



Hamilton County

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M E M O R A N D U M

Date: March 12, 2020

To: BOCC Departmental Directors and Managers

From: *Jeff Aluotto*, County Administrator

Copies: Holly Christmann, Nick Crossley

Subject: COVID-19 Operational Planning

I would like to thank all of you for your efforts to ensure a healthy work environment by encouraging sick employees to stay home and promoting hand washing and clean facilities. As part of our preparations to prevent the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19), we will be implementing a remote work day exercise next week to work out any logistical issues in the event we need to operate with a reduced workforce. While risk to our general workforce remains low, we would like to take this opportunity to put our plan in action.

Telecommuting Exercise for All Departments under the BOCC

Next week, on a day of your choosing for your department, I am asking that you please run a Level 2 Advisory within your department (refer to Section 3.4 of Personnel Policy Manual for this exercise). Level 2 dictates that County Operations remain open. I will leave it to the discretion of Department Directors as to how many employees, regardless of employee status, will participate in the exercise. (Prior to this exercise, Human Resources will provide you with a copy of your essential employee list for your review/update.)

To access the County's Telecommuting Policy, please refer to Section 3.11 of the County's Personnel Policy Manual. For this exercise, we are not requiring telecommuting request forms to be utilized. In fact, remote access is not necessarily required for telecommuting for this exercise. If remote access is deemed necessary by management or if an employee has issues being connected, please email your IT Contact. Non-JFS employees can contact Todd Coriell at [\(513\) 946-6465](mailto:todd.coriell@hamilton-co.org) or [\(513\) 946-6457](mailto:Jason.Mcclure@hamilton-co.org). In order to meet capacity, please reserve remote access to essential employees working from home. Due to the volume of requests, responses may be delayed.

At this point, I am asking that you give consideration to which employees, regardless of essential or non-essential status, can work from home and who needs to be on premises in order to carry out the essential functions of the department. For context, and for this particular situation, one goal would be to reduce the population of employees in our buildings to otherwise prevent the spread of infectious disease.

Tracking hourly employees' work is an important part of this exercise. Additional guidance will be coming from Human Resources on this process.

During your telecommuting exercise, please identify any challenges or additional support needed to ensure continuity of operations. County Administration will follow up with each department to evaluate digital needs and resources.

Eliminating Travel

Ohio Governor Mike DeWine and Ohio Department of Health Director Amy Acton, M.D., MPH, recommended yesterday that large, indoor gatherings be canceled or postponed to limit potential exposure to COVID-19.

Department heads are also asked to assist in eliminating all non-essential travel – especially if that travel is to participate in large group gatherings and events. I ask that you seek to reschedule these meetings or hold teleconferences instead.

Doctors' Notes

At 2:00 pm on Wednesday, the Governor also announced that the first case of COVID-19 "community spread" had been identified in Stark County. While we still have not experienced a positive case of the virus in Hamilton County, we want to be proactive in how we manage this situation – including how we manage time off with employees. To that end, I am asking that until further notice, we not require an immediate doctor's note if employees call off sick due to respiratory illness. We will review this policy change intermittently and will adjust accordingly if modifications are needed.

Commissioners Set to Declare State of Emergency

Today, Hamilton County Commissioners are expected to declare a State of Emergency. This declaration simply allows the Board to access federal funds and put emergency procurement measures in place, if needed.

Emergency Scheduling

For clarity, the Commissioners' State of Emergency is different from an Administrative Emergency Declaration outlined in our policy manual. No change in operations will occur as a result of the Board's action.

In the event that County-wide operations under the Board need to be suspended and County offices are officially closed to the public and nonessential personnel, that notice will come from County Administration. In such an event, employees will be compensated in the following manner:

Employee Type	Reporting to Work?	Compensation
Exempt ESSENTIAL	Yes, regardless of weather or emergency conditions unless directed otherwise by management	Paid normal salary
Exempt NON-ESSENTIAL	No, do not report until next scheduled shift unless otherwise directed by management	Paid normal salary
Non-exempt ESSENTIAL	Yes, regardless of weather or emergency conditions unless directed otherwise by management	Paid for hours worked at regular rate and subject to overtime pay provisions as applicable
Non-exempt NON-ESSENTIAL	No, do not report until next scheduled shift unless otherwise directed by management	Paid for regularly scheduled shift
Bargaining Unit ESSENTIAL	Yes, regardless of weather or emergency conditions unless directed otherwise by management	Paid according to the applicable labor agreement
Bargaining Unit NON-ESSENTIAL	No, do not report until next scheduled shift unless otherwise directed by management	Paid for regularly scheduled shift
Employee on scheduled leave	N/A	Charged with leave time, regardless of declared emergency

Finally, we are working on several additional personnel policy changes that may need to be implemented as the community responds to this situation. We will provide information on those changes as soon as possible. In order to ensure there is clarity to this exercise, we will be holding a conference call at 9:00 am tomorrow (3/13), for Department Heads under the BOCC, to answer any questions or provide further instruction. Call-in information will be provided to department heads via an electronic meeting invite. In the meantime, please let me know if you have any concerns or suggestions on how we, as an organization, can best navigate this situation.