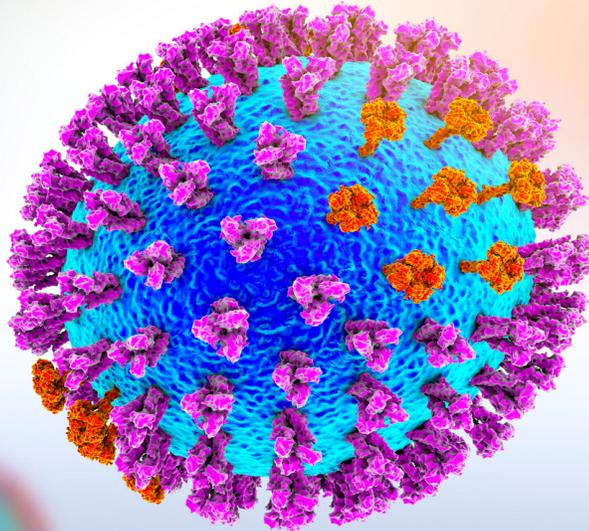




HR CONNECT

ISSUE 2 • APRIL 2020



**COVID
EDITION**

NEW POLICY ALERTS

Effective March 16, 2020, County Manager Wendell M. Davis signed the **Temporary COVID-19 Pandemic Employee policy**. The purpose of this policy is to provide all employees with guidance as information is provided. We are working with federal, state and local authorities to ensure that measures are in place to address the evolving concerns related to this pandemic.

This policy addresses emergency situations, mandatory closures, employee wellness, social distancing standards and telecommuting and guidance relative to personal and business travel.

With the current shelter in place order for the state of North Carolina, this is the best time to remind all employees how essential employees are defined. In the event of emergency situations, all employees are deemed essential personnel and will be required to report to work or remain on the premises if directed. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. Of course, this doesn't mean that we will require all employees to come onsite and work but if the need arises, any employee must be ready to report to work at any time.

(Continued on next page)

THE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

KATHY R. EVERETT-PERRY, ESQUIRE
CHRO/CHIEF EMPLOYMENT COUNSEL

In the midst of the cyber attack and the evolving COVID-19 pandemic, I want to offer a sincere thank you - for all that you have done so far, for what you are doing today and for what you will do in the coming days and weeks. These are unprecedented times and I value your ongoing professionalism.

As the number of positive COVID-19 cases are identified in Durham County, I want to provide information on available resources that may assist you through our current circumstances. We care deeply about the safety and well-being of each member of our organization. Therefore, I ask you to first, care for yourself -just as you care for others and please familiarize yourself with the available resources provided throughout this newsletter.

Please reach out to HumanResources@dconc.gov with any comments or suggestions.



NEW POLICY ALERTS (CONTINUED)

Employees providing direct emergency services and/or support services that interface with the public during the COVID-19 event or staffing the County's Emergency Operation Center are eligible for the County's 10% differential pay during the time period covered by the March 14, 2020 local emergency declaration. The differential pay must be authorized by your Department Director and General Manager.

Department Directors are encouraged to utilize telecommuting options, if feasible, and are responsible for the approval, denial and monitoring of these arrangements. During this emergency, a special focus for telecommuting is encouraged for people who are vulnerable to COVID-19. NC Department of Health and Human Services indicates those at high risk of severe illness from COVID-19 are people: over 65 years of age, and individuals with underlying health conditions including heart disease, lung disease, or diabetes, or with weakened immune systems. Employees are encouraged to discuss their status thereto with their supervisors.

Pursuant to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), employees are encouraged to stay home from work when sick with COVID-19 symptoms. An employee testing positive for the COVID-19 should inform his/her supervisor of any guidance received from the Public Health Department related to himself/herself and others in the workplace. Additionally, the employee is required to contact Human Resources at HumanResources@dconc.gov, as additional steps may be required pursuant to the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA).

For the full policy, please find it on <https://www.dconc.gov/county-departments/departments-f-z/public-information/covid-19>.

EMPLOYEE RIGHTS

PAID SICK LEAVE AND EXPANDED FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE UNDER THE FAMILIES FIRST CORONAVIRUS RESPONSE ACT

The **Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA or Act)** requires certain employers to provide their employees with paid sick leave and expanded family and medical leave for specified reasons related to COVID-19. These provisions will apply from April 1, 2020 through December 31, 2020.

