



CITY OF PHOENIX
HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT

Frequently Asked Questions: COVID-19 (Coronavirus)

Temporary Teleworking

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.

Q. Why is the City recommending employees telework? The City is recommending temporary teleworking to minimize the possibility of community spread of the Coronavirus. This is a proactive move to mitigate risks to our employees and the community.

Q. How will I know if I am permitted to telework? The decision to temporarily telework is at the discretion of the department head, not the employee. Supervisors will help determine use of this option as widely as feasible, and at the discretion of the department head.

Q. How will I know if my job duties are eligible for telework? Because of this health emergency, we are relaxing telework thresholds. In this current situation, if employees can perform most of their work (at least 50%) from home, they may be eligible to telework. Again, this will be determined by the supervisor and department head. If employees have not heard from their supervisor, they should plan on reporting to work according to their normal schedule.

Please note: *The majority of employees in the Police, Fire, Water, Public Works (Solid Waste and Fleet), and Aviation departments have very specific responsibilities in critical situations and will not participate in temporary teleworking. (Updated 3-17-2020)*

Q. How long will I be able to telework? The telework protocols implemented by the City are temporary, however they are in place until further notice. (Updated 3-30-2020)

Q. How often can I telework? While these protocols are in place, employees can telework up to 5 days each week. Again, this is at the discretion of each department head during this temporary situation.

Q. Can I telework while caring for family members? Because of the current circumstances, employees are permitted to telework while caring for family members and dependents within the home. Please keep the following in mind:

- Employees are expected to be working during all telework hours, with the exception of regular breaks
- Supervisors and employees should make extra effort to clearly communicate during telework regarding work assignments. Expectations of the work to be performed while teleworking and the results of the work must be understood between the employee and supervisor and communicated clearly.
- Any time not worked during a telework assignment should be processed appropriately (i.e., a dentist appointment or a vacation day).



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Q. If my entire division teleworks there will be no one in the office, do we need to rotate teleworking? That is a discretion left up to the supervisor and department head depending on the services provided, resources available to provide that service, and the group's interaction with the public.

Q. My job duties don't allow me to telework. What's required of me by my department? Employees in positions that are not conducive for telework are expected to report to work as normal. Being in a less populated work environment will hopefully minimize potential exposure.

Q. I just got hired at the City. Will I be able to work? The City will delay the report to work day for new hire employees. Exceptions will be made for new employees providing essential functions as determined by the department head. New Employee Orientation will be scheduled for a later date. New hires who are not immediately needed but have been given a final job offer and established a start date will be entered into the City's Human Resources Information System with the agreed upon start day and will be paid. However, they will not be permitted to report to their new work assignment until further notice. Only those recruitments deemed essential will be conducted until further notice. *(Updated: 3-30-2020)*

Q. Can employees have meetings? The City encourages limiting in-person meetings as much as possible. Please utilize teleconferencing or SKYPE options, as well as other alternatives. Departments should also work with Information Technology to request VPN or other remote work capabilities, as necessary for staff due to teleworking schedules. *(Updated: 3-30-2020)*

Q. Will the City classes/events I signed up for still take place? City HR and related training classes will be postponed until further notice.

Leave Time

Q. What if I want to take leave (non-emergencies/precautionary)? We realize some employees have had scheduled leave during this time or may have a need arise to take leave. Employees will have the option (with supervisor approval) of taking any leave available in their leave banks including sick leave, earned paid sick leave, vacation leave or comp-time. If all leave has been exhausted, employees may choose to take unpaid leave or borrow against future leave accruals. For unpaid leave or to borrow against future accruals, please contact your HR payroll liaison for guidance. ***Departments providing critical services may freeze approval of vacation time if necessary, to ensure adequate staffing levels.*** *(Updated: 4-1-2020)*

Q. Will taking leave count as an unscheduled incident? Effective March 11, 2020 and until further notice, any leave taken, scheduled or unscheduled, by employees will be held harmless, meaning it will not be counted as an unscheduled incident. It will not be considered during investigations of leave policy violations. *(Added: 4-1-2020)*

