water for at least 20 seconds.
- Cover your mouth with tissues whenever you sneeze or cough, and discard used tissues in the trash.
- Avoid people who are sick with respiratory symptoms.
- Clean frequently touched surfaces.
- Wear a cloth mask (see below for further information)

## 6. I am having symptoms. What should I do?

You should stay home when you are sick to help prevent the spread of illness to others.

Please see the enclosed "When to Seek Care" document for advice about when to contact a healthcare provider. Additionally, if an employee is a member of the Kentucky Employees' Health Plan, we recommend members use telehealth when possible, as it can help prevent them from spreading the virus further within a physical clinical setting. KEHP's free telehealth provider is LiveHealth Online Medical, a 24-hour service. Information about how to access LiveHealth Online Medical can be found at: <https://personnel.ky.gov/Pages/livehealth.aspx>. Employees may also call 1-888-548-3432.

If you are not a KEHP member, check with your insurance provider to see what telehealth options are available to you.

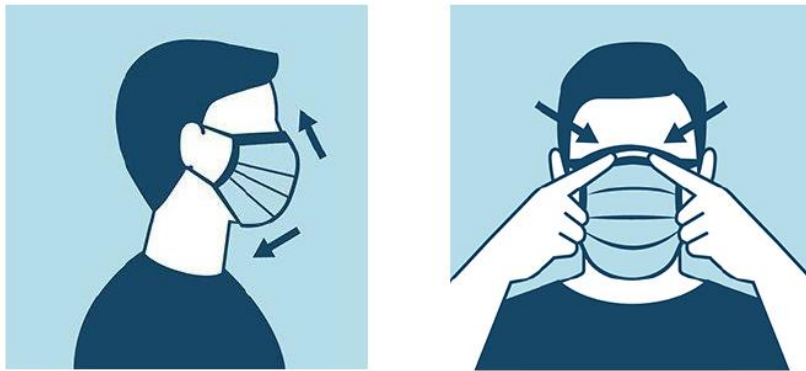
Employees may also schedule Premise Health virtual visits with a health care provider through MyPremiseHealth.com or call the clinics at 502-564-5555 or 502-564-4444 (M-F 7:30 am – 4:00 pm).

## 7. Are employees required to wear a mask in Executive Branch buildings, offices, or vehicles?

As we transition from "Healthy at Home" to "Healthy at Work," the Commonwealth of Kentucky remains committed to limiting the spread of COVID-19 and ensuring the health and safety of our state employees. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC), whose guidance the Commonwealth has continually followed, has now published guidelines recommending all persons wear cloth face coverings in public settings where social distancing is difficult to maintain. Wearing a facemask greatly decreases the likelihood that you would transmit this virus to other people if you have become infected with coronavirus but do not yet demonstrate symptoms of the illness. Accordingly, employees will be required to wear a mask when present in Executive Branch buildings/offices and in state vehicles, where another employee is present. Please note:

- Employees working in settings *where social distancing measures are difficult to maintain*, must wear either a personal or employer-provided cloth mask while in an Executive Branch office or state vehicle with other passengers.
- All personnel should wear a mask when walking through common areas such as hallways.
- Employees who can safely practice social distancing in their office or work location may remove their masks.
- Face-to-face meetings should be avoided or limited. In the event that face-to-face interaction occurs, individuals are required to wear a mask.
- Entities must, to the greatest extent practicable, restrict common areas such as lobbies, waiting rooms, break rooms, lunch rooms, and concession areas to maximize social distancing and reduce congregating.
- Masks will be required to be worn during an employee's scheduled work hours while performing job duties on or off the work premises. In the event that the mask becomes visibly soiled, saturated, or damaged while working, a new mask must be obtained.
- Employees may submit accommodation requests to the agency Human Resources (HR) office for consideration if unable to wear a facemask because of an underlying medical condition.
- Employees who do not comply with this policy may be removed from Executive Branch buildings/offices and may be subject to corrective or disciplinary action.

#### 8. What is the appropriate way to wear and use the mask?



- Before putting on a mask, clean hands with alcohol-based hand sanitizer or soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- The mask should fit snugly around the mouth and nose.
- Avoid touching the mask while wearing it.
- Ideally, personal and employer-provided cloth masks should be washed each day after use. The employer-provided masks can be washed in a washing machine with any detergent. After placing the mask in the washing machine, hands should be washed. Dry masks on high heat. It is important that a fabric mask is completely dry before wearing it, as its ability to capture particles is diminished when wet.
- Medical masks should not be worn unless required by job duties.
- Remove the mask from behind, being careful not to touch the front.
- Immediately wash hands with soap and water for 20 seconds after removing the mask.
- Employees should inspect masks throughout the day for damage. Damaged masks should be discarded in the trash; immediately wash hands with soap and water after discarding the mask and before applying a replacement mask. Employees in need of a replacement mask, or who arrive to an office/building without a mask, should immediately consult with their supervisor or an agency Human Resources employee.
- Avoid touching your face, eyes, nose, and mouth, particularly until after you have thoroughly washed your hands upon completing work and/or removing your mask.

#### 9. Now that employees are required to wear masks, is social distancing still required?

Yes

**10. Are visitors to Executive Branch buildings/offices required to wear masks?**

Agencies may request that visitors wear a mask when entering Executive Branch buildings/offices. If a visitor chooses not to wear a mask, they will still be permitted to enter the building/office. If a visitor does not have a mask upon arrival, an agency may provide a mask to the individual.

**11. Will my agency provide hand sanitizer, tissues, and cleaning supplies for the office?**

Agencies may purchase hand sanitizer, tissues, and other cleaning supplies, such as disinfecting wipes, as needed.

**12. What kinds of environmental precautions should employees take for conference rooms and shared equipment?**

Like influenza and the common cold, the CDC states that it may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes. The main way the virus spreads is through droplets from coughing and/or sneezing. Pursuant to Executive Order (EO) 2020-243, employees must practice social distancing and attempt to stay at least six (6) feet apart to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

**13. What are my telecommuting options if I would like to work from home?**

Agencies are currently taking steps to maximize telecommute options for employees. If you are not currently telecommuting, talk with your supervisor about your options. If you are sick, let your supervisor know and stay home. If you or a family member become ill with COVID-19, follow the advice of public health officials. Please also refer to question number three (3) above for additional options.

**14. What if offices need to be closed due to a COVID-19 outbreak?**

Each state agency has a Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) that outlines how to deliver essential services during an emergency. Because we provide critical services to all Kentucky citizens, we avoid closing offices whenever possible. In the event of a closure, all employees will receive notification from the Personnel Cabinet.

**15. What if I have a suggestion for improvement or a concern about risk of exposure at the workplace?**

Any concerns or suggestions for improvement should be discussed with your supervisor or HR representative.

**16. Am I required to help a customer or client who is showing signs of COVID-19 or another communicable disease?**

Employees should discuss their concerns with their supervisor and/or HR representative.

**17. Where can I find appropriate training courses?**

MyPurpose offers training modules for telecommuting, stress, anxiety, and a number of other topics related to health. To view courses during regularly scheduled working hours, seek approval from your supervisor before taking the course.