



## COVID-19 Employee Q&A

July 28, 2020

Keeping you and our residents safe is a top priority. As information is changing quickly, please look to your email, scheduled employee meetings and your department head for updated information regularly. Please send any other questions you may have to your department director. Please let Tammy Shelafo know if you have questions to add to the next Q&A.

The following Q&A document discusses the following workplace topics and is consistent with the Eighth Amended Public Health Order issued by Gunnison County on June 8, 2020:

- Sick Leave
- Vacation Leave
- Travel Outside Gunnison County
- Gatherings, Meetings and Workplace Environment
- Volunteering
- Closure and Potential Facility Closure
- Essential Positions
- Work Related Travel and Public Contact
- Benefits

### **Sick Leave**

All leave must be approved by your department head and is dependent on ensuring we are adequately staffed to provide city services.

#### **Q: What is the city doing to encourage sick people to stay home from work?**

**A:** The city has gifted a one-time allocation of 80 hours of sick leave to **ALL** full-time employees. Part-time, seasonal and temporary employees may request sick leave up to 20 hours at the regular hourly rate. Permanent part-time employees may request sick leave up to 40 hours at the regular hourly rate. Part-time employees should contact their supervisor for more details.

#### **Q: What do I do if an immediate family member becomes sick?**

**A:** Existing sick leave or the gifted sick leave (see above) may be used for at-home care of ill family members. Communicate with your supervisor when you must stay home sick.

#### **Q: When should I stay home from work?**

**A:** Employees who have symptoms of acute respiratory illness are recommended to stay home and not come to work if they have a fever (100.4° F [38.0° C] or greater using an oral thermometer), cough or shortness of breath. The CDC [Coronavirus Self-Checker](#) asks questions to establish your level of

illness. If you are symptomatic, but otherwise ok, please follow the below guidance for returning to work and self-report at [www.gunnisoncounty.org/covid19](http://www.gunnisoncounty.org/covid19) If you are symptomatic and worsening, please call the call center at 970-641-7660. If it is an emergency, please call 911. Communicate with your supervisor when you must stay home sick.

**Q: Can my department head or supervisor send me home from work?**

**A:** Your department head or supervisor may send you home if you have COVID-19 or symptoms associated with it.

**Q: When can I return to work after being self-isolated, quarantined or sent home due to suspected or confirmed COVID-19?**

**A:** Employees may return to work after the following:

- At least 3 days (72 hours) have passed since recovery defined as resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications **and** improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath); and,
- At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared. This may be extended to 20 days in cases of severe illness.
- If you are symptomatic and worsening, please call the call center at 970-641-7660. If it is an emergency, please call 911. Communicate with your supervisor when you must stay home sick.

**Q: If I am living with a person with a presumed positive or confirmed positive case of COVID-19, when can I return to work after being self-isolated, quarantined or sent home?**

**A:** Employees must self-isolate for 14 days and are able to return if no symptoms appear. If symptoms manifest during the 14 day period, employees may return to work after the following:

- At least 3 days (72 hours) have passed since recovery defined as resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications **and** improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath); and,
- At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared. This may be extended to 20 days in cases of severe illness.
- If you are symptomatic and worsening, please call the call center at 970-641-7660. If it is an emergency, please call 911. Communicate with your supervisor when you must stay home sick.

**Q: What is the city doing to address childcare issues stemming from school and daycare closures?**

**A:** We understand that employees need to be at home to care for their smaller children. Please communicate with Tammy Shelafo and your supervisor about options which may include remote work, alternative work scheduling, or use of sick leave (either accrued or gifted), etc.

**Vacation Leave**

**Q: What happens if I have vacation time off planned while the coronavirus is still a concern?**

**A:** Understanding that this is a fluid situation, urgent business needs in the future may result in leave approvals being rescinded for business purposes. We will notify employees as soon as possible should this occur.

**Q: When and where can I schedule vacations?**

A: Vacation is only available with the approval of the employee's supervisor and/or department head. Such approval may be based on scheduling needs of the department and maintaining the essential functions of the department. Federal and state restrictions may be in place for employees traveling such as no air travel, cruises and going to high densely populated areas, and are subject to change.

