



COVID-19
Policies & Guidelines
Updated March 29, 2021

TRAVEL

1. Can my department require that I provide information about my recent travel to countries considered to be high-risk for exposure to the coronavirus or ask for medical clearance upon my return from traveling?

Employers can request but not demand that you inform them if you are planning or have traveled to countries considered by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to be high-risk areas for exposure to the COVID-19.

Additionally, obtaining a medical clearance is currently not part of the CDC guidelines and therefore not required by the County. However, the County reserves the right to request that you telecommute (if possible) as an added precaution if the CDC recommends a quarantine after your travel. Absent a request to telecommute, you may return to work after your travel as long as you are not experiencing symptoms.

Finally, CDC travel guidance does differentiate between essential and non-essential travel. If your travel is essential, such as for work, any quarantine guidance will not apply.

Note: Review your local, state and applicable international travel restrictions before traveling as these may be stricter than the guidance provided by the CDC.

2. Can my department restrict my personal travel to all locations under a CDC travel advisory?

No. An employer cannot restrict personal travel. However, the use of vacation still requires the approval of your department head.

3. Can I refuse to travel on County business, if required to perform my job duties?

Under the Federal OSHA, you can only refuse to work when a realistic threat is present. The County's Public Health Department website has updates on their local COVID-19 status, or visit the [CDC](#) website for additional travel guidance. Nonetheless, if you have concerns regarding traveling for business and fear of catching COVID-19, try to work out an amicable resolution with your department.



REPORTING TO WORK

4. Do I have to comply with the County's screening protocols before entering a County building?

Yes. The County possesses the authority to screen employees for COVID-19 symptoms before entering a County worksite or facility. You must comply with all screening protocols before entering a County worksite.

The County has implemented both symptom and temperature screenings at all County facilities. For your safety, the screening process uses a non-contact thermometer and requires the use of face coverings while the screening process takes place.

Employees that fail the screening process will be sent home. Please refer to question 8 below for additional guidance.

5. If I call in sick, can my department ask me questions regarding my symptoms?

Yes, but the inquiry must be limited. Although your department cannot ask you regarding your medical diagnosis, they can ask you if you have symptoms similar to those of COVID-19. This information is necessary to ensure the County maintains a safe and healthy working environment for our employees.

6. Can my department ask me to leave work and go home if I am showing symptoms of a communicable illness?

Yes, your department may ask you to go home if you are showing signs of a communicable disease. Given the current heightened concerns regarding COVID-19 and due to County's obligation under the California Occupational Safety and Health Act ("Cal-OSHA") to maintain safe and healthy work conditions for employees, you may be sent home.

7. What if I believe it is just a cold or allergies?

An employer cannot be reasonably expected to medically distinguish the difference between symptoms of allergies, common cold, flu or other non-serious conditions from COVID-19. It is the County's responsibility under Cal-OSHA to provide safe and healthy work conditions. To this end, the County must in a consistent manner, apply the same standard to all employees who are symptomatic and you may be sent home.

8. If I am sent home, what is my pay status after being sent home?

You may use your accruals or your new Supplemental Paid Sick Leave-SB95. The County Executive Officer is directing Department Heads to allow the use of any accruals and in any order without the need to follow any prerequisites (such as pre-approval for the use of vacation) but only to cover any COVID-19 related leaves. However, this does not include



waiving County Ordinance 3.08.230 (B) regarding the use of vacation during your initial probationary period.

Please review the updated COVID Leave Guide available online for more details on the Supplemental Paid Sick Leave-SB95. Should you not have accrued leave balances to use or should deplete them while you are out sick, please contact Human Resources.

Beginning January 1, 2021, departments may begin to enforce their attendance policies for non-COVID-19 related leaves.

9. Can I be asked to perform duties outside my regular assignment during an emergency?

All County employees by the nature of their employment are classified as disaster service workers. You may be called upon to perform duties other than your regular assignments to aid County emergency efforts.

