CITY OF PHOENIX
HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT

Frequently Asked Questions: COVID-19 (Coronavirus)
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Teleworking

Q. Why did the City recommend employees telework? At the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic the City recommended temporary teleworking to minimize the possibility of community spread of the Coronavirus. This was a proactive move to mitigate risks to our employees and the community. With vaccine availability and increasing vaccination rates we will conclude the temporary teleworking phase of our response as we move in Phase 3. The city has now rolled out the permanent teleworking program which in many cases allows for a hybrid model which will still assist in reducing the possibility of community spread. *(Updated 9-12-2022)*

Q. Who can Telework? It's important to remember that a majority of City employees have jobs that can't be done remotely – solid waste pickup and disposal, 911 operators, police officers and firefighters, water and wastewater treatment plant operations, street repairs, and graffiti busters are some examples. We are working to do everything possible to keep those employees safe while they do their jobs. For those jobs that do have opportunities for temporary remote work, the department director has the authority to decide where remote work can be done. *(Updated 9-12-2022)*

Q. How will I know if I am permitted to telework? All employees that were approved to continue teleworking into Phase 3 should have applied to the Telework program and received information from their supervisor on the status of their application. *(Updated 7-27-2021)*

Q. Can I telework if I am experiencing COVID-like symptoms or tested positive but feel well enough to work? Department heads may approve employees to telework in these situations on a case-by-case basis. *(Added 7-27-2021)*

Q. Can employees have meetings? Yes, meetings can take place as long as the capacity of the room is not exceeded. Virtual options should continue to be offered. *(Updated 9-12-2022)*

Leave Time

Q. Will taking leave count as an unscheduled incident? The city's temporary policy holding unscheduled incidents harmless from March 11, 2020 – April 30, 2021 has expired. Beginning May 1, 2021, the city policy on unscheduled incidents will again be in effect and unscheduled leave will no longer be held harmless. *(Updated: 6/8/2021)*

Q. May I take leave to get tested for COVID-19 or receive a COVID-19 vaccine? With supervisor approval, employees may receive up to one hour of city paid leave, using code PZ to get a COVID-19 test at a testing center or lab. With supervisor approval employees may also take up to one hour of PZ leave to receive a COVID-19 vaccine or booster. *(Updated 7-25-2022)*

Travel

Q. How does travel affect me? The City recommends that employees stay up to date on federal and state health guidance. *(Updated 10-3-22)*

Domestic Travel: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/travel-during-covid19.html

International Travel: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/international-travel-during-covid19.html#anchor_1634925927097

Sick Employees/Members of Employee's Household

*Employees that provide medical services may be subject to different requirements than what is discussed here.

Q. What if I am sick? Any employees who are sick should stay home and follow the Maricopa County Guidance for Home Isolation. *(Updated 8-9-22)*
https://www.maricopa.gov/DocumentCenter/View/58864/Quarantine-Guidance-for-Close-Contacts?bidId=

Q. If I am experiencing symptoms, do I need to have a negative COVID test to return to work? The City recommends that employees stay up to date on Maricopa County Health guidance. This can be found on the City's website at (insert link)

Q. What if a member of my household is sick? The City recommends that employees stay up to date on Maricopa County Health guidance. This can be found on the City's website at (insert link)

Q. What if I need to see a doctor? According to CDC guidance, if you think you may have been exposed to COVID-19 and develop a fever and symptoms, such as cough or difficulty breathing, you should call your healthcare provider for medical advice. This will help the healthcare provider's office take steps to keep other people from getting infected or exposed. If you do need to seek care, the new City of Phoenix Employee Healthcare Clinic is now open and is a great option. This is a dedicated healthcare clinic for City of Phoenix benefit eligible employees and their dependents. The clinic has a Physician's Assistant and Part-time Medical Director. It's located at 1 N. Central Ave. (the N.W. corner of 1st Street and Washington St.) and is open 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday. Schedule a Healthcare Clinic Appointment through Banner Health's Clockwise.MD online appointment portal. If you need to call ahead to advise the clinic of your symptoms, please call 602-255-7651. The Employee Healthcare Clinic is available to all City of Phoenix employees and their dependents currently enrolled in a city medical plan.

