



State of Alaska COVID-19 Leave Policy

I. Purpose

On March 11, 2020, Governor Mike Dunleavy issued Administrative Order #315 and declared a State of Emergency in the State of Alaska as a result of the outbreak of COVID-19. The outbreak of COVID-19 throughout the world is a public disaster that significantly impacts the life and health of our people, the economy of Alaska, property and the public peace.

The Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) was enacted into federal law on March 18, 2020 and is effective April 1, 2020 until December 31, 2020.

In response to the FFCRA expiring on December 31, 2020, the following guidelines have been updated and address work restrictions and pay provisions for employees during the COVID-19 public health emergency effective January 1, 2021.

II. Guidelines

A. Public Health Guidance

For the signs, symptoms, and risk factors associated with the COVID-19 illness, and current public health guidance, please check the following Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) websites:

Please follow current CDC and DHSS public health guidance as recommended below.

- [What to Do If You Are Sick | CDC](#)
- [Symptoms of Coronavirus | CDC](#)
- [COVID-19 Guidance: Businesses and Employers | CDC](#)
- [Isolate If You Are Sick | CDC](#)
- [COVID-19: When to Quarantine | CDC](#)
- [Symptoms of Coronavirus | CDC](#)
- [COVID-19: Symptoms \(alaska.gov\)](#)
- [COVID-19: Quarantine guidance \(alaska.gov\)](#)
- [COVID-19: What to do if you are sick \(alaska.gov\)](#)

B. Teleworking and Workplace Configuration Guidance

State agencies, corporations, and departments shall continue to explore and promote all possible options to expand teleworking for state employees.

If a workplace configuration does not allow for employees to be safely distanced from others (about 6 feet or 2 meters), then the employer should work to alter the workplace configuration, schedule, and explore possible teleworking options so social distancing in the workplace is achieved.

These efforts are done with the recognition of current extenuating circumstances and will not create a past practice or expectation of continuation of teleworking arrangements made to accommodate this emergent situation.

B.1 Employees Requesting Teleworking

Normal teleworking and leave rules apply when agencies are operating under normal operating hours and plans. Teleworking is available to employees only in management-approved positions, and in accordance with the State of Alaska Teleworking Policy. Section II.E. of the policy states:

Management retains the right to approve or deny requests based on established criteria.

Teleworking should only be considered if mutually beneficial for the agency and the employee. In deciding whether to approve an employee's request for teleworking, the supervisor shall consider the following factors:

1. The position's suitability for teleworking;
2. The employee's suitability for teleworking; and
3. The mutual benefits to the agency and the employee.

Note, currently the State is approving situational teleworking requests on a case by case basis.

B.2 Telework-Ineligible Employees

State of Alaska employees not eligible for teleworking because of job function, duty and location include, but are not limited to, roles that are essential to public safety, safety site visits, child welfare, and some positions within 24/7 facilities. As necessary to protect employees in these roles, the state will provide employees with the necessary personal protective equipment (PPE) and training to protect themselves and the public while performing necessary job functions.

C. Travel Guidance

If you are returning from travel, please adhere to the following guidance:

1. If you have traveled anywhere out-of-state or international and are entering Alaska **you must:**
 - Follow the requirements in the State of Alaska Health Order NO. 6 International and Interstate Travel - Effective December 16, 2020.
 - Contact your employer and **do not go to work** while/if you are required to self-quarantine or follow strict social distancing after you return.
 - An employee may be required to telework during the self-quarantine period. If the employee is directed to telework and declines to do so, the employee must use their own accrued leave or be in a leave without pay status for the time in self-quarantine.

Note, employees are not eligible for SOA COVID-19 leave if travel is not in compliance with the State of Alaska's travel mandates. This includes travel that is not for critical personal needs or nonessential travel. See section D.1 for more detail.

2. Health Guidance for Returning Travelers

- Take your temperature with a thermometer two times a day and monitor for fever (>100.3°F). Also watch for cough or trouble breathing.
- Do not take public transportation during the time you are practicing social distancing.

