

COVID-19 FAQs for Employees

August 5, 2021

Thank you for reviewing the latest guidance and information on COVID-19.

General Reminder

Placer County is committed to maintaining a respectful, productive, inclusive, and equitable workplace. Therefore, all employees are expected to act with fairness, civility, integrity and to treat all coworkers and customers equitably. As we continue to manage and mitigate the spread of COVID-19 within the workplace while serving the public, these expectations and values should be our guiding principles.

REGULATIONS & GUIDANCE

The County continues to evaluate onsite department operations to ensure they are in alignment with Occupational Safety and Health (Cal/OSHA) regulations, as well as Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and California Department of Public Health (CDPH) guidance. In addition to risk assessment and site-specific protection plans, the County continues to take the following precautions:

- Training employees to limit the spread of COVID-19, self-screen for symptoms, and stay home when ill.
- Require a face covering to be worn as outlined in the [When are face coverings required to be worn?](#) section below.
- Individual control measures, including frequent handwashing, staying home when sick and seeking testing when exposed to a COVID-19 positive individual.
- Regular cleaning and disinfection of high-touch areas.

SUPPLIES

Departments continually review which supplies are appropriate to maintain a safe and healthy work environment. Supplies may include soap, gloves, cleaning supplies, hand sanitizer, masks/respirators, and disinfecting wipes. Facilities Management continues to evaluate the County's supply levels to ensure safe onsite operations.

TRAINING

Employee training to prevent COVID-19 is available through [Placer Learns](#). Training includes topics such as:

- Preventing the spread of COVID-19
- Self-screening, including temperature and/or symptom checks using [CDC guidelines](#)
- Staying home when sick
- Identifying symptoms that may require medical treatment
- Frequent handwashing (or using hand sanitizer when unable to wash hands)
- When physical distancing is appropriate, both at work and during non-work time

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- When a face covering must be worn, instruction on the proper use, and how to request a face covering
- Training resources for personal protective equipment (PPE) and how to request PPE, including N95 respirators
- How to access COVID-19 testing and vaccinations
- Resources for leave benefits

COUNTY FACILITIES

The County has increased its custodial services, particularly in high-volume areas. All employees are responsible for regularly cleaning their individual work areas and may be assigned to assist with disinfecting common surface areas. In addition, durable stickers, signage, visual aids, and/or plexiglass shields may be requested by management for counter operations, lobbies, hallways, etc.

PREVENTING THE SPREAD OF COVID-19

What are common ways to become infected with COVID-19?

A person generally needs to be in close contact with someone with COVID-19 to get infected. Close contact includes scenarios like living with or caring for a person with confirmed COVID-19, being within six feet of a person with confirmed COVID-19 for a cumulative 15 minutes or more in a 24-hour period, or if someone with COVID-19 coughs on, kisses, shares utensils, or whose bodily fluids has direct contact with another person.

What are known symptoms of COVID-19?

People with COVID-19 have had a wide range of symptoms reported – ranging from mild symptoms to severe illness. Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. People with these symptoms may have COVID-19:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

This list does not include all possible symptoms. Employees can reference the [CDC website](#) for any updates to the list.

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What can be done to protect yourself and others?

CDC and CDPH continually update their guidance regarding steps that can be taken to protect yourself and others. Employees are encouraged to stay informed regarding the latest guidance, as they are updated frequently.

- [CDC guidance for fully vaccinated people](#)
- [CDC guidance for unvaccinated people](#)

[Learn more](#) about how vaccines work, what to expect after vaccination, and what is safe to do following full vaccination. Employees may [request](#) COVID-19 paid sick leave (CPSL) to take time to receive a vaccine.

Regardless of a person's vaccination status, the below precautions help protect employees and others:

1. Stay at home when sick.
2. Screen yourself for COVID-19 symptoms every day. Do not attempt to enter the workplace if any of the following are present:
 - a. Symptoms of COVID-19
 - b. Fever equal to or higher than 100.4°F
 - c. Are under evaluation for COVID-19 (for example, waiting for the results of a viral test to confirm infection)
 - d. Have been diagnosed with or tested positive for COVID-19 and not yet completed the 10-day quarantine period when not exhibiting symptoms. If you develop symptoms, you should not report to work until:
 - i. At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared; AND,
 - ii. COVID-19 symptoms have improved; AND,
 - iii. At least 24 hours have passed since a fever of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or higher has resolved without the use of fever-reducing medications.
 - iv. If not tested, you should get tested for COVID-19.
3. Frequently wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
4. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
5. Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
6. Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.
7. Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in trash.
8. Wear a mask or face covering as required. Further details about settings where a mask or face covering is required is outlined below.

