

Civilian Personnel Guidance for DoD Components in Responding to Coronavirus Disease 2019

The Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (OUSD(P&R)), provides this civilian personnel guidance for DoD Components in responding to coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). This guidance is intended to identify human resources flexibilities to help DoD minimize risk to its civilian and other personnel and their families, as well as to ensure the readiness of our force to continue to execute our missions and our ability to support our domestic and international partners. Separate local rules and policies should be consulted for foreign national personnel. More comprehensive guidance from the Office of Personnel Management is attached. The latest information will be available at: [https:// www.dcpas.osd.mil/OD/EmergencyPreparedness](https://www.dcpas.osd.mil/OD/EmergencyPreparedness).

Supervisors have the discretion to utilize the following human resources flexibilities:

- **Telework.** Employees must occupy telework-ready positions and have a current telework agreement. DoD Components should immediately review their current telework policies and ensure that written telework agreements are in place for as many employees as possible. DoD Components are strongly encouraged to sign situational (ad hoc) telework agreements with all telework eligible employees currently without a signed telework agreement.
- **Alternative Work Schedules.** Alternative work schedules (i.e., compressed and flexible work schedules) must be authorized by DoD Component policy. Where civilian employees are represented by a labor union, a collective bargaining agreement must authorize such schedules.
- **Weather and Safety Leave.**
 - Supervisors must authorize weather and safety leave when:
 - An asymptomatic employee is subject to movement restrictions and is not a telework program participant.
 - An asymptomatic employee who is otherwise unable to safely travel to or perform duties at the worksite, as determined by their supervisor, and is not a telework program participant.
 - Supervisors generally may not authorize weather and safety leave to employees who are telework program participants.
- **Other Leave Flexibilities.**
 - Sick leave. If an employee is symptomatic and unable to perform official duties, the employee must use accrued sick leave. Weather and safety leave would not be appropriate. Employees may also use sick leave up to 104 hours to provide care for a family member who is ill. Advanced sick leave may be authorized.
 - Annual leave. Employees may use accrued annual leave for any reason, subject to management's discretion to approve and schedule such time. Advanced annual leave may be authorized.

- Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA). Employees may take FMLA leave up to a total of 12 workweeks of leave without pay for a serious health condition to care for themselves or a qualifying family member. Certain eligibility and restrictions apply.
- **Early Return of Dependents.** This is an effective tool that allows broad flexibility to allow dependents to move to a more favorable environment for their particular circumstances. The judicious use of this authority enhances quality of life and reduces support requirements in the affected area. Check with Component headquarters to determine appropriate approval authority.

Heads of DoD Components must take the following steps now:

- ✓ Review your continuity of operation (COOP) plan to ensure mission essential functions continue during the mass spread of illness or other health related conditions adversely affecting the population.
- ✓ Ensure the contact information for employees is assembled and up to date.
- ✓ Adjust DoD Component telework policy to allow employees to telework during an emergency (e.g., COOP event, office closure due to adverse or inclement weather, or pandemic health crisis) with a child or other persons requiring care or supervision at home.
- ✓ Review all civilian positions to determine if they are eligible to telework, update telework agreements, and conduct tests to determine technology and processes are in place for effective telework.
- ✓ Determine whether alternative work schedules are authorized, and how best to utilize the variety of types of schedules available to continue operations.
- ✓ Establish methods to exercise good health habits in the workplace at all times.
- ✓ Communicate best practices to the workforce, including:
 - regular hand washing (for at least 20 seconds, using soap and water);
 - avoid touching their eyes/nose/mouth,
 - avoid large gatherings;
 - avoid close contact with people who are sick;
 - contact their healthcare provider if they believe they are becoming sick; and
 - clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces and objects (e.g., counters, desktops, coffee pots) using regular household spray or wipes.
- ✓ Only those personnel identified in DoD guidance as requiring personal protective equipment (e.g., masks, gloves, etc.) are authorized to procure these items with government funds. Government funds may be used to procure hand sanitizer for placement in a common office location and to procure office cleaning supplies.