Q. What if I have used all my leave time? Employees who have exhausted all leave will have the option of taking unpaid leave or borrowing against future leave accruals up to a maximum of 80 hours for full time employees and 40 hours for part time employees. Any employee who wishes to borrow against future leave should contact their supervisor and payroll liaison in order to access this leave. *(Added: 4-1-2020)*



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Q. What if I have a COVID-19 related reason to take leave (emergencies)? Beginning April 1, 2020, additional employer paid leave is available for employees who meet certain criteria defined in the *Families First Coronavirus Response Act*. **Note: Exclusions apply for emergency responders, which may include Police, Fire, Aviation, Public Works, Water and Streets employees***. This Emergency Paid Sick Leave (EPSL) provides two weeks (up to 80 hours for FT employees/up to 60 hours for PT employees) of **paid sick leave** at the employee's regular rate of pay when the employee is unable to work or telework due to one of the following reasons:

- 1) The employee is subject to a Federal, State, or local quarantine or isolation order related to COVID-19;
- 2) The employee has been advised by a health care provider to self-quarantine due to concerns related to COVID-19;
- 3) The employee is experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 and seeking a medical diagnosis;
- 4) The employee is caring for an individual who either is subject to a quarantine or isolation order related to COVID-19 or has been advised by a health care provider to self-quarantine due to concerns related to COVID-19;
- 5) The employee is caring for a child (son or daughter) whose school or place of care is closed (or child care provider is unavailable) for reasons related to COVID-19; or
- 6) The employee is experiencing any other substantially similar condition specified by the Secretary of Health and Human Services.

Please note: Use of Emergency Paid Sick Leave does not reduce an employee's leave bank

Any other situation related to this emergency but not covered under one of the EPST provisions will require that the employee use the leave options stated above for non-emergencies. (Updated: 4-1-2020)

School Closures

Q. Is there a leave option for employees who need to stay home due to school closures? Any employee who must stay home to care for their children affected by school closures should begin by communicating their needs to a supervisor. At the discretion of the director, the employee may be allowed to participate in the temporary telework program. Beginning April 1, 2020, the FFCRA provides for an Emergency FMLA expansion which provides up to an additional 10 weeks of **paid expanded family and medical leave (not to exceed the regular 12 weeks under FMLA entitlement)** where an employee is unable to work (or telework) due to a bona fide need for leave to care for a child whose school or child care provider is closed or unavailable for reasons related to COVID-19. **Note: Exclusions apply for emergency responders, which may include Police, Fire, Aviation, Public Works, Water and Streets employees***. For employees who qualify for Emergency FMLA, the first two weeks will be



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covered by EPSL if eligible or by available leave banks, unless an employee chooses to be unpaid for that time. *(Updated: 4-1-2020)*

Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) Questions and Answers (Source: Department of Labor website)

Q. What is the effective date of the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA), which includes the Emergency Paid Sick Leave Act and the Emergency Family and Medical Leave Expansion Act?

The FFCRA's paid leave provisions are effective on April 1, 2020, and apply to leave taken between April 1, 2020, and December 31, 2020. *(Added: 4-1-2020)*

Q. Can my employer deny me paid sick leave if my employer gave me paid leave for a reason identified in the Emergency Paid Sick Leave Act prior to the Act going into effect?

No. The Emergency Paid Sick Leave Act imposes a new leave requirement on employers that is effective beginning on April 1, 2020. *(Added: 4-1-2020)*

Q. Are the paid sick leave and expanded family and medical leave requirements retroactive?

No. *(Added: 4-1-2020)*

Q. May I take 80 hours of paid sick leave for my self-quarantine and then another amount of paid sick leave for another reason provided under the Emergency Paid Sick Leave Act?

No. You may take up to two weeks—or ten days—(80 hours for a full-time employee, 60 hours for a part-time employee) of paid sick leave for any combination of qualifying reasons. However, the total number of hours for which you receive paid sick leave is capped at 80 hours under the Emergency Paid Sick Leave Act (60 hours for part-time employees). *(Added: 4-1-2020)*

Q. Who is a son or daughter (under the Emergency FLMA provision)?

Under the FFCRA, a “son or daughter” is your own child, which includes your biological, adopted, or foster child, your stepchild, a legal ward, or a child for whom you are standing in loco parentis—someone with day-to-day responsibilities to care for or financially support a child.

