



# OFFICE OF PERSONNEL & LABOR RELATIONS

CITY OF SYRACUSE, MAYOR BEN WALSH

**Donna D. Briscoe**  
Director

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## COVID-19 Leave Policy for Non-Public Safety and Non-Public Works Departments

After reviewing employees' leave utilization since the onset of the pandemic, and to ensure compliance with New York State's Paid Leave for COVID-19 and the Federal Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA), the City is adopting a revised policy related to paid leaves for COVID-related absences.

Essential employees who are asymptomatic and have tested negative for the COVID-19 virus may continue to work under most government-issued quarantine and isolation orders. Therefore, all requests for leave will be evaluated to determine if the leave is necessary under applicable public health guidelines. ***Essential employees who are free of symptoms and have tested negative will be required to return to work as allowed by the government-issued order.*** Department Heads will determine whether an employee is considered essential under local, state and/or federal law

Guidelines for COVID-related leave requests include:

- 1. Government-Issued Quarantine Order:** Administrative Leave of up to two (2) weeks will be considered when an employee is subject to a mandatory or precautionary order of quarantine or isolation issued by the state of New York, the NYS Department of Health, or the Onondaga County Department of Health, or any other authorized government entity, and is unable to work remotely. *Employees who receive such an order must immediately provide a copy to Human Resources and their direct supervisor.* Administrative Leave will be considered only for the period mandated on the order, not to exceed two weeks. Additional time will be charged to Sick Time or another Paid Time Off accrual. Essential employees who are asymptomatic and have tested negative may be required to return to work, as permitted by the order.

Employees who test positive for COVID-19 and are subject to a government-issued isolation order will be required to submit official documentation clearing them to return to work. If the employee's absence extends beyond the isolation order, additional days beyond the order will be charged to Sick Time or another Paid Time Off accrual.

- 2. Healthcare Provider Quarantine Instructions & Employees Seeking COVID Diagnosis:** If a healthcare provider (e.g. Doctor, Nurse Practitioner, Physician's Assistant) instructs the employee to self-quarantine due to COVID, or if the employee is experiencing COVID symptoms and is seeking a test or waiting on the results of a test,

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the employee *may* be eligible\* for *Federal Paid Sick Leave* for up to a maximum 80 hours annually. Please note, however, that under public health guidelines, employees voluntarily seeking a COVID test without symptoms are not subject to quarantine, and therefore, will be expected to continue working while awaiting results.

- 3. COVID Caregiver Leave:** If an employee is unable to work because of a bona fide need to care for an individual subject to quarantine (pursuant to Federal, State, or local government order or advice of a health care provider), or care for a child (under 18 years of age) whose school or child care provider is closed or unavailable for reasons related to COVID-19, the employee *may* be eligible\* for 80 hours of *Federal Paid Sick Leave* at **two-thirds** the employee's regular rate of pay.

**\*Eligibility for Federal Paid Sick Leave:** Federal Paid Sick Leave is available only for employees who are unable to work remotely, either due to the nature of their job, or if symptoms prevent them from working. Employees who are able to work remotely are ineligible for Federal Paid Sick Leave and any absence under #2 or #3 above will be charged to Sick Time or another Paid Time Off accrual.

- 4. Extended FMLA for COVID Childcare:** In addition to COVID Caregiver Leave, an additional ten (10) weeks of Paid Extended Family and Medical Leave (E-FML) may be available to eligible\*\* employees where an employee is unable to work due to a bona fide need for leave to care for a child (under 18 years of age) whose school or child care provider is closed or unavailable for reasons related to COVID-19. Extended FMLA is paid at **two-thirds** the employee's regular rate of pay. All E-FML time is charged towards the employee's annual FMLA allotment of twelve (12) weeks.

**\*\*Eligibility for Paid Extended Family and Medical Leave (E-FML):** E-FML is only available for employees who cannot perform teleworking tasks or work the required teleworking hours because they need to care for their child whose school/childcare is closed. Employees who are able to work remotely are ineligible for E-FML and any absence will be charged to Sick Time or another Paid Time Off accrual.

- 5. Travel-Related Quarantine:** Quarantine or isolation required as a result of voluntary travel outside of New York State will not be considered for Administrative Leave or Federal Paid Sick Leave, and must be charged to Sick Time or another Paid Time Off accrual.

Questions about the COVID-19 Leave Policy and requests for leave should be directed to the employee's direct supervisor **and** the Human Resources Department at 315-448-8780 or [mchajka@syrgov.net](mailto:mchajka@syrgov.net) or [jgorsuch@syrgov.net](mailto:jgorsuch@syrgov.net). Employees who require an extended medical leave related to a COVID-19 illness should consult with the Human Resources Department regarding their available leave benefits during their illness.

Employees who require a reasonable accommodation for a disability may also seek information or submit a request, consistent with the City's Policy on Non-Discrimination on the Basis of Disability, by contacting the Human Resources Department at 315-448-8781 or [btearney@syrgov.net](mailto:btearney@syrgov.net).

Reference:

<https://paidfamilyleave.ny.gov/covid19>

<https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/pandemic/ffcra-employer-paid-leave>

<http://www.ongov.net/communications/press/documents/COVID19/LO6.pdf>