



CITY OF HARRISONBURG OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER

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TO: All City Employees

FROM: Eric D. Campbell, City Manager 

SUBJECT: COVID-19 Employee Policies and Procedures

DATE: August 20, 2021

Due to the Delta variant, the CDC now recommends all individuals wear face coverings in public indoor settings in communities with substantial or high transmission. The City of Harrisonburg and Rockingham County are both classified as communities with substantial or high COVID-19 transmission. Therefore, in line with CDC recommendations and the Virginia Department of Labor and Industry requirements, the City of Harrisonburg will be re-instituting mandatory face covering requirements for all employees in indoors settings effective Monday, August 30th. The City is also establishing new COVID-19 emergency sick leave for vaccinated employees. Employees who have not yet obtained a COVID-19 vaccine are strongly encouraged to do so. With the Delta variant, this is more urgent than ever. Vaccination is the most important public health action to end the COVID-19 pandemic and the need for workplace mitigation measures such as wearing of face coverings. Changes to existing policies and procedures are in [blue](#).

Face Coverings

As of Monday, August 30th all employees, including vaccinated employees, are required to cover their mouth and nose with a face covering if they are in an indoor setting shared by others, including occupying vehicles with other people. 'Face covering' means an item made of two or more layers of washable, breathable fabric that fits snugly against the sides of the face without any gaps, completely covering the nose and mouth and fitting securely under the chin. Neck gaiters made of two or more layers of washable, breathable fabric, or folded to make two such layers are considered acceptable face coverings. Face coverings with valves are not acceptable. Employees unable to wear a face covering due to a medical condition must request an exemption by contacting the Department of Human Resources and must submit medical documentation. Employees who previously submitted an exemption to Human Resources do not need to resubmit unless the medical condition status has changed.

Employees who do not comply with the requirements outlined above are subject to disciplinary actions, as outlined in the City of Harrisonburg Safety Program.

Visitors to City of Harrisonburg facilities will also be recommended to wear face coverings.

Other COVID-19 Safety Protocols

All other Department of Labor and Industry COVID-19 safety protocols, such as physical distancing, enhanced cleaning, and health screenings, remain in effect.

COVID-19 Vaccination

Employees who have not yet obtained a COVID-19 vaccine are strongly encouraged to do so. With the Delta variant, this is more urgent than ever. Vaccination is the most important public health action to end the COVID-19 pandemic. Vaccines lower the risk of infection and spread, severe illness, hospitalization, and death. As of



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August 13, 98.17% of individuals who died of COVID-19 in Virginia were not fully vaccinated. 97.24% of all hospitalizations for COVID-19 in Virginia are people not fully vaccinated.

Vaccines are safe and effective and help protect against COVID-19 and variants, including Delta. The Central Shenandoah Health District is offering free COVID-19 vaccine clinics in the Harrisonburg/Rockingham area. To make an appointment, please visit <https://vaccineappointments.virginia.gov/> and search for nearby clinics using your zip code.

Returning to Work After Vaccination

An employee who receives the COVID-19 vaccine and experiences signs and symptoms consistent with the vaccine will be allowed to return to work if they are feeling well enough and do not have a fever above 99.9 degrees. Symptoms, such as fever, fatigue, headache, chills, and body aches, can occur following COVID-19 vaccination. Cough, shortness of breath, runny nose, sore throat, or loss of taste or smell are **not** consistent with post-vaccination symptoms, and instead may be symptoms of COVID-19 or another infection. Any employee who receives the vaccine experiences a fever that does not resolve within 2 days is encouraged to seek medical attention. Employees who experience side-effects which necessitate time away from work will be required to utilize their sick/vacation/PTO.

Teleworking and Alternative Work Schedules

Until otherwise communicated City departments may continue:

- Teleworking for employees;
- Staggered work shifts that allow employees to maintain physical distancing from other employees, other persons, and the general public;
- Delivering services remotely by phone, audio, video, mail, package delivery, curbside pickup or delivery, etc.

The City's Executive Leadership Team is currently developing a formal teleworking policy to provide procedural guidance to both employees and their supervisors on how departments may structure teleworking should a supervisor and an employee wish for it to permanently continue.

Meetings/On-Site Trainings

It is strongly encouraged for on-site meetings or trainings to be conducted via technology whenever possible rather than in-person. The City will continue to not accept reservations of any indoor City meeting spaces by outside groups.