Under the FFCRA a “son or daughter” is also an adult son or daughter (i.e., one who is 18 years of age or older), who (1) has a mental or physical disability, and (2) is incapable of self-care because of that disability. *(Added: 4-1-2020)*

Q. Do I qualify for leave for a COVID-19 related reason even if I have already used some or all of my leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)?

If you are an eligible employee, you are entitled to paid sick leave under the Emergency Paid Sick Leave Act regardless of how much leave you have taken under the FMLA.



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However, if your employer was covered by the FMLA prior to April 1, 2020, your eligibility for expanded family and medical leave depends on how much leave you have already taken during the 12-month period that your employer uses for FMLA leave. You may take a total of 12 workweeks for FMLA or expanded family and medical leave reasons during a 12-month period. If you have taken some, but not all, 12 workweeks of your leave under FMLA during the current 12-month period determined by your employer, you may take the remaining portion of leave available. If you have already taken 12 workweeks of FMLA leave during this 12-month period, you may not take additional expanded family and medical leave. *(Added: 4-1-2020)*

Q. If I take paid sick leave (EPSL) under the Emergency Paid Sick Leave Act, does that count against other types of paid sick leave to which I am entitled under State or local law, or my employer's policy?

No. Paid sick leave under the Emergency Paid Sick Leave Act is in addition to other leave provided under Federal, State, or local law; an applicable collective bargaining agreement; or your employer's existing company policy. *(Added: 4-1-2020)*

Q. May I use paid sick leave and expanded family and medical leave together for any COVID-19 related reasons?

No. The Emergency Family and Medical Leave Expansion Act applies only when you are on leave to care for your child whose school or place of care is closed, or whose childcare provider is unavailable, due to COVID-19 related reasons. However, you can take paid sick leave under the Emergency Paid Sick Leave Act for numerous other reasons. *(Added: 4-1-2020)*

Q. Who is an emergency responder?

For the purposes of employees who may be excluded from paid sick leave or expanded family and medical leave by their employer under the FFCRA, an emergency responder is an employee who is necessary for the provision of transport, care, health care, comfort, and nutrition of such patients, or whose services are otherwise needed to limit the spread of COVID-19. This includes but is not limited to military or national guard, law enforcement officers, correctional institution personnel, fire fighters, emergency medical services personnel, physicians, nurses, public health personnel, emergency medical technicians, paramedics, emergency management personnel, 911 operators, public works personnel, and persons with skills or training in operating specialized equipment or other skills needed to provide aid in a declared emergency as well as individuals who work for such facilities employing these individuals and whose work is necessary to maintain the operation of the facility. This also includes any individual that the highest official of a state or territory, including the District of Columbia, determines is an emergency responder necessary for that state's or territory's or the District of Columbia's response to COVID-19. *(Added: 4-1-2020)*

Additional DOL FAQs (can be found at <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/pandemic/ffcra-questions>)

Q. How will the City apply the exclusions allowed by the FFCRA? Federal Act permits the City to exclude health care providers and emergency responders from these provisions. Based



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on guidance from the Department of Labor and to ensure adequate staffing levels for critical services, the City has decided to implement the following exclusions:

Emergency Paid Sick Leave

- Emergency responders are only eligible to take Emergency Paid Sick Leave for reasons #1, 2, 3, and 4 above.
- Emergency responders are not eligible to take EPSL for reasons #5 and 6 above. Any request made by emergency responders to take Emergency Paid Sick Leave for reason #5 will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

Emergency FMLA

- Emergency responders are not eligible for Emergency FMLA. Any request made by emergency responders to take Emergency FMLA will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

Emergency Responders are defined as the following: all sworn Police, all sworn Fire, all 911 operations, certain non-sworn employees in the Police, Fire, Public Works, Water Services, Streets and Aviation Departments. Employees in Police, Fire, Public Works, Water Services, Streets, and Aviation will need to contact their HR Liaison/payroll liaison to determine eligibility.

