

## **August 30, 2021 COVID-19 Informational FAQs**

### What steps will the MOA take to ensure the workplace is safe for all employees?

Departments will practice physical distancing, disinfection of high touch areas, provide hand sanitizer for both customers and employees, provide disinfecting wipes for employee use, and create appropriate separation within workspaces wherever practicable. Where physical distancing is not feasible, departments should work with HR-Labor Relations to determine the path forward.

Refraining from eating with others in break rooms, limiting gathering in conference rooms, and increasing use of Microsoft Teams may also help slow and/or lessen the spread of the virus. For telecommuting options, please see below.

Daily and frequent self-monitoring for COVID-19 symptoms is encouraged and any employee experiencing symptoms associated with COVID-19 should consider immediate testing to avoid further transmission.

The MOA encourages everyone to taking the following steps:

- Talk with your medical provider to become informed about the various vaccine options that are available and to determine whether vaccination is a medically appropriate option for you that may prevent severe illness or hospitalization if you contract COVID-19. If you do not have a medical provider and would like information about COVID-19 vaccines, you can call 531-5100. Information on vaccine clinics is available at <https://anchoragecovidvaccine.org/>.
- Consider wearing a mask in public indoor settings, if you are in an area of [substantial or high transmission](#).
- Practice physical distancing.
- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds or sanitize your hands frequently.
- [Get tested](#) if you experience [COVID-19 symptoms](#) or are in “close contact” to someone with COVID-19, whether you have had the disease, are vaccinated or are unvaccinated.

### Mandatory Self-Reporting:

Employees are required to report any of the following: occurrence of any COVID-19 symptoms, such as the following, when not attributable to other known causes: fever, chills, cough, shortness of breath, fatigue, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea, or new loss of taste or smell; “close contact” with another individual who tests or is presumed to be a positive case of COVID-19. “Close Contact” is defined by CDC guidelines as a cumulative 15 minutes or more of contact within 6 feet of distance (with or without masks) in a 24-hour period.

Will employees be sent home if they have COVID-19 symptoms?

Yes. Employees with COVID-19 or other signs of illness will be directed to leave the workplace immediately. For employees, vaccinated or unvaccinated, with [symptoms of possible COVID-19](#): inform your supervisor ASAP, stay home or go home, and immediately contact a healthcare provider or call 531-5100. We also encourage employees who are symptomatic, or who are asymptomatic but have had “close contact” with a COVID-19 positive individual, to get tested to determine whether they have contracted COVID-19. Employees sent home can use their personal leave or other leave options available to them under their collective bargaining agreement or Personnel Rules. Use of administrative leave is not authorized for this purpose.

What do I do if an employee tests positive for COVID-19 or is in “close contact” with a COVID-19 positive person?

Employees who test positive for COVID-19 or have been in “close contact” with a COVID-19 positive person will be required to quarantine on their own leave and will have the below options.

Per CDC guidelines, a person who is COVID-19 positive or in “close contact” with someone who tests positive for COVID-19 should quarantine at home and monitor for symptoms for 10 days (please also consider immediately contacting a healthcare provider). If they are asymptomatic on day 10 (contact day being day 0) they can come out of quarantine on day 11 but should continue to monitor for symptoms.

Employees may seek testing on day 6, following their last exposure to a positive case, unless they become symptomatic before then. If an employee tests negative on day 6, and still has not experienced any symptoms, the employee may come out of quarantine on day 7.

For individuals who test positive for COVID-19, the infectious period is 10 days from symptom onset or test date, whichever is earlier. If an employee tests positive for COVID-19, the employee likely will test positive for up to 90 days thereafter. Consequently, securing a negative COVID test before returning to work is not an option.

Once they successfully meet the end of isolation criteria, as outlined above (no fever, no over-the-counter-meds, and symptoms have improved), employees may return to work.

For on-duty COVID-19 exposures, please contact HR Labor Relations for guidance on how to code the employee’s time.

Will employees be able to telecommute while quarantining if their job/operations support telecommuting?

Executive and non-represented employees may telecommute with supervisory approval and in accordance with Policy 40-40, if their job duties allow. AMEA employees may telecommute in strict accordance with the AMEA Administrative Agreement.

If employees are unable to telecommute, then are they required to take leave in order to quarantine?

Yes. If you have been in “Close Contact” with a COVID-19-positive employee, are required to quarantine, and are unable to telecommute, you must take leave. Employees should contact their supervisors immediately if they must self-quarantine, so that departments can plan accordingly and ensure continuity of operations. Employees should request the appropriate amount of leave to cover their quarantine period.

What information will an employee who feels ill at work or calls in sick be asked to provide?

Supervisors may ask employees, who report feeling ill at work or who call in sick, questions about their symptoms to determine if they have or may have COVID-19. Currently, these symptoms include fever, chills, cough, shortness of breath, fatigue, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea, or new loss of taste or smell.

Employees are encouraged to contact their health care provider for assessment and testing, if they have any of these symptoms. Employees may also call 531-5100 for more information.

Will employees be asked why they have been absent from work?

Yes. Supervisors will ask why an employee has not reported for work.

Will employees who have been absent from work be required to provide a doctor’s note certifying fitness to return to work?

Yes. Supervisors may require employees to provide a note from their medical provider prior to returning to work.

What will happen if an employee is showing symptoms that they say are allergies?

Employees may be sent home and may provide a doctor’s note upon return. They would need to take personal leave.

Are employees going to be required to wear personal protective equipment, including cloth face coverings, gloves, or gowns?

No, employees may make personal choices to wear personal protective equipment (such as masks or gloves) as a protective health measure. Certain Municipal Departments may require personal protective equipment, as it relates to specific job duties.

#### Are Masks required on MOA Buses?

Yes. U.S. federal mandates require wearing of face masks on buses.

#### Will employees be required to get vaccinated?

No, employees may make a personal choice to get vaccinated, as a protective health measure. As always, employees are encouraged to practice safe social practices. Everyone in the workplace can do their part to help reduce the spread of COVID-19 by continuing to adhere to the safety measures already in place for your department.

#### What should employees do if they need a reasonable accommodation to new COVID-19 policies because of a disability?

Employees should make requests through Paul Deery, the MOA ADA Coordinator within HR. [paul.deery@anchorageak.gov] As with any accommodation request, the MOA may ask questions to determine whether the condition is a disability; discuss with the employees how the requested accommodation would assist them and enable them to keep working; explore alternative accommodations that may effectively meet their needs; and request medical documentation if needed.

#### Out-of-State Travel

Employees traveling out-of-state on work travel should follow the health and safety mandates of the local area they are visiting.

#### Use of personal leave

Employees are encouraged to take the required amount of leave in accordance with their collective bargaining or personnel rules.

For additional questions or concerns, please contact your supervisor, the Human Resources Department, or your union representative.

#### Am I required to report to the Municipality my vaccine status?

No, you are not. The Municipality will respect your decision to keep your vaccine status confidential and between you and your medical provider. However, you may proactively notify your supervisor(s) of your vaccine status if you so choose. No one, however, should be harassed, bullied, pressured, threatened, coerced, or otherwise feel compelled to discuss their vaccine status.