- Avoid crowded places (such as shopping centers and movie theaters) and limit your activities in public.
- Keep your distance from others (about 6 feet or 2 meters).
- If you get sick with fever (>100.3°F), cough, or shortness of breath, please call your health provider.
- If you seek medical care for other reasons, such as dialysis, call ahead to your doctor and tell them about your recent travel.

D. Guidance for COVID Leave Use

D.1. Qualifying COVID-19 Leave Reasons

If the employer has determined there are no teleworking options for an employee, SOA COVID-19 leave may be taken for the following qualifying reasons:

- a) You are subject to a Federal, State, or local quarantine or isolation order related to COVID-19 (i.e. travel self-quarantine);
- b) You tested positive for COVID-19;
- c) You are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 and seeking a medical diagnosis;

To be eligible to take SOA COVID -19 leave under (a) above, the individual must have traveled for critical personal needs. Critical personal needs are defined: as those needs that are critical to meeting a person's individual or family needs. Those needs include buying, selling, or delivering groceries and home goods; obtaining fuel for vehicles or residential needs; transporting family members for out-of-home care, essential health needs, or for purposes of child custody exchanges; receiving essential health care; providing essential health care to a family member; obtaining other important goods; and engaging in subsistence activities.

To be eligible to take SOA COVID-19 leave under (b) and (c) above, the individual must be seeking a medical diagnosis or have been advised by a health care provider (HCP) to self-quarantine.

If you are a full-time employee and have a qualifying reason as outlined above, you are eligible for up to 10 work days (75/80 hours) maximum of paid sick leave in accordance with your regularly scheduled workweek hours. Part-time employees are eligible for paid sick leave based on the number of hours equal to the average number of hours the employee works over a typical 2- week period. SOA COVID-19 leave is capped at 10 work days.

With supervisor approval, the employee may be released for up to ten (10) work days:

- with no loss of pay under COVID-19 Leave;
- using union bank leave; or
- on accrued leave.

In the event a leave eligible employee meets the provisions under (a), (b), or (c) above on more than one separate occasion, they may be eligible for an additional 10 days of SOA COVID-19 leave with approval. In no instance will an employee be paid more than 10 days of SOA COVID-19 leave for any single eligibility event.

D.2 How to Request Leave

To request SOA COVID-19 leave employees must complete “Employee Verification for Paid Leave Due to Coronavirus (COVID) 2019 form.” The employer retains the right to request written verification confirming the circumstances warranting self-quarantine or documentation from a health care provider supporting the employee’s request for SOA COVID-19 leave.

D.3 General Leave Provisions

If during the period of an employee’s self-quarantine, an employee is unable to continue teleworking due to illness (unrelated to COVID-19), personal needs, or other factors, the employee is required to use accrued leave or leave from a union leave bank, in accordance with state policies, procedures, and any applicable collective bargaining agreement.

The employee is not permitted to report to the worksite during the time they are in self-quarantine for one of the qualifying reasons above. Once you begin taking SOA COVID-19 leave for one or more of these qualifying reasons, you must continue to take paid sick leave each day until you either (1) use the full amount of paid sick leave or (2) no longer have a qualifying reason for taking paid sick leave. Please note, your supervisor may approve for you to take SOA COVID-19 leave intermittently while teleworking.

E. Supervisors

Supervisors who notice an employee exhibiting contagious sick symptoms consistent with COVID-19 at the workplace (e.g., fever plus coughing or difficulty breathing) should require the employee to leave for home.

Supervisors can call their HR Manager, or the Division of Personnel and Labor Relations for further guidance.

F. Office Closure

In the event of a department, office, or facility closure, instructions will be provided to employees regarding their work status (e.g., teleworking, administrative leave, employee required to work in operations that must provide public safety or other essential public business).

G. Review of Policy

The State reserves the right to modify the policy in order to ensure that the components of this policy advance appropriate public health policy and are not disruptive to the operations of government. This entire policy shall be reviewed no later than fourteen (14) days from its issuance.

H. COVID-19 Related Questions

- a. www.coronavirus.alaska.gov
- b. For non-clinical questions call 2-1-1