

LaPorte County COVID-19 Employee and Operations Policy

The Board of Commissioners continues to place the highest priority on the health, safety and wellbeing of the LaPorte County community AND its employees, while protecting the continuity of essential county functions. Above all else, however, we MUST keep health care up and running in our community.

Effective Wednesday, March 18, 2020 and extending for 30 days, LaPorte County's workplace policies are being enhanced for those employees under the Board of Commissioners' Employee Handbook, regardless of current length of employment or full/part-time status. These policies will be revisited regularly, and employees should continue to check with their supervisors for updates. These enhanced policies do not automatically apply to employees of 24/7 or emergency operations; those employees should consult their supervisor for further instructions.

Public Health Leave

Our primary goal is to keep operating as normal as possible for as long as possible. The public sector plays a critical role in the community. YOU play a critical role in the community. Employees who are **able and healthy** are expected at work as scheduled, with the following Exceptions:

- 1) Employees who have a current diagnosis of COVID-19 or who have been in ***close contact** with a person with symptomatic laboratory-confirmed COVID-19;
- 2) Employees who are under quarantine (including self-imposed quarantine), at the instruction of a healthcare provider or a local, State, or Federal official, in order to prevent the spread of COVID-19;
- 3) Employees who do not have a current diagnosis of COVID-19 but who develop signs or symptoms compatible with COVID-19 until such time as a diagnosis is confirmed or 4-5 days after compatible symptoms have ended unless directed otherwise by a healthcare provider or a local, State, or Federal official, in order to prevent the spread of COVID-19;
- 4) Employees who are living in the same household as, an intimate partner of, or caring for a person in a nonhealthcare setting who meet exceptions 1, 2, or 3;
- 5) Employees who are at increased risk for complications from COVID-19 due to a diagnosed health conditions and who are presently under the care of a physician for the diagnosed health condition whose job duties require ***close contact** but for whom temporary job modification is not possible;
- 6) Employees who are engaged in primary caregiving, because of the COVID-19-related closing of a school or other care facility or care program, for a child or other individual unable to provide self-care (if two or more caregivers living in the same home are county employees, only one caregiver is eligible for Public Health Leave per day);

Employees who meet Exceptions 1, 2, or 3 above will be granted ten (10) paid Public Health Leave days paid at 100% of their regular rate of pay. If after the Public Health Leave days are exhausted the employee still meets Exception 1, 2, or 3, the employee will receive supplemental wages at the rate of 75% of their regular rate of pay until such time as they no longer meet the Exception or this policy is altered, whichever comes first. Employees who meet Exceptions 4, 5, or 6 will receive 75% of their regular rate of pay until such time as they no longer meet the Exception or this policy is altered, whichever comes first.

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Employees who receive 75% of their regular rate of pay may supplement with available benefit time but will not be required to use available benefit time while on Public Health Leave. Employees who are eligible for Public Health Leave due to Exceptions 4, 5, or 6 are not required to take leave and are free to work as scheduled, assuming they are able and healthy and otherwise free of COVID-19 symptom or COVID-19 compatible symptoms. Intermittent leave is permissible. Additionally, if alternate work arrangements are approved by their supervisor (e.g. flex time or remote work), employees who meet Exceptions 4, 5, or 6 are eligible for their regular rate of pay for documented hours worked. Employees still in their first year of employment with LaPorte County who meet Exceptions 4, 5, or 6 will be granted five (5) Public Health Leave days to use as benefit days to supplement the 75% of their regular rate of pay they receive under this policy if they so choose. Any unused Public Health Leave days will expire at the employee's first year anniversary or discontinuance of this policy, whichever comes first.

Employees must have a **Public Health Leave Form** signed by their Department Head or Elected Official on file with Human Resources to receive any benefit under this policy. Employees who knowingly falsify eligibility may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination. LaPorte County is committed to pay continuation for a defined period of time (e.g., 30 days), with review and possible modification as conditions change. Should the employee on Public Health Leave have a change in status and no longer meet the eligibility of an exception, they should return to work as scheduled.

If an employee meets only Exception 6 listed above, and the school closure occurs when the employee already had scheduled the use of benefit time, the employee must use their benefit time as planned if they do not report to work. (e.g. If an employee had already planned to be off for spring break, and a school or care facility closure overlaps with already approved benefit time, the employee must use their benefit time as scheduled.)

Any employee currently receiving full or partial wage replacement due to

- a) a specifically defined qualifying events of the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 is not eligible for Public Health Leave until the qualifying event is no longer applicable or a set period of benefits is exhausted,
- b) receiving indemnity payments through workers compensation or
- c) receiving unemployment compensation from LaPorte County is not eligible for Public Health Leave.