▶ PAID LEAVE ENTITLEMENTS

Generally, employers covered under the Act must provide employees:

Up to two weeks (80 hours, or a part-time employee's two-week equivalent) of paid sick leave based on the higher of their regular rate of pay, or the applicable state or Federal minimum wage, paid at:

- 100% for qualifying reasons #1-3 below, up to \$511 daily and \$5,110 total;
- ⅔ for qualifying reasons #4 and 6 below, up to \$200 daily and \$2,000 total; and
- Up to 12 weeks of paid sick leave and expanded family and medical leave paid at ⅓ for qualifying reason #5 below for up to \$200 daily and \$12,000 total.

A part-time employee is eligible for leave for the number of hours that the employee is normally scheduled to work over that period.

▶ ELIGIBLE EMPLOYEES

In general, employees of private sector employers with fewer than 500 employees, and certain public sector employers, are eligible for up to two weeks of fully or partially paid sick leave for COVID-19 related reasons (see below). *Employees who have been employed for at least 30 days* prior to their leave request may be eligible for up to an additional 10 weeks of partially paid expanded family and medical leave for reason #5 below.

▶ QUALIFYING REASONS FOR LEAVE RELATED TO COVID-19

An employee is entitled to take leave related to COVID-19 if the employee is unable to work, including unable to **telework**, because the employee:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. is subject to a Federal, State, or local quarantine or isolation order related to COVID-19;2. has been advised by a health care provider to self-quarantine related to COVID-19;3. is experiencing COVID-19 symptoms and is seeking a medical diagnosis;4. is caring for an individual subject to an order described in (1) or self-quarantine as described in (2); | <ol style="list-style-type: none">5. is caring for his or her child whose school or place of care is closed (or child care provider is unavailable) due to COVID-19 related reasons; or6. is experiencing any other substantially-similar condition specified by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. |
|---|---|

▶ ENFORCEMENT

The U.S. Department of Labor's Wage and Hour Division (WHD) has the authority to investigate and enforce compliance with the FFCRA. Employers may not discharge, discipline, or otherwise discriminate against any employee who lawfully takes paid sick leave or expanded family and medical leave under the FFCRA, files a complaint, or institutes a proceeding under or related to this Act. Employers in violation of the provisions of the FFCRA will be subject to penalties and enforcement by WHD.



WAGE AND HOUR DIVISION
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

For additional information
or to file a complaint:
1-866-487-9243
TTY: 1-877-889-5627
dol.gov/agencies/whd



Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) ***Emergency Paid Sick Leave Policy***

Per new federal legislation recently passed called The **Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA)**, the County will provide eligible employees with emergency paid sick leave under certain conditions.

Eligibility: All employees (full-time, part-time, temporary) are eligible for emergency paid sick leave. *First responders are excluded from this policy*

Reason for Leave: You may take emergency paid sick leave if you are unable to work (or telework) because:

1. You are subject to a federal, state, or local quarantine or isolation order related to COVID-19;
2. You have been advised by a health care provider to self-quarantine because of COVID-19;
3. You are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 and are seeking a medical diagnosis;
4. You are caring for an individual or are advised to quarantine or isolate;
5. You are caring for a child whose school or place of care is closed, or whose childcare provider is unavailable, due to COVID-19 precautions; or
6. You are experiencing substantially similar conditions as specified by the Secretary of Health and Human Services, in consultation with the Secretaries of Labor and Treasury.

Duration/Compensation: Employees are entitled to:

- Full-time employees: 80 hours of pay at their regular pay rate. However, for reasons 4, 5, and 6 above, sick leave is paid at two-thirds the employee's regular rate.
- Part-time employees: Pay for the number of hours the employee works, on average, over a two-week period.

Paid leave under this policy is limited to \$511 per day (\$5,110 in total) where leave is taken for reasons 1, 2, and 3 described above; and \$200 per day (\$2,000 in total) where leave is taken for reasons 4, 5, or 6.

Leave Rules: You may elect to use emergency paid sick leave before using any accrued paid leave. No leave provided by the County before April 1, 2020 may be credited against this emergency paid sick leave entitlement. In addition, emergency paid sick leave expires on December 31, 2020.