10. Can I refuse to assist in the disinfecting of my work area as recommended by the CDC?

If you are being provided with the appropriate equipment and instructions and doing such cleaning has no known increase risk, your department has the right to request that the work be done.

11. What if I want to take personal preventative measures at work to feel safer?

Your department cannot prevent you from taking other personal preventive measures as long as they do not disrupt operations or create safety hazards. However, we recommend that before considering the additional measures to take, you first review the recommendations by the CDC including:

- Washing your hands frequently and thoroughly (including the top, bottom, between fingers and thumbs, with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Covering your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing (cough or sneeze into your elbow if a tissue is not available – never into your hands).
- Not touching your face.
- Practicing good hygiene such as disinfecting common surfaces like doorknobs, tables, desks, and smartphones regularly.

12. What if I have a medical condition or disability that requires that I take additional precautions at work?

The County will review all requests for a reasonable accommodation through our usual ADA process. Contact Human Resources for additional guidance or complete the Accommodation



Request Form found on our website.

13. Do I have to wear a face covering while at work?

As per updated California Department of Public Health (CDPH) guidance, you must wear a face covering at all times during your workday when indoors. There is an exception for employees that are working in an office or in a room alone. However, this exception does not apply to staff that is working in a cubicle area, even if there is a divider between co-workers.

Additional exceptions include employees that are in a car alone, eating or drinking (while maintaining 6 feet distancing from others), and employees that are outdoors (maintaining at least 6 feet distancing from others).

The County has face coverings available for all employees upon request through your department and/or supervisor. Your face covering must be clean and undamaged. Your supervisor may ask you to replace your face covering if it does not meet these requirements. If this happens, your supervisor must provide you a new face covering to use.

14. Do I have to wear a face covering in hallways?

Yes, you must wear a face covering in a hallway as it is not certain someone can maintain a minimum of 6 feet separation with other individuals at all times.

15. What if I have a disability that prevents me from using a face covering?

The County will evaluate all situations where a medical or mental health condition or disability prevents you from wearing a face covering. You may be required to submit information from your health care provider to determine alternatives to a face covering. Contact Human Resources for additional guidance or complete the Accommodation Request Form found on our website.

16. How do I report COVID-19 exposures and possible hazards at the workplace?

If you believe a co-worker is experiencing symptoms, makes statements that they have been exposed or you believe they are exposing you to COVID-19, notify your supervisor. We ask that you do so discretely in an effort not to invade the privacy of your co-worker.

If you have specific recommendations in reducing COVID-19 hazards, please submit them in writing to your supervisor for review and consideration.

Your supervisor will evaluate the situation and determine the appropriate action based on County policies and CDC guidelines.

17. Does the County's health plan cover COVID-19 testing?

Yes, your Blue Shield medical plan offers regular COVID-19 testing. Please review your



health plan for applicable costs sharing details. When visiting a test provider, provide them with your Blue Shield insurance card for coverage confirmation.

18. Do I have to notify the County if I have been in close contact with a COVID-19 positive individual?

Yes, but only if it meets the definition of close contact. To assist you in determining if you are a close contact, the CDC has provided the following guidance:

An individual is considered to be in close contact of a COVID positive person if, forty-eight (48) hours before the symptoms began or while this same individual was under an isolation order, you:

- 1. Were within six (6) feet of a COVID-19 Positive Person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period: or*
- 2. Had unprotected contact with the body fluids and/or secretions (including but not limited to being coughed on or sneezed on, sharing utensils, or drinking out of the same container) of a COVID-19 Positive Person.*

If you meet the definition of close contact, you may be under self-quarantine. Please review the County's Local Health Order for exemptions. Exceptions may exist for vaccinated individuals (within last three (3) months) and/or individuals that have already tested positive (within last three (3) months).

Your department may approve for you to telecommute for the length of your self-quarantine period. If telecommute is not an option, review the COVID-19 Leave Guide for instructions on requesting time off to self-quarantine.

Please review the Return to Work section in this document for the County's policy on returning to the worksite after your self-quarantine ends.

