

UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## HR AND PAYROLL COVID-19 FAQs FOR EMPLOYEES



8/1/21

**Q: How are employees paid if they are absent from work due to a COVID-19 related illness?**

**A:** Absences attributable to COVID-19 related illness are handled in the same manner as other medically related illnesses. Accordingly, employees who earn paid leave may request to use any available leave such as sick leave, vacation, or crisis leave to cover the absence in accordance with applicable University policy. Employees who do not earn paid leave will not be paid during COVID-19 related absences. Subject to the prior approval of the University and the operational needs of the unit, an employee may be permitted to work temporarily from home pursuant to an alternative worksite arrangement.

**Q: Can employees receive paid leave for COVID-19 related absences under either the University's COVID-19 Emergency Paid Leave program or under the federal Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA)?**

**A:** Because both programs have expired, the leave benefits offered under those programs are no longer available.

**Q: Do employees qualify for leave under the University's Family Medical Leave policy if they are absent due to a COVID-19 related illness?**

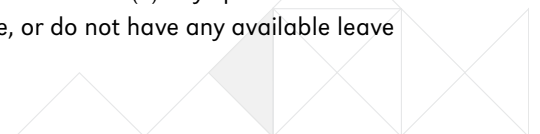
**A:** Because illnesses attributable to COVID-19 may constitute a serious health condition under the University's Family Medical Leave (FML) policy, eligible employees who are absent due to COVID-19 related illness may qualify for the leave and other protections offered under that policy.

**Q: How are employees paid if they are absent from work because their child's daycare or school is closed due to COVID-19?**

**A:** Employees may not use sick leave or crisis leave to cover an absence due to the closure of their child's daycare or school. Employees, therefore, may only request to use any available, accrued vacation benefits that they have remaining to cover the absence or, alternatively, may request unpaid leave if they do not accrue or do not have any remaining vacation benefits. Subject to the prior approval of the University and the operational needs of the unit, an employee may be permitted to work temporarily from home pursuant to an alternative worksite arrangement or may be permitted to temporarily alter their work schedule pursuant to a modified work arrangement.

**Q: How are employees paid when they are absent from work to care for a family member who is ill or quarantined due to COVID-19?**

**A:** Employees who earn paid leave may request to use any available leave, such as sick leave, vacation, or crisis leave, to cover the absence in accordance with applicable University policy. University policy currently limits the use of sick leave to care for an immediate family member to a maximum of five (5) days per illness or per incident in the case of a major illness. Employees who do not accrue, or do not have any available leave



benefits, may request an unpaid leave. Subject to the prior approval of the University and the operational needs of the unit, an employee may be permitted to work temporarily from home pursuant to an alternative worksite arrangement or may be permitted to temporarily alter their work schedule pursuant to a modified work arrangement.

**Q: How are employees paid if they are directed to stay home or to leave work by a supervisor due to illness that is, or may be related to, COVID-19?**

**A:** Employees who earn paid leave may request to use any available leave, such as sick leave, vacation, or crisis leave, to cover the absence in accordance with applicable University policy. Employees who do not accrue, or do not have any available leave benefits, may request an unpaid leave. Subject to the prior approval of the University and the operational needs of the unit, an employee may be permitted to work temporarily from home pursuant to an alternative worksite arrangement. NOTE: Supervisors must adhere to the guidance issued by their campus human resources office whenever they direct employees to leave work or remain off work due to an illness.

**Q: How are employees paid if a healthcare provider advises them to stay at home or self-isolate/quarantine because they have a health condition that places them at risk for becoming severely ill from COVID-19?**

**A:** Employees who earn paid leave may request to use any available leave, such as sick leave, vacation, or crisis leave, to cover the absence in accordance with applicable University policy. Employees who do not accrue, or do not have any available leave benefits, may request an unpaid leave. Subject to the prior approval of the University and the operational needs of the unit, an employee may be permitted to work temporarily from home pursuant to an alternative worksite arrangement.

**Q: How does an employee request to receive crisis leave if the employee has already exhausted all other forms of paid leave?**

**A:** The employee should contact the campus human resources office to request crisis leave.

**Q: What should an employee do if the employee needs to be absent from work for a COVID-19 related reason for a period that exceeds the employee's available paid leave?**

**A:** The employee should contact the campus human resources office to discuss the situation.

**Q: How can an employee donate or contribute vacation hours to the crisis leave bank?**

**A:** The employee should contact the campus human resources office to obtain the appropriate documents.

**Q: Are employees required to submit a statement from a healthcare provider to verify an absence due to a COVID-19 related illness?**

**A:** The University may require employees to provide a medical release from their healthcare provider to verify a medically related absence.

**Q: Are employees required to submit a medical release from a healthcare provider prior to returning to work following a COVID-19 related illness?**

**A:** To safeguard the health and safety of the workplace and the University community, the University may require employees to provide a medical release from their healthcare provider before being allowed to return to work following a COVID-19 related illness.

**Q: Does the University's health plan cover testing and vaccination for the COVID-19 virus?**

**A:** Yes.

**Q: How do employees request an alternative or modified work arrangement to address issues caused by COVID-19?**

**A:** If an employee with a disability under the Americans with Disabilities Act is being impacted by COVID-19 and needs a workplace accommodation, the employee should request a reasonable accommodation through the campus ADA coordinator or the campus disability office. Under some circumstances, an alternative or flexible work arrangement may constitute a reasonable accommodation. If an ADA accommodation is not being sought, employees may submit a request for an alternative or modified work arrangement to their supervisor in a manner consistent with campus guidelines and unit procedures. Any questions regarding alternative or modified workplace arrangements may be directed to campus human resources. The NU alternative worksite policy is available at: <https://nebraska.edu/-/media/unca/docs/offices-and-policies/policies/policies/hr-03-alternative-worksite-policy.pdf>

**Q: Where can employees obtain the most updated information on COVID-19 and the measures being taken by each University campus?**

**A:** Employees can access updated information on COVID-19 and recommended health and safety measures from the COVID-19 website maintained by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Each campus also has established COVID-19 planning websites.

**Q: Where can employees obtain assistance if they are feeling stressed or anxious over COVID-19 issues?**

**A:** Campus counseling services are available to all faculty, staff, and students. Faculty and staff members may contact their applicable Employee Assistance Program (EAP), while students may contact the relevant student counseling and psychological services program on their campus.

**Q: Who should employees contact regarding any questions not addressed within this FAQ?**

**A:** Employees should contact their campus human resources office with any additional questions that they may have related to COVID-19.

