

## Temporary Leave Program in Response to COVID-19

January 1, 2021

### **PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this policy is to implement a temporary program to address employee absence needs related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **POLICY:**

The City of Plano is committed to the health, safety and well-being of our employees as we address our current situation with COVID-19. To this end, the following temporary policies will be instituted in an effort to address current workplace concerns while keeping our service level commitment to our citizens. The provisions detailed in this document are valid only during period of time the City's state of emergency declaration is activated.

For the purposes of this temporary policy, a COVID-19 related absence is any absence from the workplace necessitated by COVID-19 including but not limited to: employee's own health condition, health condition of a family or household member, school closure required by COVID-19. Furthermore, the City will treat this leave in the same manner it treats FMLA.

Employees who are at higher risk for complications from COVID-19 are encouraged to contact their health care provider at the first signs of illness for advice. Employees at higher risk for complications, especially those in positions designated under the City's Essential Governmental Functions during a potential outbreak, are encouraged to contact Mark Stephens ([Mstephens@plano.gov](mailto:Mstephens@plano.gov)), HR Compliance Administrator to confidentially discuss leave, reassignment, or accommodation options based on a qualifying medical condition.

The City of Plano will relax its normal policies regarding leave usage in the following manner:

- a. Employees may use any type of accrued leave in any order (i.e. sick, vacation, compensatory time) for any COVID-19 related absence.
- b. In the event of a COVID-19 related absence, employees are encouraged to provide as much advanced notice to their supervisors as possible. However, employees will not be disciplined for failing to follow any regular call-in procedures.
- d. We will not require a healthcare provider's note for employees who are sick with acute respiratory illness or flu-like symptoms to validate their illness or to return to work, as healthcare provider offices and medical facilities may be extremely busy and not able to provide such documentation in a timely way.

### **IN THE EVENT OF MANDATORY OR VOLUNTARY QUARANTINE:**

In the event of mandated quarantine by authorized government officials (i.e. Centers for Disease Control, Collin County Health Department, etc.), the employee may be eligible to telecommute as outlined in the Temporary Telecommuting Policy. If an employee is ill and/or telecommuting solutions are not available, the employee can use available personal leave (sick, vacation, comp time).

An employee may return to work following a period of leave for self-quarantine in accordance to the City's COVID-19 Exposure Procedures.

## **IN THE EVENT AN EMPLOYEE HAS SYMPTOMS ASSOCIATED WITH COVID-19:**

An employee who is experiencing COVID-19 symptoms (cough, fever, tightness of chest, shortness of breath, etc.) should seek the advice of a medical professional, who can direct him/her to get tested or potentially self-quarantine if needed. Employees who are generally ill (non-COVID-19 related) are asked to remain at home until they are fever/symptom-free for at least 72 hours without medication.

The City of Plano has relaxed our normal policies regarding leave usage, therefore employees may use any type of accrued leave in any order (sick, vacation, compensatory time). This provision applies to employees in the initial six-month period after hire as well.

## **IN THE EVENT AN EMPLOYEE IS DIAGNOSED WITH COVID-19**

In the event an employee is diagnosed with COVID-19, the employee is to follow the process depicted in the City's COVID-19 Exposure Guide. If the employee was diagnosed as a result of exposure at work, they will follow the work related exposure process depicted below. If the employee was diagnosed as a result of a non-work related matter, the employee can use available personal leave (sick, vacation, comp time).

## **IN THE EVENT OF A WORK RELATED EXPOSURE\*:**

Please see the City's COVID-19 Exposure Guide for more information.

## **IN THE EVENT OF CARING FOR A FAMILY MEMBER:**

If an employee is absent from work to care for a family member, the employee shall contact Human Resources to determine eligibility for FMLA and time-off will be in accordance with City of Plano Policy 212- Family Medical Leave. If the employee is not eligible for FMLA, the employee may be permitted to use available personal leave (sick, vacation, compensatory time), in accordance with City of Plano Policy 210-Leave.

## **IN THE EVENT OF FACILITY CLOSURE:**

The City is committed to the continuance of our business operations without interruption. However, the City Manager may determine to temporarily close certain city operations for the good of employees and the public. Any such decision will be made taking into consideration current information from the Collin County Health Department.

In the event City facilities are closed, employees are still expected to work. Some may be temporarily assigned to a different role based on organizational need or may have the ability to telecommute.

## **IN THE EVENT OF CLOSURE OF NON ESSENTIAL GOVERNMENTAL FUNCTIONS:**

Employees are expected to continue to work to support both our internal and external customers. However, only employees holding positions directly linked to the essential government functions below are expected to come to the workplace. All other employees are expected to work remotely using the

City's temporary telecommuting policy and should be available/on-call during normal working hours.

Employees are to follow these provisions unless they are symptomatic, under quarantine, under doctor directed self-isolation, are caring for a family member who is symptomatic or has tested positive for COVID-19. These employees are able to use available personal leave.

## **ESSENTIAL GOVERNMENT FUNCTIONS**

Below are City of Plano services needed to ensure the continuing operation of the government to provide for the health, safety and welfare of the public:

**City Management**

**City Attorney**

**City Secretary**

**City Council**

---

**First responders**

- **Fire Rescue personnel**
- **Emergency medical personnel**
- **Law enforcement personnel**
- **Dispatchers**
- **Emergency management personnel**

---

**Environmental Health**

---

**Signals**

---

**Water**

---

**Sewer**

---

**Roads and highways**

---

**Solid waste collection**

---

**Animal Services**

---

**Fleet Services**

---

**Warehouse**

---

**Technology Services**

- **Internet**
- **Telecommunications systems**
- **Business infrastructure**
- **Web-based services**

---

**Any support staff needed for the above services**

---

The provisions detailed above are valid only during period of time the Shelter in Place declaration is activated.

## **IN THE EVENT OF SCHOOL CLOSURE RESULTING IN CHILDCARE NEEDS:**

Employees whose school aged children are prohibited from attending school may be eligible to telecommute as outlined in the Temporary Telecommuting Policy. If the employee is not eligible to telecommute, the employee can use available personal leave (sick, vacation, comp time, etc.).

## **CITY'S EMERGENCY SICK LEAVE ADVANCEMENT LOAN:**

Full time City employees who have exhausted their vacation and sick leave may apply for an advancement loan of up to 80 hours of sick leave if they meet one of the following categories:

- a. The employee is subject to quarantine or isolation orders related to COVID-19;
- b. The employee has been advised by a health care provider to self-quarantine;
- c. The employee is symptomatic or seeking a diagnosis of COVID-19 or caring for a family member who is symptomatic or has been diagnosed with COVID-19; or
- d. The employee is caring for a son or daughter under 18 years old if their school or daycare is closed or unavailable.

After returning to work full time, the employee who has received an advancement of the sick leave loan shall reimburse the City at the rate of 15 percent (15%) of their sick leave accrual from each paycheck.

Any employee interested in applying for an advancement loan of sick leave must complete the Emergency Sick Leave Advancement Request Form and submit to a Human Resources ([HR Department](#)).

In addition, employees who do not have available leave may be addressed on a case by case basis as determined by the City Manager's Office and Human Resources when necessary, the employee may receive paid administrative leave.