Requesting Leave: If you need to take emergency paid sick leave, provide notice as soon as possible. Employees not reporting to work must notify their supervisor and or another member of their management chain within thirty minutes of the start of the work shift. In addition, you will need to reach out to FMLASource at 1-877-462-3652 or via www.fmlasource.com to initiate this request.



Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA)

Expanded Family & Medical Leave

The **Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA or Act)** requires Durham County Government (the County) to provide employees with expanded family and medical leave for specified reasons related to COVID-19.

Eligibility: All employees (full-time, part-time, temporary) who have worked for the County for at least 30 days prior to the need for leave are eligible for Emergency Family and Medical Leave. *First responders are excluded from this policy.* Please note that this new act does not change the eligibility requirements for regular FMLA leave.

New FMLA Qualifying Reason: Lack of Child Care Due to COVID-19

The Emergency FMLA Act amends the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) of 1993 by the following:

- Added a new qualifying reason that provides 12 weeks of leave when an employee is unable to work – either onsite or remotely – due to a need to care for the son or daughter under 18 years of age of such employee if the school or place of care has been closed, or the child care provider is unavailable due to an emergency with respect to COVID-19 as declared by a federal, state, or local authority;
- FFCRA § 3102 provides in part, that a “childcare provider” under the Act is defined as one who provides childcare services on a regular basis and receives compensation, and pursuant to 658P of the Child Care and Development Block 7 Grant Act of 1990, a child care provider is: (6) Eligible child care provider-The term ‘eligible child care provider’ means- (A) a center-based child care provider, a group home child care provider, a family child care provider, or other provider of child care services for compensation that- (i) is licensed, regulated, or registered under State law as described in section 658E(c)(2)(F); and (ii) satisfies the State and local requirements, including those referred to in section 658E(c)(2)(I); applicable to the child care services it provides; or (B) a child care provider that is 18 years of age or older who provides child care services only to eligible children who are, by affinity or consanguinity, or by court decree, the grandchild, great grandchild, sibling (if such provider lives in a separate residence), niece, or nephew of such provider, if such provider complies with any applicable requirements that govern child care provided by the relative involved.
- Leave taken under the Emergency FMLA Act is paid leave after a 10-day waiting period; an employee may choose to use accrued leave for the 10-day waiting period. In no instance can the County require the employee to use accrued leave during the waiting period;
- After the 10-day period, the County is required to pay full-time employees no less than two-thirds the employee’s regular rate for the number of hours the employee would otherwise be normally scheduled. The new Act limits this pay entitlement to \$200 per day and \$10,000 in the aggregate per employee; employees who work a part-time or an irregular schedule are entitled to be paid based on the average number of hours the employee worked for the six months prior to taking leave; employees who have worked for less than six months prior to leave are entitled to the employee’s reasonable expectation at hiring of the average number of hours the employee would normally be scheduled to work.
- The regular rules under the FMLA will apply to job reinstatement. The County has the same obligation as under traditional FMLA to return any employee who has taken Emergency FMLA leave to the same or equivalent position upon the return to work;

Leave Rules: Employees are still limited to a total of twelve weeks of FMLA leave within a 12-month period for all reasons combined. Employees who have already used up their FMLA allotment for the year are not entitled to emergency FMLA leave.

Requesting Leave: If you need to take emergency paid sick leave, provide notice as soon as possible. Employees not reporting to work must notify their supervisor and or another member of their management chain within thirty minutes of the start of the work shift. In addition, you will need to reach out to FMLASource at 1-877-462-3652 or via www.fmlasource.com to initiate this request.

HOW CAN I STAY FOCUSED WHILE WORKING REMOTELY?

Working from a remote location can be challenging, whether you are working from a global office, a client's office or just from your home. An unfamiliar work environment comes with its own set of obstacles and distractions. Consider the following information to learn how to stay focused in this new work environment.

Write Down Daily Goals

To combat any distractions brought on by the new work environment, create lists of what you want to achieve every day. Make each list at the end of the work day for the next day's tasks. Writing down what you want to accomplish for the day gives you a sense of direction. During the day, as you complete each task, cross it off. This system can help you to stay focused and motivated in order to eventually cross off all the tasks by the end of the work day.

