



MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 19, 2020
TO: ALL CITY OF INGLEWOOD EMPLOYEES
FROM: JAMES T. BUTTS, MAYOR
SUBJECT: CITY EMPLOYEE FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (COVID-19)

The Mayor and City Council recognizes that the current State of Emergency designated by the Governor is unprecedented in most of our employees' careers. With the unusual mandates to close businesses and schools being issued, it is understandable that employees may be feeling anxious and possibly experiencing high levels of stress. We as public servants, are committed to assisting our employees in getting through this together.

I want to assure all of you that the Mayor & City Council, Department Heads, and the Office of Emergency Services (OES) have been and will continue to be proactive in communicating with the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health and other Public Safety agencies from around the region and state. Included in this group are the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the World Health Organization (WHO). The City is committed to stay in front of this health emergency. We will provide you with the most accurate and reliable information as it becomes available.

To assist you in navigating through the enormous amount of information, the below are frequently asked questions and answers summarizing reliable information on the coronavirus and best practices for you as an employee of the City of Inglewood.

1. What are your responsibilities as a City of Inglewood employee and public servant during this crisis?

Under the California Emergency Services Act, any person employed by a county, city, state agency or public district in California is a public employee and considered a **Disaster Service Worker**. During an emergency or disaster, the city may ask you to do work outside the normal scope of your duties as a Disaster Service Worker in support of a critical assignment. As a Disaster Service Worker, you are expected to stay informed by listening to reliable sources and focus on facts; not rumors and fear; as the organization faces the challenge of this rapidly evolving global emergency.

Just as important, our residents will depend more than ever on the dedication of our employees to deliver the best services possible to meet the daily needs of our community. We must be proactive in determining the needs of our citizens as we learn more each day about the transmission patterns and incubation periods.

Examples of expected service include but are not limited to, the following:

- Be sure that all phones are answered as soon as possible. Have available at you work stations the fact sheets provided by the office of Emergency Services. This will allow you to immediately provide accurate information and eliminate the need for an in-person visit to City Hall. If a caller reaches the incorrect Department, have a listing of department numbers readily available for immediate transferring and also provide the caller with the correct telephone number to call in the future.
- Use email or the telephone to communicate whenever possible. Create fillable PDF forms that can be emailed to residents, vendors, and other parties and have the forms submitted via email or by fax. Be sure to create a cover sheet that provides completion and submission instructions to attach to all forms. Follow up with a return email or telephone call to acknowledge receipt of the documents.
- Use caution in all person to person interactions with other staff and visitors. Wash hands frequently and/or use hand sanitizer. Try to maintain a 6-foot distance between yourself and others where practical. During this emergency period we should eliminate visits to other workplaces for social purposes.
- Be prepared! Management can suspend sick leave and scheduled vacation in the event of a significant emergency, and you are responsible for reporting for duty if requested. Be alert to your surroundings and limit social activities. Researchers have declared that this virus can be airborne; can be contracted from solid objects; and can remain contagious from 24 to 72 hours depending on the surface.
- Follow the Office of Emergency Services @ReadyInglewood on Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter to learn new developments regarding this crisis and be prepared to adapt to any changes that may occur.
- The City of Inglewood has a comprehensive Emergency Preparedness Website for all hazards. www.cityofinglewood.org/1033/Office-of-Emergency-Services

2. What is the City of Inglewood doing to ensure a safe environment for the public and our employees?

- Public access to City Hall will be by APPOINTMENT ONLY, except for City Council Meetings, which may be modified to meet social distancing and teleconferencing recommendations specified in the Governor's Executive Order (N-25-20). Temporarily restricting access to City Hall limits potential transmission of COVID-19 by controlling contacts until the virus has passed the incubation contagion period.
- The City has postings in lobby entrances, employee breakrooms, and elevator lobbies in addition to sending out regular emails that explain good sanitation and hygiene practices geared toward protecting yourself and others. The city is also looking into webinars to provide more information on preventative measures that employees can view at their workstations.
- Additional cleaning staff has been assigned during business hours dedicated to the disinfecting of all public counters and high foot traffic areas at city facilities.

- Hand sanitizer and disinfectant products have been placed at all public counters. Emergency Services will be examining proximity access privileges to ensure necessary worksite related access only.
- All non-essential business travel (previously approved or not) is prohibited until further notice unless approved in writing by the City Manager.
- **All Employees** - Clean and disinfect your immediate workspace frequently. **STOP HANDSHAKING** – Use other non-contact methods of greeting, clean hands at the door of entrance to your workplace where possible. **Managers** - Schedule regular hand washing reminders by email. **All Employees** - Avoid touching our faces and cover coughs and sneezes and then immediately use an alcohol based sanitizer. **Custodial Personnel** - Each morning and evening disinfect surfaces like doorknobs, tables, desks, and handrails;
- Department Heads/Division Managers will insist employees not to come to work if feeling ill and *will approve authorized absence without pay (during this Emergency Declaration Period only) if no accrued leave is available to avoid an adverse impact on your employment.* Human Resources will be monitoring all sick leave to ensure we do not have patterns of leave abuse.
- Department Heads and Division Managers are to send employees home immediately who report to work exhibiting flu-like or other respiratory distress symptoms.