Q. How can I manage the stress and anxiety I am experiencing due to the Coronavirus? The City recognizes that these are stressful times for employees and their loved ones. We want to remind you that it is important to take care of yourself. A good place to start is by reviewing your City medical benefits, where mental health resources may be available to you and your dependents. Online assistance is available through the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) by ComPsych, or EAP can be contacted by phone at (602) 534-5433. Also, here are some

recommendations on managing stress from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Things you can do to support yourself

- Take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories, including social media. Hearing about the health crisis repeatedly can be upsetting.
- Take care of your body. Take deep breaths, stretch, or meditate. Try to eat healthy, well-balanced meals, exercise regularly, get plenty of sleep, and avoid alcohol and drugs.
- Make time to unwind. Try to do some other activities you enjoy.
- Connect with others. Talk with people you trust about your concerns and how you are feeling.

Call your healthcare provider if stress gets in the way of your daily activities for several days in a row.

Q. What precautions can I take to reduce the risks for exposure to the coronavirus? The Maricopa County Department of Public Health recommends you follow these precautions to protect yourself from viruses, including COVID-19.

- Get the COVID-19 vaccine. Stay up to date with boosters, as eligible.
- Avoid poorly ventilated spaces and crowds
- Put distance between yourself and other people.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Keep up to date on Maricopa County's community levels and most recent recommendation on how to protect yourself our community.
- Test for COVID-19 to prevent spread to others.
- Follow home isolation guidance if you test positive for COVID-19 and follow quarantine if you've been exposed to someone infected with the virus.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.
- Check Maricopa County's COVID-19 Community Level for recommendations on when to wear a mask indoors in public

Q. Should I be self-monitoring for symptoms? All employees should self-monitor for symptoms daily, including the following:

- Monitoring body temperature and other symptoms daily, before reporting to work
- A temperature greater than 100.4 or any respiratory symptoms that are not known to be a part of a chronic condition (asthma, allergies etc.), requires that the employee stay home.
    - o Symptoms may include fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, nausea or vomiting, and diarrhea *(Updated 9-12-22)*

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Employees Who May Have Been Exposed to Covid-19

*Employees that provide medical services may be subject to different requirements than what is discussed here.

Q. Will I be notified if a City employee tests positive for COVID-19? As of ___ the city no longer performs close contact tracing. Employees who test positive are encouraged to determine who they were in *close contact* and notify those individuals. Close contacts should follow Maricopa County Department of Public Health guidelines for those in contact with someone who tests positive for COVID-19. *(Updated 9-12-2022)*

Q. Will I be informed of *potential* exposure to COVID-19? There is no efficient or effective way for the City to effectively communicate to employees every potential exposure to COVID-19. All employees should reasonably understand that **due to the widespread community transmission of COVID-19, they may have been in contact with people that are infected with and/or being tested for COVID-19.** Employees should **continuously monitor their health for symptoms of respiratory illness and take precautions** such as frequent hand washing, minimizing contact with anyone who is sick, regularly disinfecting frequently touched objects. *(Added 3-23-2020)*

Q: What if I believe I have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive or has symptoms of COVID-19? All employees should follow Maricopa County Department of Public Health guidelines if they believe they have been in close contact with someone who has tested positiveor has symptoms of COVID-19. *(Updated 9-12-2022)*

Employees who are sick or who have tested positive for COVID-19

Q. What if I test positive for COVID-19? We ask any City employee who tests positive for COVID-19 to follow medical direction and public health guidelines regarding their recovery and return to work. *(Added 3-23-2020)*

Q. What if I am symptomatic and test positive with an active infection of COVID-19?
Any City employee who tests positive for COVID-19 will need to follow local health department guidance on ending home isolation. *(Updated 8-6-2020)*

Q: What if I test positive for an active infection of COVID-19 but do not have symptoms?
Any City employee who test positive but are not displaying symptoms will need to follow local health department guidance on ending home isolation. *(Updated 8-6-2020)*

Face Coverings/Masks and Physical Distancing

Q. Is a face mask required to access a city facility? No. The CDC published new mask recommendations based on three community levels. Under these guidelines, face covering recommendations vary based on community levels. CDC mask recommendations will be

adjusted as community level indicators change. City employees will be made aware of these changes through city wide enterprise messaging. Employees are encouraged to routinely visit the CDC community level indicator page to review Maricopa County levels and recommendations. Employees may choose to wear a mask even when CDC community levels do not require.