Ergonomic Exercises

Your new workspace may take some time to get used to. For example, the chair, desk, keyboard or wrist pad may feel different from the ones you normally use in your regular office. As a result, your body may feel tense. Incorporate ergonomic exercises into your day, if possible and appropriate. Some ergonomic exercises can include shoulder rolls, wrist rolls, hand stretches and hand grips (squeezing a stress ball or hand grip). These simple exercises can get your blood flowing and keep your body relaxed. If your body is relieved of tension, you will be more likely to focus well.

Personalize Your Work Environment

If you have to work remotely for many days or weeks, personalize your workspace if possible. Put up a photo of your family or friends, add some small art pieces or keep a favorite mug on your desk. Having something familiar to look at throughout the day will be calming and also give you motivation to continue working hard.

Stay in Touch with Co-workers

In your usual work environment, working in proximity of your co-workers can keep you focused. This is because you are all likely working toward the same or similar goals under the same circumstances. Seeing them hard at work can be reassuring and help you stay on task.

Unfortunately, since you cannot be around your co-workers while working remotely, it is important to keep in touch with them via email, instant message or phone. Of course, you should not contact them excessively, but it may be a good idea to check in with the ones whom you work closely with at certain points during the day or week. Not only will this keep you all updated on one another's progress on mutual projects, but it will also remind you that you are not working alone and help you stay focused.

Stick to Your Regular Routine

Although it may be difficult in a new environment, try to stick to your regular work routine if possible. This means starting and finishing work at the same times, as well as taking your regular lunch break. It also means doing the same activities that you normally do. For example, if you usually enjoy going for a walk outside for part of your lunch, continue doing so while working remotely. Similarly, if you like to have snacks at certain times during the day, continue doing this as well. Sticking to your usual routine will create a sense of stability, keeping you focused on what is most important: the work.



Source: ComPsych Guidance Resources, Durham County's EAP Provider

Prevent the spread of COVID-19 in

7 STEPS

- 01** Wash your hands frequently
- 02** Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth
- 03** Cover your cough using the bend of your elbow or a tissue
- 04** Avoid crowded places and close contact with anyone that has fever or cough
- 05** Stay at home if you feel unwell
- 06** If you have a fever, cough and difficulty breathing, seek medical care early — but call first
- 07** Get information from trusted sources



SOURCE: WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

STRESS AND COPING



The outbreak of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) may be stressful for people. Fear and anxiety about a disease can be overwhelming and cause strong emotions in adults and children. Coping with stress will make you, the people you care about, and your community stronger.

Everyone reacts differently to stressful situations. How you respond to the outbreak can depend on your background, the things that make you different from other people, and the community you live in.

People who may respond more strongly to the stress of a crisis include:

- Older people and people with chronic diseases who are at higher risk for COVID-19
- Children and teens
- People who are helping with the response to COVID-19, like doctors and other health care providers, or first responders
- People who have mental health conditions including problems with substance use.

Stress during an infectious disease outbreak can include:

- Fear and worry about your own health and the health of your loved ones
- Changes in sleep or eating patterns
- Difficulty sleeping or concentrating
- Worsening of chronic health problems
- Increased use of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs



Things you can do to support yourself

- Take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories, including social media. Hearing about the pandemic 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.

Reduce stress in yourself and others

[Sharing the facts](#) about COVID-19 and understanding the actual risk to yourself and people you care about can make an outbreak less stressful. When you share accurate information about COVID-19 you can help make people feel less stressed and allow you to connect with them. Learn more about [taking care of your emotional health](#).

Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/managing-stress-anxiety.html>

COVID-19 CHILDCARE ASSISTANCE FOR DURHAM

We understand finding childcare might be difficult during these times. Here are some resources to help you find the coverage you need.

Find Childcare NC at 1-888-600-1685

- 100 referral specialists working to find care options close to home or work for ages 0-12 years old.
- A resource for employees that provide necessary services to, or care for, members of our communities.

NC Division of Health & Human Services

- Visit the [NCDHHS](https://www.ncdhhs.gov) to find childcare in your area.

Childcare Services Association

- Do a [referral search](#) through the Childcare Referral Central.
- Call 1-855-327-5933 to speak with a childcare counselor.
- Email referral@childcareservices.org to be connected with a referral counselor.