19. Do I have to notify the County if I am seeking a COVID-19 test?

Yes. It is the County's policy that employees that are seeking a COVID-19 test remain off the worksite. This applies even if the test is part of any pre-surgery requirement or other medical procedure. You may telecommute if approved by your department.

If telecommute is not available, review the COVID-19 Leave Guide for instructions on requesting time off for COVID-19 testing.

NOTE: If your department requires that you test as part of your job (i.e. to visit clients in a hospital), you may continue to work pending COVID-19 test results.

20. I tested positive for COVID-19? What do I do? Can I telecommute?



You must notify your department that you tested positive for COVID-19. Notify your department within a reasonable time after receiving the diagnosis. Your department will notify the County's COVID Response Team. Please review the section below for additional details on the County's next steps, including the notice you will receive from Human Resources with important information on your rights.

You will not be able to telecommute if you have tested positive. This is to ensure your prompt recovery. Review the COVID-19 Leave Guide for instructions on requesting time off after testing positive.

For guidance on returning to work, review the Return to Work section found in this document.

RESPONDING TO COVID-19 DIAGNOSIS

21. What is the County's process for responding to an employee testing positive for COVID-19?

When the County receives a notification that an employee has tested positive for COVID-19, Public Health will reach out to the employee and complete a "contact" form. The "contact" form will have specific questions to determine if any co-workers were potentially exposed (as defined below) to COVID-19. Information gathered includes the day and time the employee was last at a County building, the date of the positive test and the first date the employee had symptoms (if applicable).

The employee that tested positive for COVID-19 will receive a notice from Human Resources with information on their rights. This will include guidance on any workers compensation benefits that may apply if the COVID-19 diagnosis is determined to be work related.

An employee is considered to be potentially exposed if, within 48 hours before the symptoms began, you:

- a. Were within six (6) feet of a COVID positive person for a cumulative total of fifteen (15) minutes; or*
- b. Had unprotected contact with the body fluids and/or secretions (including but not limited to being coughed on or sneezed on, sharing utensils, or drinking out of the same container) of a COVID positive person.*

If you are following social distancing guidelines and using your face coverings as required, potential exposures will be minimal at your worksite.

As a final step, the County will sanitize the work areas where the COVID-19 positive employee worked. It may be necessary that the building be closed to allow for the sanitation to take place. If there is a need to close your building, you will be sent home to telecommute and/or be sent home with pay for the remainder of the day.



22. How will I know if I have been potentially exposed?

Upon completing the contact form, Public Health will determine the potential exposures. Within one (1) business day, Human Resources, via your department, will send an exposure notice. The notice will include self-quarantine guidance and any benefits that may be available under federal, state and local laws.

Beginning in December 2020, workplace exposures will be given the option to seek COVID-19 testing during working hours. You may do so by coordinating the time off with your supervisor.

If you do not receive a notice from Human Resources, you should continue to report to work as usual.

23. What instructions will I receive if I have been determined to be “potentially exposed” by Public Health?

The notice from Human Resources will include instructions on testing options (during working hours), self-monitoring guidance and any applicable return to work guidance. Every notice is different, as the self-monitor dates will vary depending on the last date you had close contact with the COVID-19 positive employee.

We recommend that you carefully review the notice you will receive from Human Resources, as it will include important information on your options. As a reminder, the County will either allow you to telecommute after a workplace exposure or if telecommute is not available, they will grant you a paid leave of absence.

24. What if I am not considered a potential exposure but still want to get tested for COVID-19?

The County cannot prevent you from seeking a COVID-19 test. However, the County requires that employees seeking a diagnosis remain off the worksite. You may telecommute if that is available. If telecommute is not available, review the COVID-19 Leave Guide for instructions on requesting time off for COVID-19 testing.

Review the Return to Work section (below) for guidance on returning to the worksite after seeking COVID-19 testing.