People with symptoms, a positive test, or exposure to COVID-19, or those who are in isolation, must continue to wear a mask in city facilities. Employees who are immunocompromised or at high risk for severe illness from the virus should talk with their providers about if and when to wear a mask. *(Updated 3-2-2022)*

Q. Where can I get a face mask? Each department will provide face masks to employees working on site or in the field, upon request. Please speak to your supervisor for more information. Employees are encouraged to explore other options for face coverings as recommended on the CDC website. *(Added 4-07-20)*

Q. What kind of mask is the City providing to employees? The type of face covering the City is providing a disposable paper mask. Departments may offer N-95 and KN-95 masks; however, supply is limited and may not always be available. *(Updated 1-13-2022)*

Q. What is the Voluntary Respirator (Appendix D) Form? In order to comply with OSHA regulations, employees who are provided an N-95 by the City of Phoenix for voluntary use must sign the Voluntary Respirator Form. This form outlines the limitations of the mask and reiterates that the employer is providing the mask for use on a voluntary non-required basis. Employees who bring their own N-95 mask from home do not need to sign the Voluntary Respirator Form. Completed forms should be kept in the employee's department personnel file. *(Added 3-2-2022)*

Q. Can I wear a face shield instead of a mask? A face shield cannot be used during the 10-day period in which an employee tests positive and is required to wear a mask or is required to wear a mask after a close contact exposure. If you wish to return to the workplace during day 6-10 of your positive case isolation or after close contact exposure and cannot wear a face covering, please contact your HR liaison. *(Updated 3-2-2022)*

Q. Can I wear a mask with a one-way valve? Face masks with a valve (regardless of filter) are not a permitted face covering. These masks do not provide effective source control and have been found to actually propel droplets further into the environment. *(Added 8-6-20)*

Q. If I am a close contact, do I need to wear a mask? Yes, if you have been identified as a close contact of a COVID positive individual, you must wear a face covering for 10 days from the date of your last exposure anytime you are outside your home, regardless of vaccination status. This includes outdoors if you are within 6 feet of another person. This applies to the workplace regardless of current face covering policies that may apply otherwise. *(Updated 1-7-2022)*

Q. Can I be disciplined for not wearing a mask? Masks or face coverings are required as a safety measure after returning from isolation or after a close contact exposure. Although it is not the City's desire to discipline employees for not wearing a mask, it is critically important for all

employees to follow these public health recommendations. **If an employee refuses to wear a mask, they may be sent home and/or subject to corrective or disciplinary action.** Employees who are unable to wear a face covering due to amedical reason, please contact your HR liaison. *(Added 3-2-2022)*

COVID-19 Vaccine

Q. If I am experiencing side effects from the vaccine, do I need to stay home? Yes. If you are vaccinated and develop symptoms as a side effect from the vaccine you should remain home during the duration of symptoms and follow the health guidance (insert link)

Q. What is the Vaccine Safety Award? The Vaccine Safety Award is an incentive program where all **City employees** are eligible to receive a **Vaccine Safety Award of $75** when they submit a **completed vaccine card** showing the dates of all required doses for the type of vaccine received. COVID-19 vaccines received at a City of Phoenix distribution site or any other location are eligible for the award. All employees who have already received the vaccine, as well as those who receive it through calendar year 2022, are eligible for the award. *(Updated 3-2-2022)*

Q: Can I receive the COVID-19 vaccine if I had COVID in the last 90 days? Yes, as long as you have completed the isolation period and are not actively sick/symptomatic. *(Added 3-10-2021)*

Q: Can I receive the vaccine if I am sick? No. If you are ill, please delay scheduling or reschedule your appointment until you are symptom-free and clear of illness. *(Added 3-10-2021)*

Q. What does it mean to be fully vaccinated?* You are fully vaccinated if it has been more than 2 weeks since you have completed your primary series of vaccine. *(Added 3-2-2022)*

Q. What does it mean to be "up to date" on COVID-19 vaccines?* Up to Date with COVID vaccinations means a person has completed all recommended COVID-19 vaccines, to include booster doses that they are eligible to receive.

Vaccine recommendations are different depending on your age, the vaccine you first received, and time since last dose. To determine if you are up to date, please visit (LINK-https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/stay-up-to-date.html#:~:text=CDC%20recommends%20COVID%2D19%20primary,%2D19%20vaccines%2C%20including%20boosters).

It is a good idea to have frequent discussions with your healthcare or vaccine provider about what staying up to date with vaccines means for your individual health needs. *(Added 8-9-2022)*

Additional Questions

Q: Who do I contact if I have questions regarding health benefits, qualified life events, Long Term Disability Benefits and/or COBRA? Submit your question(s) electronically through the following email address: benefits.questions@phoenix.gov. The Benefits Team is on standby to reply to your questions or concerns. *(Added 3-23-2020)*

Additional Questions or concerns regarding any of this information should be directed to HR Safety at hr.safety@phoenix.gov or 602-495-5700. You can also contact your department's HR liaison.