(Added: 4-1-2020)

Closed Facilities/Scaled Back Services

Q. How will staff be compensated if the City closes services and/or facilities? If certain city services or facilities are closed and there is an impact on the work performed by employees in those areas, employees should wait for direction from their supervisors. At this time, most employees will be able to continue working, although they may be temporarily assigned other duties. If an employee is not assigned to work but asked to remain on call at home, they will be paid at their regular rate. In a case like this, an abundance of flexibility and adaptability to this temporary situation is appreciated. Please know, the City is making every effort to ensure that employees will not be negatively impacted by closures. *(Updated: 3-17-2020)*

Q. If the City keeps scaled back services open, how will employees be selected and assigned to work? Due to the nature of this unusual situation for the City and our customers, the City is taking an ‘all hands-on deck’ approach to continue providing city services. That means, currently the direction is for all staff (full time and part time) assigned to departments where programs are being scaled back will be reassigned duties if they are not serving in their regular capacity. If the scaled back service provision continues for an extended period, and there isn’t work for the employee(s), they will be paid. *(Updated: 3-17-2020)*

Travel

Q. How does travel outside of Arizona affect me? The decision to travel out of state is ultimately up to the employee. The City recommends that employees stay up to date on federal and state health guidance, because this health emergency situation is fluid—there are new



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developments every day. Due to updated information available through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), employees, volunteers, and contractors are asked to report their travel to a supervisor. Any travel to a [Level 3 country](#), as defined by the CDC (as of 3/29 this includes all international travel) including cruise ship travel, will require that the employee stay home for 14 days before returning to work. Please consult with your department HR liaison regarding any travel. *(Updated: 3-30-2020)*

Q. What if I was previously told to remain at home due to recent travel? If an employee was previously told to remain at home and travel was to any location within the United States, the employee may return to work provided they are not having any symptoms of illness. Employees who have travelled internationally to a [Level 3 country](#), as defined by the CDC (as of 3/29 this includes all international travel) including cruise ship travel will still require the employee stay home for a full 14 days after to returning to Arizona. *(Updated: 3-30-2020)*

Q. Are there any other travel restrictions I should be aware of. Aside from the travel precautions stated above, employees may return to work after traveling, if they are not sick.

*We recognize people want and need to travel and often it is for leisure. Please be cognizant before traveling anywhere by staying up to date with news and information on your travel destination related to the health emergency. Pay close attention to travel restrictions, as well as any restrictions that may be in place at your destination. If you can delay travel and are able to work, we could use your help to get through this health crisis. We need as many people as possible working their normal schedules (even teleworking if approved) to ensure we are providing the very best service to our community. **Departments providing critical services may freeze approval of vacation time if necessary, to ensure adequate staffing levels.***

(Added 3-17-2020)

Sick Employees/Members of Employee's Household

Q. What if I am sick? Any employees who are sick should stay home until they are free of fever or other symptoms for **72** hours without medication. Please see leave options above. *(Updated 4-1-20)*

Q. What if a member of my household is sick? An employee who has a member of their household who is sick with a respiratory illness should separate themselves from the ill person (people) in the home. The employee should stay at home for 14 days after separating themselves from the ill person, except to get essential medical care, prescriptions, and food. Do not go to work, school, or public areas (e.g., shopping centers, movie theaters, stadiums, etc.). Do not use public transportation, including rideshares and taxis. Do not go on long-distance travel. Additional instruction from Maricopa County Department of Public Health can be found [here](#). This guidance does not apply to other non-respiratory illnesses (i.e., gastrointestinal illness). Please see leave options above. Please note: *some exceptions exist for Public Safety departments.* *(Updated: 4-1-20)*

Q. What if someone comes into work sick? If an employee reports to work showing symptoms of respiratory illness such as cough, shortness of breath, runny nose or fever, they will be sent home. If sent home, employees will have the leave options referenced above.

(Updated: 4-1-20)



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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 am to 6 pm 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.

- Keep your hands clean. They should be washed often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer when soap and water are not available.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Use a tissue to cover your cough or sneeze, then toss it in the trash.
- Frequently touched objects and surfaces should be cleaned on regular basis.