25. How will I know if my building/department was sanitized?

To ensure that all employees receive notice, the cleaning company will place a flyer at the building/department entrance. The notice will most likely read “Pathogen Disinfection”. The County has contracted with MYLO Corporate Maintenance and Janitorial Services for disinfecting services. Their scope of work includes applying an appropriate EPA registered COVID19 disinfecting product and procedure for all touchpoints at the facility. Such work is performed according to CDC standards.



The disinfecting process will occur after all employees have exited the building. In addition, since the disinfecting usually occurs after regular business hours, your department may ask you to return to the workplace as early as the next morning.

26. What other sanitation measures has the County taken?

In addition to the above sanitation process, the County has identified regularly touched surfaces (i.e. doors, elevators, staircases) and has staff assigned to clean and disinfect them. Such cleaning occurs throughout the day on regular scheduled workdays.

Hand sanitizers have been placed throughout the County buildings and within individual departments. If your department does not have these resources available, please report this to your supervisor.

27. I received a notice regarding an outbreak at my department/division? What does this mean?

COVID-19 Emergency Temporary Standards (ETS) CCR Title 8, Division 1, Chapter 4 3205.1 require that the County track COVID-19 positive cases by department/division. An outbreak is defined as three (3) or more COVID-19 positive cases within 14 days. COVID-19 positive cases where the employee has been telecommuting and not present at your department/division do not count towards an outbreak.

Upon identifying an outbreak, the County will notify your department and begin to implement mandatory testing for all employees that were physically at that department/division during the last 14 days. A second test will be conducted a week after.

The County will facilitate a rapid test for your convenience during working hours. The test is mandatory, not optional.

RETURN TO WORK GUIDANCE

28. I was sent home due to symptoms. When can I return to work? Will I be asked for a doctor's note?

If you have not been diagnosed with COVID-19, you may return to work once you are asymptomatic without the need for a doctor's note. If you wish to return to work while you are still symptomatic, you must seek medical certification from your treating physician noting that the symptoms are non-communicable.

As an example, if you have a cough, you may return to work without a doctor's note when you are no longer coughing. However, if you wish to come back and still have a cough, you may do so but after being cleared by a treating physician that your symptoms are non-communicable.

If you are seeking COVID-19 testing or you have tested positive for COVID-19, please refer to questions below for return to work guidance.



29. My COVID-19 test came back negative. When can I return to work?

If you are not under self-quarantine or experiencing any symptoms, you may return to work upon submitting confirmation that you tested negative.

30. An individual that resides with me has tested positive for COVID-19. When can I return to the worksite?

It is the County's policy that employees on self-quarantine due to a household exposure be off the worksite for the entire length of their self-quarantine period in accordance with the public health order applicable to Imperial County. You may return to work upon notifying your department that your quarantine has ended. You will not need a release from a doctor.

We ask that you review the 2021 Local Health Order for Self-quarantine guidance, as there may be an exception for vaccinated individuals (within last three (3) months) or those that have tested positive (within last three (3) months).

31. I have been in close contact with an individual outside my residence that tested positive for COVID-19. When can I return to the worksite?

Based on guidance from the County's Medical Officer, the County will require that you remain off the worksite for the entire length of your self-quarantine period in accordance with our local health order. You may return to work upon notifying your department that your quarantine has ended. You will not need a release from a doctor.

We ask that you review the 2021 Local Health Order for Self-quarantine guidance, as there may be an exception for vaccinated individuals (within last three (3) months) or those that have tested positive (within last three (3) months).

32. I tested positive for COVID-19. When can I return to work?

In order to return to work, you will need a doctor's release and sign a Return to Work acknowledgement. The County does not require that you test negative before returning to work. As a reminder, self-isolation orders are subject to change by Public Health in accordance to CDC guidelines. The County will adapt to these changes and will reflect them in the Return to Work acknowledgement.

You may submit a release from a provider in Mexico. However, the County will also require that you obtain a release from a U.S. provider. This is at no cost to you.

If you are not under the care of a doctor, the County will arrange for you to receive a release from the County's medical provider. This is at no cost to you.