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In addition to self-monitoring, Placer County may pre-screen employees by measuring temperature and assessing symptoms prior to them entering the facility and/or at the start of their shift (as determined by Department Head).

When are face coverings required to be worn?

On June 24, 2021, CDPH issued updated [Guidance for the Use of Face Coverings – Effective June 15, 2021](#). This guidance states that a face covering is required for everyone, regardless of their vaccination status in the following settings:

- On public transit and in transportation hubs
- Indoors in K12 schools, childcare, and other youth settings
- Healthcare settings
- State and local correction facilities and detention centers
- Homeless shelters, emergency shelters and cooling centers

Cal/OSHA has updated the [COVID-19 Emergency Temporary Standards](#) to allow for fully vaccinated employees to no longer wear a face covering except in workplace settings outlined above by CDPH and during outbreak situations. In order for Placer County to implement these provisions, all fully vaccinated employees who wish to be exempt from wearing a face covering may voluntarily complete and submit the [COVID-19 Record of Vaccination Status Voluntary Self-Attestation form](#) to Human Resources.

Cal/OSHA continues to require all employees who are not fully vaccinated, or who choose not to complete the self-attestation, to continue to wear a face covering when indoors or in vehicles, with the following exceptions:

- When an employee is alone in a room or vehicle
- While eating or drinking at the workplace, provided employees are at least six feet apart
- Workers who are required to wear respiratory protection
- Specific tasks which cannot feasibly be performed with a face covering. This exception is limited to the time period in which such tasks are actually being performed
- Employees unable to wear a face covering due to medical reasons should work with their supervisor and contact [Human Resources](#).

What is a face covering?

Cal/OSHA defines a face covering as a surgical mask, a medical procedure mask, a respirator worn voluntarily, or a tightly woven fabric or non-woven material of at least two layers. A face covering has no visible holes or openings and must cover the nose and mouth. A face covering does not include a scarf, ski mask, balaclava, bandana, turtleneck, collar, or single layer of fabric.

A face covering that no longer covers your nose or mouth; has stretched out or damaged ties or straps; cannot remain securely attached to your face; has holes or tears in the fabric; and/or obstructs your vision is not an effective face covering.

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Employees who are not fully vaccinated may request respirators (N95) for voluntary use at no cost and without fear of retaliation.

How should I care for a face covering?

Disposable face coverings, such as a surgical or medical procedure masks, should be disposed of after every use.

Cloth face coverings should be washed whenever they get dirty or at least daily. Have a bag or bin to keep cloth face covering in until they can be laundered using laundry detergent and the appropriate settings according to the fabric label. If you must re-wear your cloth face covering before washing, put the face covering back on with the same side facing out and wash your hands immediately after putting it back on and avoid touching your face.

How do face coverings work to prevent the spread of COVID-19?

Face coverings are a simple barrier to help prevent respiratory droplets from reaching others. Studies show that face coverings reduce the spray of droplets when worn over the nose and mouth. Face coverings also offers some protection to the wearer. How well it protects you from breathing in COVID-19 likely depends on the fabrics used and how the face covering is made. Face coverings are not a substitute for avoiding close contact with someone who is sick, washing hands and staying home when sick, but they may be helpful when combined with these primary interventions.

What is physical distancing?

Physical distancing is a community mitigation measure used to help slow the spread of the virus. There are specific situations in which physical distancing may be required in the workplace.

What can I do if I am feeling anxious about COVID-19?

Get accurate information from the [CDC website](#) and the [County's COVID-19 webpage](#).

You may also contact Managed Health Network to utilize Employee Assistance Program benefits, including financial and legal services. Managed Health Network is available by calling (800) 242-6220 or via their [website](#) (registration code: placercounty).

EMPLOYEE CONCERNS

What should I do if I am at high risk?

Employees are expected to be available to report to the worksite as scheduled. In support of this expectation, older adults and employees of any age who have serious underlying medical conditions, as identified by the [CDC](#) and at higher risk of COVID-19 complications, may request a reasonable accommodation to support their continued ability to work.

Employees should work with their supervisor to address any concerns. For leave options that may apply, see [Employee Leaves](#).

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Who should quarantine for potential COVID-19 exposure?

Employees who are not fully vaccinated or who do not have a completed [COVID-19 Record of Vaccination Status Voluntary Self-Attestation form](#) on record with Human Resources and have been in close contact with an individual or member of your household who has been diagnosed with or tested positive for COVID-19 or who exhibited symptoms associated with COVID-19 following a close contact exposure to a COVID-19 positive individual, should stay at home, or in a comparable setting, and practice physical distancing for 10 days after the last contact with the positive individual.