**Q: What happens if I am maxed on my vacation time and I cannot take vacation leave due to the necessity of being at work?**

A: Vacation leave accruals will not be extended beyond the max accruals.

**Travel Outside Gunnison County**

Your travel and activities may still be restricted or discouraged under orders issued by the State of Colorado or other counties or local governments should you choose to leave the County. Employee travel outside the County is highly discouraged at this time.

**Q: What happens when I return from vacation or travel out of the County?**

A: The City of Gunnison strongly encourages employees to utilize vacation time and travel when not working, as long as the travel does not unreasonably expose your coworkers to illness. However, since the City of Gunnison provides critical services to the community, the City reserves the right to require isolation upon return from travel.

*Unless formally exempted by your Department Head, you **must** isolate and quarantine yourself from all other persons, for a period of at least seven (7) days from the date of return from travel outside the County for any reason for more than 24 hours, regardless of whether you are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19.*

To obtain an exemption from this provision:

- Have a conversation with your Department Director about vacation and travel on personal time to help determine whether isolation upon your return can be exempted.
- The City may request that you contact the call center at 970-641-7660 for further advice on health screening and isolation.
- Your department head, supervisor, or Human Resources may inquire about the location of your personal travel to determine the need for isolation.
- You may *voluntarily* wish to relay the activities undertaken during your travel or number of persons contacted.

If during the period of self-isolation, you do experience symptoms of COVID-19, you are required to self-isolate until the following:

- At least 3 days (72 hours) have passed since recovery defined as resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications **and** improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath); and,
- At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared.

Use of accrued leave time, including the gifted sick leave, may be used. Please note any leave time approval provisions that may apply from this Q&A or the Employee Handbook.

### Gatherings, Meetings and Work Environment

**Q: Will public meetings and events organized by the city be cancelled?**

**A:** Please consider canceling such meetings or gatherings when appropriate. If a meeting must be conducted in person or with some participants in person, social distancing should be followed. This situation may evolve as regulations on such will continue to change. Meetings and gatherings can continue using a remote meeting tool, if appropriate. Departments are authorized to purchase their own accounts using Zoom or WebEx, etc.

**Q: How do we create social distancing and mitigate risks in the workplace?**

**A:** Speak with your department head, supervisor or Human Resources about creation of a work environment. Possible solutions include remote working, virtual meetings, staggering of shifts, workspace modification or relocation, job reassignment, etc. The Department Director may request a waiver of these provisions from the City Manager for industry specific applications as allowed by law.

- Older employees (age 60 and older) and individuals with underlying medical conditions that are at increased risk of serious COVID-19, are not prohibited from attending gatherings or meetings, as this violates various antidiscrimination laws. Older employees, employees who have a preexisting medical condition, or employees with medical conditions associated with pregnancy may be entitled to a reasonable accommodation and should contact Tammy Shelafo.
- Social distancing recommendations must be met. These include limiting contact of people within 6 feet from each other for 10 minutes or longer.
- Employees must be screened for coronavirus symptoms each day and excluded if symptomatic. This may include your supervisor asking questions about your symptoms to determine if you have or may have COVID-19. Currently these symptoms include, for example, fever, chills, cough, shortness of breath, or sore throat. Screening may include measurement of body temperature. As with all medical information, the fact that an employee had a fever or other symptoms would be subject to ADA confidentiality requirements.
- Proper hand hygiene and sanitation must be readily available to all attendees and employees.
- Environmental cleaning guidelines from the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) are followed (e.g., clean and disinfect high touch surfaces daily or more frequently). Please note there is specific guidance on disinfection after a suspected/conformed case of COVID-19.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html>

**Q: Must I wear a mask or gloves while working?**

**A:** Employees are required to wear face coverings at all times unless you:

- Are able to maintain safe social distancing (six feet or more).

- Are working in a professional office without face-to-face interactions with others or otherwise not in common areas.
- Have a health condition or disability that would cause you a specific and demonstrable injury or impairment.
- Have specific instructions from your Department Head to use refrain from using such face coverings or use alternate face shields, etc.