3. What happens if my Manager sends me home?

If an employee is sent home from work, he or she will be **paid for the remainder of the day** as an authorized absence with pay. The employee may not return to work without clearance from a healthcare provider and will be required to use accrued leave for the time he or she is absent from work. If the employee returns to work without a healthcare provider clearance, the employee will be sent home without pay and may be subject to discipline for insubordination.

If an employee does not have sick leave available OR the employee exhausts their sick leave during the absence, the city may require the employee to use accrued vacation time. If during the employees' absence, the employee's treating physician diagnoses the employee or employee's family member is diagnosed with COVID-19, the employee will qualify for FMLA/CFRA leave, because the condition constitutes a "serious health condition."

It is critical that employees not potentially infect others by coming to work with a contiguous cold, flu, or other virus. Being sent home is not a form of discipline; it is done to protect you and your co-workers.

4. I think I may have been exposed to the COVID-19 virus and have elected to self-quarantine, am I required to use my accrued leave?

If you think you may have been exposed to the virus for whatever reason and elect to self-quarantine, you must notify your management of your need for leave and will be required to use your accrued leave to cover the absence.

Upon return, you will be required to provide a medical note clearing you to return to work. It is highly recommended that you speak to your healthcare provider to assess your health condition as soon as possible if you feel you may have been exposed to the COVID-19 or any other viruses. If you are diagnosed with COVID-19, the City will restore up to 80 hours of sick leave upon your return to work with a doctor's certification that you are clear of infection.

5. What should I do if I need to stay home because my child's school/daycare is closed due to the COVID-19, to care for a sick family member, or if I am directed to self-quarantine?

Immediately inform and work with your supervisor. All absences must be reported to the Human Resources Department for tracking purposes. Employees will be required to complete a request for leave form to be absent from work. This information is not being used for **disciplinary action**, but to help monitor the impact of the current mandates.

It is strongly recommended that employees exercise all options available before taking leave. If no other option is available to avoid an absence, the employee may be granted time off utilizing his/her accrued sick or vacation time. In some instances, employees without accrued leave MAY be eligible for an advance of sick leave for up to 30 days. An employees' longevity, past attendance, and other circumstances will be factors considered in approving or modifying the request, on a case by case basis.

To request an advance of sick leave hours, employees must make a formal request in writing to their immediate supervisor as soon as reasonably possible. The request must be approved and recommended by the Department Head and the Human Resources Director with final approval from the City Manager.

Part-time employees, including permanent part-time employees, work schedules are not guaranteed hours, and employees are only paid for time worked. Due to the unforeseen closure due to the health emergency, this may allow part-time employees to be eligible to file an unemployment claim with the Employment Development Department. Please visit https://www.edd.ca.gov/Unemployment/UI_Online.htm for more information regarding eligibility. Part-time employees can use up to 24 hours of sick leave per year.

6. Can an employee telecommute?

The city offers limited opportunities for telecommuting for specific assignments. In this case, Telecommuting alternative will be measured using the below as part of the request consideration:

- a. The nature of your responsibilities and whether the work you perform can effectively be performed remotely;

- b. The reason you are requesting to telecommute, if you are off work because you are ill, telecommuting is not available;
- c. Ultimately, approval of telecommuting requests is at management's discretion and must be authorized by your department director and the City Manager.
- d. If an employee is approved for a telecommuting assignment, the approval must be revisited and re-approved every 14 days by Human Resources and the City Manager. No telecommuting assignment shall be made permanent as a result of approval made during this crisis.
- e. Employees who are approved to work remotely will be required to submit a log as proof of work product to their supervisor daily. The log will be inspected and work verified before regular pay is recorded on the employee's timesheet.

7. Can employees get the COVID-19 test at one of the city's assigned medical clinics?

NO, if you are feeling ill while at work, you must inform your supervisor immediately. The Human Resources Director will meet with you ASAP to provide a quick temperature assessment. If you are determined to have a fever, you will be sent home and advised to see your healthcare provider immediately.

8. What happens if I cannot function due to the stress of the COVID -19 and the changes that are happening?

The city's contracts with MHN (Mental Health Network) to provide an EAP (Employee Assistance Program). This program is confidential and allows employees to receive confidential counseling services for a wide variety of issues impacting their professional and personal life. Please contact MHN at 800-977-7593 or www.members.mhn.com/inglewoodeap

9. Is the city canceling all meetings and events? Hiring postponements?

All public Board and Commission meetings are postponed unless otherwise determined by the Department. Department heads are directed to cancel, modify or postpone all non-essential public community events or group activities that require close contact and meetings with 50 or more participants. All city facilities and gathering places must attempt to provide recommended 6-foot social distancing, hand washing areas, and hand sanitizing alcohol based materials specified by LA County Public Health Guidelines. Employees are to forgo visits to other workgroups that are non-essential to the performance of their work. As the current situation unfolds, upcoming events and meetings may be canceled or postponed. Currently, all employment testing, hiring of new *full time staff* has been postponed until March 30, 2020.



**JAMES T. BUTTS, JR.
MAYOR**

RESOURCES

City of Inglewood Office of
Emergency Services website
[https://www.cityofinglewood.org/1033/
Office-of-Emergency-Services](https://www.cityofinglewood.org/1033/Office-of-Emergency-Services)

Los Angeles County Department of
Public Health
[http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/media
/Coronavirus/](http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/Coronavirus/)

California Department of Public
Health
<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/>

Center of Disease Control and
Prevention
[https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019
-ncov/index.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html)

World Health Organization
<https://www.who.int/>