



Virus-Related Outbreak Concerns Human Resources Guidelines

This document is for Human Resources colleagues and University supervisors in the event there are virus-related outbreak concerns. Please review the following HR guidelines for important information.

1. Temporary Travel Restrictions

The University will monitor an outbreak and review affected areas as it relates to potential university-related travel for employees and students to and from an affected region, based on information from appropriate public health authorities, U.S. State Department, and other appropriate officials as necessary.

- a. Supervisors should comply with any travel restrictions that are established by either the University Chancellor or University President.
- b. Supervisors should not impose any additional travel restrictions without first consulting their university, hospital, or system HR, which in turn will seek appropriate review and approvals.
- c. If an employee expresses virus-related concerns about assigned travel duties, a supervisor should gather information about the basis for the employee's concerns and any special personal circumstances that might apply (e.g., disability, pregnancy, or other health condition) and then consult HR regarding any potential accommodations for the employee's concern.

2. Travel Delays

- a. If an employee experiences delay in returning to work from University travel because of virus-related travel difficulties (e.g., cancelled or delayed flights), the employee may be asked to work remotely to the extent feasible. To the extent remote work is not feasible, the employee will still be considered to be working, carrying out University duties in making reasonable efforts make travel arrangements to return to work, and therefore will remain in paid status.
- b. If an employee experiences delay in returning to work from personal travel because of virus-related travel difficulties (e.g., cancelled or delayed flights), the employee may be asked to work remotely to the extent feasible. To the extent remote work is not feasible:
 - i. Benefit-eligible Administrative, Service & Support employees and certain non-regular academic employees may use vacation and/or personal leave and in accordance with HR-402 and HR-403. Unpaid leave may be requested after all available paid leave has been exhausted.
 - ii. 12-month faculty may use any of their unused four weeks (20 days per year) of annual leave, per [CRR 320.070 Academic Appointments](#).
 - iii. Employees not eligible for paid leave may be approved for leave without pay, subject to supervisory approval.

3. International Travel Registry

Please refer to [CRR 210.070](#) for information regarding international travel registry requirements for faculty, staff, volunteers, and other leaders international travel.

4. Nondiscrimination and Confidentiality

- a. Focus on information provided by appropriate public health authorities.
 - i. Supervisors should avoid offering medical opinions about any diseases.
 - ii. Help employees feel confident, reduce unwarranted fear, and remain consistent with the messaging provided by the University.

- b. Employees and students should be supported and provided a safe and inclusive environment that does not discriminate because of their race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, sex, pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, disability, protected veteran status, or any other protected status. Nondiscrimination applies to students, employees and applicants. See [CRR 600.010 Equal employment/Educational Opportunity Policy & Statement of Nondiscrimination](#).
 - i. Consult with your university, hospital or system human resources before taking employment action based on virus-related concerns.
 1. Any employment actions should be based on reliable information and consistent with recommendations of appropriate public health authorities, not on perceptions based on protected status.
 2. In some situations, it may be appropriate to direct an employee to stay home from the worksite for a period of time based on reliable information about potential virus exposure, such as returning from travel to an outbreak-affected region. However, such action should only be undertaken if consistent with information from appropriate public health authorities and should not be undertaken based only on an employee's race or national origin.
 - ii. Supervisors who have concerns about an employee's potential virus exposure should promptly consult with university, hospital or system leadership.
 - iii. Be aware of the risk that individuals who come from places where the virus outbreak is occurring may experience discrimination as a result of virus-related fear. While safety precautions must be taken during a public health concern, leaders should also be aware of the potential of individuals being treated unfairly and respond accordingly.

- c. Any requests for a disability accommodation related to virus concerns should be handled in accordance with the normal process for accommodations. (e.g., employee with suppressed immune system related to disability requests alternative work site or work arrangements because of concern about potential exposure to virus.)

- d. Ensure confidentiality is consistent with University policy and applicable law.
 - i. Health information concerning employees should be managed in accordance with [HR-114 Release of Information](#), which addresses confidentiality of personnel records.
 - ii. For units of the University that are HIPAA covered entities, ensure compliance with HIPAA. <https://www.umsystem.edu/ums/fa/ipsrc/patient-health-information>

5. Attendance and Paid Leave

Employees shall continue to follow department established guidelines for attendance and requesting approval for time off. Departments are encouraged to support employees to stay home if they are sick, thereby minimizing the spread of potential viruses. Paid Time Off benefits are available in accordance with policy.

- a. Benefit-eligible Administrative, Service & Support employees and certain non-regular academic employees may use the following paid time off:
 - i. Sick leave, per [HR-404 Sick Leave](#).
 - ii. Vacation and/or personal days, in accordance with [HR-402](#) and [HR-403](#).
 - iii. Unpaid leave may be requested after all available paid leave has been exhausted, subject to supervisory approval.
- b. Should the employee be diagnosed by a health care provider with a major illness qualifying as a catastrophic event, Shared Leave may be available, in accordance with [HR-414 Shared Leave](#).
- c. An employee who is experiencing a serious health condition or who requires time to care for a family member who is experiencing a serious health condition may be entitled to job-protected leave under the federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA). However, it is important to understand that common cold symptoms, or staying home to *avoid* getting sick, generally is not considered a serious health condition eligible for FMLA. Visit [HR-407 Family Medical Leave Act \(FMLA\)](#) for more information about and how to request Family Medical Leave under FMLA.
- d. 12-month faculty may use any of their unused four weeks (20 days per year) of annual leave, per [CRR 320.070 Academic Appointments](#).
- e. Tenured, or tenure-track faculty, or full-time, ranked non-tenure track faculty who are approved for leave under the federal Family Medical Leave Act may be eligible for paid leave in accordance with [CRR 340.070 Faculty Leave](#).
 - i. Faculty, as defined in 340.070, will receive up to two 12-week paid leaves in a six (6) year period. Such period will be based on the same method all FMLA leave is calculated.
 - ii. Once paid FMLA leave is exhausted, faculty must use the four (4) weeks of annual leave per CRR 320.070.
 - iii. Once all paid leave is exhausted, further leaves are without pay.
- f. Non-benefit eligible employees will be approved for leave without pay, subject to supervisory approval.
- g. A viral illness may be considered an occupational disease and therefore may be compensable if it is contracted out of and in the course of employment. As such, if the virus impacts our employees in connection with their work, an investigation of the circumstances will be initiated to determine if the employee would have been equally exposed outside of and unrelated to the employment in normal non-employment circumstances.

To determine if the situation is considered compensable under Workers Compensation, contact the University's Workers Compensation Coordinator at [Workers Compensation](#). For additional information, please refer to [HR-307 Workers Compensation](#).

6. Emergency Closures

In the event the chancellor or president determines conditions require the cancellation of classes and/or the closure of the University, the following policies apply: [HR-217 Emergency Closure/Suspension of Operations](#) and [HR-217 Q&A](#).

- a. University closure announcements will be released by the chancellor (president for the UM system) through established campus processes.
- b. The chancellor or president has the authority to close a university.
- c. The chancellor or president, or their designee, has the authority to approve a “limited closure”.
- d. During a “limited closure”, per HR-217, “Only specifically designated building(s) are closed due to an emergency that impacts a limited portion of the university. In the event of an emergency where only designated buildings are closed, the expectation is that employees will continue to perform assigned duties. Every attempt will be made to facilitate the performance of those duties through temporary relocation, work from home or other arrangements that allow an employee to perform assigned duties.”