To the extent possible, wear gloves when in contact with customers or goods.

Please contact the City Clerk's office if you need a mask.

**Q: What happens when I believe my coworker may have COVID-19?**

**A:** If you believe a co-worker has COVID-19 due to observance of symptoms including fever, chills, cough, shortness of breath, or sore throat, please notify your supervisor to conduct authorized screening.

**Q: What happens if my coworker is sent home due to COVID-19?**

**A:** If the city learns that an employee has COVID-19 or symptoms associated with COVID-19, the city will take action consistent with CDC guidance. However, the city is required by law to make "every effort" to limit the number of people who know the employee's identity, and those who know the employee's identity will be advised to keep the information confidential. Employees who are suspected to have been exposed to the sick employee will be notified to protect their health. Workspaces will be disinfected after a suspected/confirmed case of COVID-19 according to CDC guidance.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html>

**Volunteering**

**Q: Can I volunteer for other duties to aid in response?**

**A:** The City encourages employees engaging in the support of our community in this time of need. Please note that time worked (including volunteer time) may not exceed 40 hours per week unless specifically approved by the City Manager or Finance Director. Please contact your supervisor or department head for prior approval if you are interested in performing a supporting volunteer role.

**Closure and Potential Facility Closure**

**Q: What will happen if the City Manager closes a facility to the public and non-essential employees are asked to stay home?**

**A:** All staff hired before the closure and scheduled during the closure will be paid their regular rate of pay for their normally scheduled work hours.

- Employees who are able to work remotely in their roles will be expected to continue to complete their work remotely.
- Essential employees will continue to work on site if they are healthy and the department director deems it necessary.
- Employees who are unable to work remotely will receive their regular rate of pay and are expected to be available to return to work in any capacity should city operations or needs dictate.

- Upon request, part time employees will have their time from February averaged to determine amount during the closure. The City retains the discretion to reassign your job duties.
- The City is currently in a hiring freeze. Position vacancies shall remain unfilled unless specifically approved by the City Manager for full-time positions or the Finance Director for part-time positions.

### Essential Positions

**Q: How do I know if my position is deemed an “essential” position?**

**A:** The department head will make the determination as to which employees are in essential positions or are not in essential positions. All employees need to be available to support city requirements if needed, or as approved by the Department of Health and Human Services Public Health Director. If you are unsure of your status, please contact your supervisor.

**Q: Can employees be assigned work duties to work a different job?**

**A:** Yes, department heads can direct employees to perform work outside of their normal job duties for which you are qualified for during this event. You will be expected to accept the assignment you are given to best support the needs of the city.

### Work-Related Travel and Public Contact

**Q: Can I travel for a meeting or training?**

**A:** Any non-essential (not required to maintain licensure, etc.) meetings or trainings, should be postponed until further notice, unless specifically approved by the department head. Training to maintain licensure should be conducted remotely.

**Q: What is the protocol for employees into homes to perform essential job duties?**

**A:** Please contact your department head or supervisor to ascertain the protocol for contact with the public.

### Benefits

**Q: What should I do if I am feeling anxious and overwhelmed?**

**A:** Please contact our Employee Assistant Provider, TRIAD over the phone at 877-679-1100. Online resources and webinars are available at [www.triadeap.com](http://www.triadeap.com)

Username: city

Password: gunnison

This is available 24/7/365 to all household members.

Another resource is the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline  
1-800-273-8255 <https://gunnisonhelp.com/>

**Q: The medical providers are overwhelmed in town, is there somewhere else I can go for prescription refills or other medical issues?**

**A:** Employees covered by the City’s medical benefit may access [Teledoc](#), which offers **FREE** 24/7/365 access to U.S. board-certified doctors through the convenience of phone or video consults.

**Q: What are the medical costs associated with COVID-19 testing?**

**A:** While the COVID-19 test is available through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at no cost, the U.S. Food & Drug Administration has now officially approved commercial test kits making them ready for use. Effective immediately, CEBT medical plan members will have cost share (deductible, copays, coinsurance) waived for COVID-19 testing during this time of concern.