Modifications to Normal Operations

While the primary goal is to keep operating as normal as possible for as long as possible, there may be situations in which modifications to department operations or service offerings must take place. Departments should immediately enact social distancing practices (separation of at least six feet) where possible. This may lead to limits on public interactions with your department. Please balance these considerations with the goal of ensuring continuity of operations.

Employees at increased risk for complications from COVID-19 due to diagnosed health conditions and whose job function requires ***close contact**, but who are otherwise able and healthy, may request

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temporary modifications to their job in coordination with their supervisor. This may include a temporary change in job location for front-line staff, modifications of work assignment or duties, or implementation of additional protective measures to reduce their exposure to others or chances of being infected. If job modifications are not possible, employee meets Exception 5.

If recommended social distancing measures are insufficient, departments may need to consider further reductions in physical proximity to the public, up to and including closing offices to the general public to reduce further spread of COVID-19. Departments should ensure that the public is informed of alternate methods of conducting business with the department and if no alternate methods exist, may need to consider temporary modifications of processes, procedures, rules, and deadlines. Departments may also need to consider alternate methods of conducting business due to a lack of available employees. To increase employee availability, departments may need to permit flexing work hours or permitting remote work where feasible and manageable.

In the event that neither recommended social distancing measures nor any additional enhanced measures taken by Departments are sufficient to reduce the spread of COVID-19, the Board of Commissioners may be forced to close county facilities to the public AND employees or take other extreme measures. In the unlikely event of this closure, all non-Essential Personnel will be placed on Public Health Leave as if they meet Exception 6. Essential/Safety Personnel who must report to work during these extreme conditions may be eligible for additional benefits yet to be determined.

LaPorte County reserves the right to decline compensation to those receiving assistance provided under Family First Coronavirus Response Act.

Employees are restricted from participating in any outside employment while receiving any paid leave under this policy.

This policy is subject to modification by the Board of Commissioners. Changes in policy will be communicated to employees as best as possible.

The Centers for Disease Control defines **close contact as a) being within approximately 6 feet of a COVID-19 case for a prolonged period of time; close contact can occur while caring for, living with, visiting, or sharing a healthcare waiting area or room with a COVID-19 case or b) having direct contact with infectious secretions of a COVID-19 case (e.g., being coughed on).*

EXAMINED AND APPROVED BY THE
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE
COUNTY OF LA PORTE, INDIANA
DATE Shale Matia 3-18-2020

[Signature]

ATTEST: _____

Auditor

LA PORTE COUNTY, INDIANA

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PUBLIC HEALTH LEAVE FORM

Employee Name _____ Department _____

I am requesting Public Health Leave for the following reason (check all that apply):

- I have a current diagnosis of COVID-19 or who have been in close contact with a person with symptomatic laboratory-confirmed COVID-19
- I am under quarantine (including self-imposed quarantine), at the instruction of a healthcare provider or a local, State, or Federal official, in order to prevent the spread of COVID-19
- I do not have a current diagnosis of COVID-19 but developed signs or symptoms compatible with COVID-19 and am waiting for laboratory-confirmed diagnosis or for 4-5 days to pass after compatible symptoms have ended and have not been directed otherwise by a healthcare provider or a local, State, or Federal official, in order to prevent the spread of COVID-19
- I am living in the same household as, an intimate partner of, or caring for a person in a nonhealthcare setting who meets one of the above listed reasons
- I am at increased risk for complications from COVID-19 due to a diagnosed health condition for which I am presently under the care of a physician, my job requires close contact with customers, and temporary job modifications are not possible
- I am engaged in primary caregiving, because of the COVID-19-related closing of a school or other care facility or care program, for a child or other individual unable to provide self-care (if two or more caregivers living in the same home are county employees, only one caregiver is eligible for Public Health Leave per day)

I attest that I meet one or more of the eligibility criteria outlined above and as explained in the **LaPorte County COVID-19 Employee and Operations Policy**. I acknowledge that providing false information may subject me to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

SIGNATURES

Employee _____ Date _____

Elected Official /Department Head _____ Date _____

ADDITIONAL PUBLIC HEALTH LEAVE SUPPLEMENTAL WAGES

In order to continue to receive my base weekly salary during the period of time for which I am eligible and being paid Public Health Leave supplemental wages of 75% of my regular pay, I hereby make the following election and authorize my Elected Official/Department Head to supplement my Public Health Leave benefit by applying my available paid time off days as follows:

COMP. TIME	_____	HRS
PAID SICK LEAVE	_____	HRS
VACATION	_____	HRS
FLOATING HOLIDAY	_____	HRS

Notes:

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