Public Health

Before you visit the Employee Wellness Clinic ...

Please call first (x7925)!



Due to the shortage of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).



These webinar trainings can help those dealing with uncertainty amid the COVID-19 outbreak and those navigating the transition to working from home. Click the links below to access the recordings.

[Dealing with Uncertainty About the Coronavirus](#)

[Navigating Your Work From Home Transition Due to the Coronavirus](#)

Upcoming Webinars offered by ComPsych – Guidance Resources (EAP)

TOOLS TO HANDLE COVID-19-RELATED STRESS

FRI, APR 3, 2020 3:00 PM - 4:00 PM EDT

This workshop focuses on specific activities to reduce stress caused by COVID-19. Participants will review proven stress-reducing techniques to such as: being accountable and recognizing the choices we can make, engaging in activities that encourage us such as hobbies, remembering past successes and how we have survived previous stressful situations, and taking breaks where we step away from a stressor for a moment of personal renewal. All of these techniques can help us to de-stress, and then do what we need to do in a more effective way.

<https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/9089617952626063883>

SELF-ISOLATING TOGETHER: HOW TO GET ALONG WITH YOUR PARTNER AND KIDS DURING THE PANDEMIC

TUE, APR 7, 2020 3:00 PM - 4:00 PM EDT

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to many changes in our everyday lives. We're now spending more time than ever with the people we love. While there are many benefits to this added family time there are certainly struggles as well. Juggling multiple schedules, emotions and needs - all in one space - can be challenging. This session will help you navigate your relationship with your partner/spouse and kids while supporting your own wellbeing.

<https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/3891838360524330507>

BEING AN EFFECTIVE MANAGER DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

FRI, APR 10, 2020 3:00 PM - 4:00 PM EDT

The way we manage our departments and staff, as well as our personal lives, during this time of the coronavirus pandemic is new to everyone. One could say we are all in this together and to an extent that is true. However, we are also all individuals so we will all face the crisis differently. One thing we have in common as managers though is that we are still responsible for the productivity of our departments and staff. In this session we'll give you some suggestions and tips to help you in your job as a manager.

[HTTPS://REGISTER.GOTOWEBINAR.COM/REGISTER/7936860275251832843](https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/7936860275251832843)

Contact Us...Anytime, Anywhere

No-cost, confidential solutions to life's challenges.

Personal issues, planning for life events or simply managing daily life can affect your work, health and family. ComPsych Guidance Resources provides support, resources and information for personal and work-life issues. Guidance Resources is company-sponsored, confidential and provided at no charge to you and your dependents. Below are some of the services provided to employees.

Confidential Emotional Support

Our highly trained clinicians will listen to your concerns and help you or your family members with any issues, including:

- Anxiety, depression, stress
- Grief, loss & life adjustments
- Relationship/marital conflicts



Work-Life Solutions

Our specialist provide qualified referrals and resources for just about anything on your to-do list, such as:

- Finding child and elder care
- Hiring movers or home repair contractors
- Planning events, locating pet care



Legal Guidance

Talk to our attorneys for practical assistance with your most pressing legal issues, including:

- Divorce, adoption, family law, wills, trusts and more
- Need representation? Get a free 30-minute consultation and a 25% reduction in fees.



Financial Resources

Our financial experts can assist with a wide range of issues. Talk to us about:

- Retirement planning, taxes
- Relocation, mortgages, insurance
- Budgeting, debt, bankruptcy and more



Online Support

GuidanceResources Online is your 24/7 link to vital information, tools, and support. Log on for:

- Articles, podcasts, videos, slideshows
- On-demand trainings
- "Ask the Expert" personal responses to your questions



Your ComPsych Guidance Resources program offers someone to talk to and resources to consult whenever and wherever you need them.

Call: 800.272.7255

TDD: 800.697.0353

Your toll-free number gives you direct, 24/7 access to a Guidance Consultant, who will answer your questions and, if needed, refer you to a counselor or other resources.

Online: guidanceresources.com

App: GuidanceResources Now

Web ID: COM589

Log on today to connect directly with a Guidance Consultant about your issue or to consult articles, podcasts, videos and other helpful tools.

24/7 Support, Resources & Information