Off-Site Training/Conferences

Departments may authorize domestic off-site training and conference attendance. International training or conferences are not permitted. **Unvaccinated** employees who attend an off-site training or conference and as a result must quarantine or isolate will be required to use their PTO or sick leave.

Social Gatherings at the Workplace



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Departments may hold social gatherings for employees (e.g. awards banquets). Such gatherings must be voluntary for employees to attend. If possible, these should be held outdoors. Department of Labor and Industry standards must be complied with during these events.

Do Not Report to Work if Sick

Employees experiencing symptoms consistent with COVID-19 should not report to work. Employees knowingly coming to work while ill has been connected to several instances of co-workers being exposed or possibly exposed to COVID-19. These exposures resulted in multiple employees being required to quarantine and several have become ill.

All employees should self-monitor for symptoms of COVID-19. A list of symptoms is available at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing>. Any employee who exhibits any symptoms of illness should not report to work and is encouraged to seek medical attention, while also reporting any absences to the appropriate supervisor.

Employees who develop symptoms during the workday should immediately notify their supervisor and will be required to leave work for the remainder of the workday. Any employee known to or suspected to be infected with COVID-19 will not be permitted to report to or remain at work.

Employees who are notified that they have been exposed to COVID-19 should also immediately notify their supervisor and may be required to leave work for the remainder of the workday. Any employee known to or suspected to have been exposed to COVID-19, within CDC guidelines of an exposure, will not be permitted to report to or remain at work.

Leave Benefits

Paid Time Off (PTO) or Sick Leave

The City of Harrisonburg provides either PTO or sick leave benefits to all full-time employees. These benefits are available for employees to use for numerous circumstances, including when experiencing personal illness or when exposed to contagious disease such that the employee's presence on duty would jeopardize the health of co-workers.

An employee who is experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 that are not attributable to any other existing non-contagious medical condition should not report to work after notifying their immediate supervisor in accordance with department regulations. Employees whose symptoms are consistent with COVID-19 are encouraged to seek medical attention if these symptoms persist for more than 24 hours.

An employee who completes a daily COVID-19 screening questionnaire and acknowledges they are exhibiting a symptom may be sent home for the remainder of their shift. An employee who is sent home due to symptoms of COVID-19 are encouraged to seek medical attention. These absences will be covered by the employee's accrued PTO or sick leave.



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Employees instructed by the City's emergency management team to quarantine or isolate will not be allowed to report to work. Employees in quarantine or isolation are required to use PTO or sick leave, unless it is determined that their case qualifies for worker's compensation.

Special Emergency Paid Leave

COVID-19 infections in fully vaccinated people (breakthrough infections) happen in only a small proportion of people who are fully vaccinated, even with the Delta variant. Moreover, when these infections occur among vaccinated people, they tend to be mild, reinforcing that vaccines are an effective and critical tool for bringing the pandemic under control. However, preliminary evidence suggests that fully vaccinated people who do become infected with the Delta variant can be infectious and can spread the virus to others.

Therefore, beginning Monday, August 30th, the City of Harrisonburg will provide up to fourteen days of special emergency paid sick leave to all vaccinated employees. Employees who are not yet fully vaccinated are not eligible for the special emergency paid sick leave. This special emergency paid sick leave is separate from paid sick leave or PTO. Any vaccinated employee who is exposed to persons known or suspected to be infected with COVID-19 and is determined to require a quarantine period and/or who is awaiting diagnosis or after they receive a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19 is eligible to receive special emergency paid sick leave.

Proof of vaccination must be presented to the Department of Human Resources should an employee have need to utilize emergency paid sick leave. A vaccinated employee who is determined to be able to telework or work in-person while in quarantine and declines will be required to use their PTO or sick leave. Once an employee has reached the end of their quarantine or isolation period, the emergency benefit would no longer apply. Should the employee be unable or unwilling to return to work, the employee would be required to use their PTO, sick, or vacation leave.

Personal Travel

Employees who travel domestically or internationally should notify their supervisor. Employees may be asked to self-quarantine upon return, depending on the destination and mode of travel. Employees who do not have the ability or authorization to telework during a quarantine resulting from voluntary travel will be required to utilize their vacation or PTO. For information on current CDC travel requirements, go to:
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/travel-during-covid19.html>

Employee Assistance Program

For those of you coping with the stress from the ongoing difficulties posed by the pandemic, our Employee Assistance Program is available. Visit anthemEAP.com (Login: City of Harrisonburg) or call 1-800-865-1044 for confidential help.