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Q. Should I be self-monitoring for symptoms? New guidance issued from the Maricopa County Department of Public Health indicates that 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.
 - Symptoms may include: cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, sneezing, and full body/muscle aches *(Added 4-07-20)*

Notification of Employees Who May Have Been Exposed to Covid-19

Q. Will I be notified if a City employee tests positive for COVID-19? Employees who are reasonably determined to be in *close contact* (face to face contact within 6 feet for a prolonged period, usually defined as at least 10 minutes) with an employee who has tested positive for COVID-19 will be informed when the City is informed of a positive result. This could be other employees in the same workgroup as the employee who tests positive, employees who attended meetings with them or others they interacted with closely. Employees notified will be asked to follow [Maricopa County Department of Public Health guidelines](#) for those in contact with someone who tests positive for COVID-19. By law, we are not allowed to disclose the name of the person who tests positive or any other identifying information about them. **Please be aware that the City may not be informed of all employees who test positive for COVID-19.** *(Added 3-23-2020)*

Q. Will I be informed if 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, only those that are confirmed by a positive test and brought to the City's attention. 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? Employees should follow [Maricopa County Department of Public Health guidelines](#) if they believe they have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive or has symptoms of COVID-19. If you were in close contact (within 6 feet for longer than 10 minutes), but do not live in the same home, with someone with respiratory symptoms (cough or shortness of breath) OR someone with COVID-19, you should practice social distancing and stay at home as much as possible, except to go to work (telework, if possible), get essential medical care, prescriptions, and food. You should monitor your temperature & symptoms for 14 days after you last had contact with the ill person. *(Added 3-23-2020)*

Q. What if I test positive for COVID-19? We ask any City employee who tests positive for COVID-19 to inform their supervisor and/or HR liaison immediately and to follow medical



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direction and public health guidelines regarding their recovery and return to work. *(Added 3-23-2020)*

Face Coverings/Masks

Q. Am I required to wear a face mask if I'm working on site or in the field? Face coverings or face masks are not required but are recommended by the CDC in **public settings** where social distancing cannot be maintained. This can be a city issued disposable mask, or employees may choose to wear their own masks. Please note certain employees are required to wear PPE (including a face mask) as part of their regular protocols for work. Those requirements will not change unless the employee is instructed to do so by a supervisor. *(Added 4-07-20)*

Q. What kind of mask is the City providing to employees? The City is providing a disposable paper mask to employees **as long as supplies are available. These are not N-95 respirators**, which are critical supplies that must continue to be reserved for healthcare workers and other medical first responders, as recommended by current CDC guidance. *(Added 4-07-20)*

Where can I get a face mask? Each department will provide face masks to employees working on site or in the field, upon request and **as long as supplies are available**. 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. How many masks will the City make available? The total number of coverings the city has **is limited**, so employees may use their own masks or other face coverings like scarves or bandanas. Employees should feel free to explore [alternatives for homemade masks](#) that are explained on the CDC website. The City is attempting to purchase additional disposable masks, however access to supplies is limited. *(Added 4-07-20)*

Q. If employees are teleworking, can they pick up a face mask? Employees who are teleworking are not in public, in a business capacity. Therefore, the city is only providing masks to staff working onsite or in the field, as supplies are limited. Employees who are teleworking are reminded that they can make cloth face coverings at home for use as a voluntary public health measure. *(Added 4-07-20)*

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 on standby to reply to your questions or concerns. *(Added 3-23-2020)*

Q. What if my driver's license is expiring soon? To reduce customer demand and traffic in MVD offices the Governor of Arizona has issued an Executive Order allowing the Arizona Department of Transportation to extend Arizona driver licenses and driving permits that expire between March 1, 2020 and September 1, 2020. Licenses expiring in this time frame will automatically be renewed by the state for 6 months from the date of expiration. The city will



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honor these automatic extensions when doing drivers license verification checks. *(Added 3-30-2020)*

Q. What if I am a CDL driver and medical certification is expiring soon? The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) has issued a waiver effective 3/20/2020 – 6/30/2020 for all drivers in response to COVID-19. To reduce customer demand and traffic in MVD offices the Governor of Arizona has issued an Executive Order allowing the Arizona Department of Transportation to extend this waiver for Medical Certificates/Cards that expire between March 1, 2020 and September 1, 2020. Certificates/cards that expire during this time frame will automatically be extended to September 1, 2020. If a driver is diagnosed with a potentially disqualifying medical condition, they are not covered under the waiver and they must obtain new medical certification in order to drive a commercial vehicle. The medical waiver does not apply to medical certifications issued for less than 90 days. *(Added 3-30-2020)*

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**.