Employees who are fully vaccinated and have a completed [COVID-19 Record of Vaccination Status Voluntary Self-Attestation form](#) on record with Human Resources should stay at home and self-isolate if they develop symptoms associated with COVID-19 following a close contact exposure to an individual or member of your household who has been diagnosed with or tested positive for COVID-19 or who exhibited symptoms associated with COVID-19 following a close contact exposure to a COVID-19 positive individual.

Close contact is defined as being within 6 feet of a person who has been diagnosed with or tested positive for COVID-19 for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or greater in a 24-hour period.

What should I do if I have symptoms?

Regardless of an employee's vaccination status, those who have symptoms associated with COVID-19 are to adhere to the following:

- If symptoms develop prior to arriving at work, employees are to stay home and notify their supervisor.
- If symptoms develop during an employee's shift, they should immediately separate themselves from other employees, customers, and visitors, notify their supervisor, and go home. If symptoms develop outside of work, employees should notify their supervisor and stay home.
- Consider seeking advice from a health care provider and/or get tested for COVID-19.
- Employees who have COVID-19 symptoms and are directed to care for themselves at home, may discontinue isolation under the following conditions:
 - At least 10 days have passed since symptom first appeared; AND,
 - COVID-19 symptoms have improved; AND,
 - At least 24 hours have passed since a fever of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or higher has resolved without the use of fever-reducing medications.
- If diagnosed with or test positive for COVID-19 and never develop symptoms, employees may discontinue isolation and other precautions 10 days after the date of their first positive test.

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EMPLOYEE LEAVES

What is COVID-19 Paid Sick Leave (CPSL) and how may it be used?

[Pursuant to Senate Bill 95](#), full-time employees may be eligible for up to 80 hours of time off (pro-rated for part-time employees) for COVID-19 related reasons between March 29, 2021 and September 30, 2021.

Employees must certify that they meet the COVID-19 criteria by submitting the [CPSL request form](#) to Human Resources for determining eligibility and approval, prior to receiving any of the COVID-19 benefits. CPSL may be utilized if the employee is unable to work or telecommute because of the following criteria:

- Employee is subject to a Federal, State, or local quarantine or isolation order related to COVID-19.
- Employee has been advised by a health care provider to self-quarantine due to concerns related to COVID-19.
- Employee is attending an appointment to receive a vaccine for protection against contracting COVID-19.
- Employee is experiencing symptoms related to a COVID-19 vaccine that prevents them from being able to work or telecommute.
- Employee is experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 (e.g., fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, and/or diarrhea) and seeking a medical diagnosis.
- Employee is caring for a qualifying family member (child, parent, spouse or registered domestic partner, grandparent, grandchild, or sibling) who is subject to a Federal, State, or local quarantine or isolation order related to COVID-19 or been advised by a health care provider to self-quarantine due to concerns related to COVID-19.
- Employee is caring for their child whose school or place of care is closed after concern that a person who had been present on the school or daycare premises on or after January 1, 2021 was exposed to, or had contracted, COVID-19. This does not include caring for a child whose school or daycare was closed before January 1, 2021. If the school or daycare was closed on or after January 1, 2021, it must have been due to a closure, or partial closure, making the care unavailable due to COVID-19 on the premises.
- Employee has been exposed to a positive COVID-19 case at work and excluded from the workplace pursuant to the Cal/OSHA Emergency Temporary Standards (3205 (C)(10) "COVID-19 Regulations").

Unused CPSL will not be eligible for reimbursement upon expiration, termination, resignation, retirement, or other separation from employment.

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Employees requesting compensation for any unpaid time off between January 1, 2021 and March 28, 2021 due to one of the qualifying reasons noted above may complete and submit the [Employee Request for Retroactive 2021 COVID-19 Paid Sick Leave Form](#). The employee can request payment for that leave only if the time off was not paid (i.e., not paid through use of accrued leave such as sick leave, vacation, CTO, floating holiday, etc.). If an employee utilized accrued leave balances during this time period, CPSL will not be applied retroactively.

What if I cannot work due to experiencing symptoms associated with COVID-19, being diagnosed with COVID-19, or have been in close contact with a COVID-19 positive individual or a member of my household and have not voluntarily completed and submitted the COVID-19 Record of Vaccination Status Voluntary Self-Attestation form to Human Resources? How do I receive pay?

