




December 10, 2020

MEMORANDUM

TO: Department Heads

FROM: Brandi Hopkins, Director of Human Resources

SUBJECT: **County Operations During Regional “Stay-At-Home” Order**



As you are aware, the San Joaquin Valley Region was placed under a Stay-At-Home Order beginning Sunday, December 6, 2020. This order is in place for a minimum of three weeks. During the Board of Supervisors meeting this week, the Board consensus was to provide Department Heads the discretion to evaluate the essential services of their department regarding telework while maintaining the delivery of essential services, including temporarily modifying in operating hours to meet the service delivery needs.

In response, the County Administrator’s Office and Human Resources have developed the following guidelines for department heads to consider.

**Continued Delivery of County Services**

The County is responsible for the delivery of essential community services. It is crucial that these services continue during these difficult times. **County departments and associated facilities necessary for the delivery of essential services must remain open to the public, unless the Board of Supervisors has approved closure.**

**Keeping our Employees Safe**

Keeping employees safe as we deliver essential government services is our priority. To ensure our employees safety, department heads should consider the following when evaluating the ability to offer telework to employees:

- It is anticipated the County will remain under the Stay at Home Orders until the end of 2020; department heads should consider approving additional time off requests that are frequently received this time of year. For example, if a department generally approves a 50%-time off rate this time of year, perhaps a 70% time off rate is appropriate.
- Consider work from home arrangements for employees whose job duties are conducive to working from home. These arrangements should be evaluated on a

case-by-case basis. The Department is encouraged to implement all tools available to monitor productivity in meeting essential service demands.

- Participation in the telework program is not mandatory.
  - The duration of the work from home arrangement is still expected to be short-term due to the State's Stay at Home Order or other public health orders and the **County can require any employee to return to regular, in-office work at any time. Departments should communicate this information to employees when approving an expanded telework schedule.**
  - Information Systems Division can assist with the establishment of secure connections to the County's systems as appropriate. Please contact Chris Cruz, Information Systems Director, if you have questions (468-0215).
  - All employees who are approved to telework should have a signed telework agreement on file with the department. The telework agreement should include the employees' work schedule to ensure FLSA requirements are met, when applicable. Telework Agreement templates are available through HR and on the employee COVID website.
  - Teleworking employees must be on an approved agreed upon work schedule. Employees should still submit time off requests for hours in which they cannot work.
  - Teleworking is not designed to be a replacement for appropriate child care. Although an individual employee's schedule may be modified to accommodate child care needs, the focus of the arrangement must remain on job performance and meeting business demands.
  - It should be the department's expectation that employees who telework provide daily workload information so that productivity can be measured appropriately. Employees who telework should be reachable just as if they were in the office. Availability applies to the employer and customers the employee serves.
  - Departments should ensure there is consistency as to how telework is authorized and develop policy guidelines for approval of telework.
- If teleworking is not available, due to operational needs, departments should continue to consider the following:
    - Non-traditional (alternative work schedules) work schedules can be a tool for improving social distancing. Consider alternate work schedules for essential employees that must perform their duties in a County facility.
    - For those employees that are in a defined "at-risk" group or whose duties are not conducive to working from home, liberal approval of requests for non-sick leave usage (i.e., Vacation, Administrative Leave, Floating Holiday) should be considered.
    - Limit the number of people in County facilities at any given time to allow for appropriate social distancing.
    - Regularly disinfecting employee workspaces and high-touch surfaces in public areas.

- Increase availability of hand sanitizers and tissues in high-use areas.
- Decrease social contacts in the workplace.
- Eliminate large work-related gatherings and non-essential travel.
- Remind employees to call their supervisor prior to the start of their shift if they are experiencing an illness or symptoms of COVID-19.
- Employees should stay home if they are sick.

### Face Coverings

The State of California now requires face coverings to be worn whenever a person is “outside the home.” The attached Face Covering Guidance was provided to all Department Heads last Friday, please review for the few defined exceptions. In the workplace face covering should be worn 100% of the time in compliance with these guidelines. This means individuals located in cubicles must wear a face covering at their desks, unless they are eating or drinking.

### Disaster Workers

Remember, all County employees are defined as “Disaster Workers” and may be called back to work at any time. Human Resources will continue to monitor this rapidly evolving situation and communicate vital information as quickly as possible.

**As each department may implement remote work and office procedures as appropriate, please communicate these updates to your employees.** The employee COVID-19 website remains a resource to your staff:  
<https://www.sjgov.org/covid19/employees>.

Thank you for your on-going commitment and patience during a year of ever changing and evolving rules, guidance and unknown circumstances.

cc: County Administrators Office  
County Counsel  
Katherine Harris, Deputy Director of Human Resources  
HR Principal Personnel Analysts  
County Labor Organizations