



Memo

To: Otero County Staff
From: Amy White-Tanabe
Date: March 16, 2020
Re: **Coronavirus (COVID-19) Guidelines and Frequently Asked Questions**

In an ongoing effort to keep employees informed and out of an **abundance** of caution to protect our most vulnerable, I want to take a moment to provide some information. The health and safety of our employees and their families is our priority. I want to ensure you we are taking every precaution to help prevent the spread of this virus. With that in mind, county leadership has implemented some new guidelines and frequently asked questions for all employees to follow.

What is Changing Today?

- We continue to encourage employees to exercise good hygiene and wash hands often.
- We have additional disinfecting supplies on order and will provide those to employees who interact with the public as soon as possible.
- The county is increasing its cleaning protocols to include disinfection during business hours in public areas.
- All meetings that involve outside agencies need to be converted to phone or webinars.
- We are practicing social distancing. Travel for county business and attendance at trainings and conferences that include participants outside of the county are canceled or postponed through the end of May. (Some travel may be required per department guidelines, i.e. DHS)
- At this time, public hearings will continue as scheduled.
- Other than the items listed above, it is business as usual at this time. This situation is quickly evolving, and new information or protocols will be shared as quickly as possible.
- We are encouraging our customers to use online services or conduct business by phone. We are posting signs at our buildings to discourage people from entering if they are sick.
- We are not wearing masks. Public health officials are consistently giving advice that masks are not helpful, and in fact could be harmful, to those that are healthy. We will not be authorizing employees to wear masks at work (unless necessary for job safety requirements or permitted through a health accommodation.)

What if I'm Sick?

- If you do not feel well, please stay home.
- If employees come to work displaying flu-like symptoms (respiratory problems, fever, etc.) they will be asked to leave.
- Employees who have flu-like symptoms will be asked to stay home while they are sick and for another 24 hours after all symptoms are gone.

- Employees that are being tested for coronavirus will be granted additional leave, up to 14 days, by the county. The employee and/or the supervisor should contact Human Resources to let them know that employee is taking this leave.
- The county is not requiring doctor's notes for employees that are experiencing flu-like symptoms (either prior to taking leave or when returning). Currently, we do not want to force employees to go to medical facilities to protect them from potential exposure.
- Managers and supervisors should report situations in which employees are exhibiting flu-like symptoms to their Director. Directors should report the situation to the County Administrator.

What if I Don't Want to Come to Work?

- The county is not accommodating employees who would prefer not to come to work at this time. We recognize some employees may prefer to stay home, but at this time there is no indication that our workplace is more dangerous than the general community.
- Individual employees with special circumstances, including medical conditions that may warrant staying away from the workplace, should contact Human Resources to determine if an accommodation is appropriate.

What if Customers Appear to be Sick?

It is appropriate to ask customers displaying flu-like symptoms to leave our facilities and conduct their business via phone or email. These may be difficult conversations and we encourage employees to work with their supervisors in these situations.

What if I Have Traveled?

Employees who travel to any of the locations identified by the CDC as high risk for Coronavirus, will be required to stay out of the workplace for 14 days after their return. Employees should work with their supervisor to determine if work from home is an option. If not, the county will provide leave for the 14-day period.

Can I Work from Home?

Currently, the county is not changing our work from home policy. Employees who are currently authorized to work from home may continue to do so, but others will be expected to conduct business as usual.

What if there is a Confirmed Case in my Workplace?

The county will rely upon the direction of the Health Department regarding potential exposure at the workplace. If employees or customers are known to be exposed, the Health Department will give direction on quarantine and whether offices or buildings are closed.

What will Happen if the Virus Outbreak Gets Worse?

The county is continuing to work on our planning in the case of greater impact to our operations. We are identifying essential functions and essential personnel. These are not the most important functions or employees but are the functions and employees that are most critical to our citizens during a time of crisis. We will provide more information as these plans develop.

Thank you for your ongoing professionalism and dedication to serve. We will get through this together.

Please see the following websites for up to date information:

www.cdc.gov Centers for Disease Control & Prevention

www.colorado.gov/cdphe Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment

www.oterogov.com Otero County