If an employee is unable to work or telecommute due to experiencing symptoms associated with COVID-19, being diagnosed with COVID-19, or have been in close contact with a COVID-19 positive individual or a member of their household and have not voluntarily completed and submitted the [COVID-19 Record of Vaccination Status Voluntary Self-Attestation](#) form to Human Resources, they will utilize available accrued leave balances such as CPSL (as described above), sick leave, vacation, floating holiday, compensatory time earned (CTE), and management leave. If available leave balances are exhausted, unpaid hours (UPH) may be applied. Employees may also be eligible for protected leave of absence under the FMLA/CFRA and wage replacement such as State Disability Insurance, depending on their labor group. If an employee has questions, they should discuss the matter with their supervisor and/or contact [Human Resources](#).

What if I need to take time off work to care for an ill qualifying family member? How do I receive pay?

Employees requesting time off work to care for a qualifying family member who has been diagnosed with COVID-19 will utilize available accrued leave balances such as sick leave, vacation, floating holiday, compensatory time earned (CTE), and management leave or may utilize CPSL (as described above). If available leave balances are exhausted, unpaid hours (UPH) may be applied. Employees may also be eligible for protected leave for a leave of absence from work under the FMLA/CFRA to care for a qualifying family member if the family member has contracted COVID-19 and is considered to have a serious health condition. In addition to utilizing accrued leave balances, wage replacement such as Paid Family Leave administered by the State of California may be available depending on the employee's labor group.

What other benefit programs may I be eligible to utilize?

Disability Insurance - Sick or Quarantined (PPEO employees)

If an employee is unable to work due to having or being exposed to COVID-19 (certified by a medical professional), they can file a Disability Insurance (DI) claim. DI provides short-term benefit payments to eligible workers who have a full or partial loss of wages due to a non-work-related illness, injury, or pregnancy.

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Paid Family Leave - Caregiving (PPEO employees)

If an employee is unable to work because they are caring for an ill or quarantined family member with COVID-19 (certified by a medical professional), they can file a Paid Family Leave (PFL) claim. PFL provides up to eight weeks of benefit payments to eligible workers who have a full or partial loss of wages because they need time off work to care for a seriously ill family member or to bond with a new child.

Unemployment - Reduced Work Hours

If an employee's hours have been reduced due to COVID-19 related reasons, they can file an Unemployment Insurance (UI) claim. UI provides partial wage replacement benefit payments.

If employees have questions, they should contact [Human Resources](#).

TELECOMMUTE

How do I request a telecommute assignment?

Telecommuting is a business decision and a management tool that offers an alternate workplace environment that may benefit the County and its employees. Determining whether a telecommute assignment meets the business and service needs of the County, Department, and customers is left to the sole discretion of County management. Telecommuting is not an employee right, entitlement, or negotiated benefit. It may or may not be a viable option for a County department, County employee, or job classification. Agreements, resources, and training materials can be found on MyPlacer's [Telecommuting site](#).

What if I am having technical issues with telecommuting?

Refer to MyPlacer's [Telecommuting site](#) for technical assistance. Please contact your department's IT Liaison or the IT Service Desk at (530) 889-4357 if you are unable to connect remotely to the County's network.

What are the top nine things I need to know about telecommuting?

1. Telecommuting allows you to work from a remote site other than your primary work location. It does not change your employment status or number of hours worked.
2. You are expected to commit your concentration on work assignments to the same extent as when working in the office.
3. You and your supervisor should regularly document the specific work assignments and expected delivery dates. Unless prior alternate arrangements are made, due dates will be honored.
4. You should maintain productivity and support efforts to measure and monitor your performance.
5. You must be available by telephone and email during your scheduled work hours. If not immediately answered, calls forwarded from your primary work location must reach a professional voicemail message.

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6. You must be able to physically report to your primary work location if directed to do so.
7. You must obtain pre-approval to use accrued leaves, as appropriate, to attend to personal matters during telecommute hours, other than during rest and meal breaks.
8. Telecommuting is not intended to be a substitute for childcare or elder care.
9. You must treat the telecommute location as an extension of the office, including a safe and ergonomic workstation.

What steps should be taken by an employee working remotely with concerns about ergonomics?

- Test various work surfaces and chairs available at home.
- Complete "[Ergonomics - A Training Guide for Healthy Office Workers](#)" training.
- Discuss concerns with your supervisor to brainstorm alternatives.

Contact Theresa Lannigan, Management Analyst in Human Resources, at (530) 886-2617 or tlannigan@placer.ca.gov.

TIME REPORTING

How should I report time related to COVID-19 activities?

Employees should record time worked, whether on site or telecommuting, according to their department's normal timekeeping guidance. If working on activities related to COVID-19, they must code those hours to include the Grant Worktag GR00719. If they are an exempt employee, they must ensure that all hours worked beyond their normal schedule are captured through Statistical Service Units (SSU) with the Grant Worktag GR00719. It is essential that all hours worked related to COVID-19 be captured to assist the County with reimbursement of costs.