

**Iowa Judicial Branch**  
**Coronavirus: Frequently Asked Questions**  
**Effective: March 12, 2020**  
**Updated: August 11, 2021 10:55 pm**

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**SECTION A: PRECAUTIONS**

**Q 1. Should we take additional precautions? If so, what proactive steps can and should we take to keep our workplace healthy and safe?**

**A 1.** Yes. The General Duty Clause of the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) requires a place of employment that is “free from recognized risk.” Following the below measures meets the General Duty Clause. We all need to promote and practice illness prevention strategies. The best way to prevent ANY viral illness is to avoid being exposed to a virus. The [virus spreads](#) from person-to-person and contact with contaminated surfaces or objects.

These are a few actions to help prevent the spread of respiratory viruses:

- Hand washing is the most important! Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use a 60% alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
  - This video is very informative, but without words, <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=cbX0xwKORjk> .
  - The CDC also has great information on handwashing as well <https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/>
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick or unnecessary contact with people in general (e.g., handshake).
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Eliminate any unnecessary travel.

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) is recommending the use of face masks as a preventive measure to stop transmission.

If you are sick, to keep from spreading your illness to others, you should:

- Cover your cough or sneeze, preferably into your elbow or sleeve. If a tissue is used, immediately throw the used tissue in the trash.
- [Clean and disinfect](#) frequently touched objects and surfaces, such as cell phones, keyboards, door and drawer handles, keys, countertops, etc.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use a 60% alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
  - 1) Stay home when you are sick.

If you feel sick and think you may have been exposed to a virus, please call your medical practitioner first and talk to them about the next steps (going to a clinic or ER first could unnecessarily expose others).

**Q 2. If an employee is experiencing symptoms similar to the Coronavirus (e.g., fever, cough, or shortness of breath), but the employee requests to continue to work, can they be sent home?**

**A 2.** Yes. An employee who is sick should not come to the workplace. If an employee reports to the workplace exhibiting symptoms, the employee should be sent home immediately. A manager/supervisor

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must require an employee to take leave or work from home when it has a reasonable belief based on objective evidence that the employee's present medical condition would:

- Impair their ability to perform *essential job functions* with or without reasonable accommodation, or
- Pose a *direct threat* (i.e., significant risk of substantial harm that cannot be reduced or eliminated by reasonable accommodation) to safety in the workplace.

If the employee is not too sick to work:

- For exempt employees, to the extent possible, the manager/supervisor should encourage flexible or working from home. The manager/supervisor needs to work closely with the employees to determine if their position enables temporary working from home during the period of illness.
- For non-exempt employees, the manager/supervisor needs to review whether working from home is possible, making sure the employee understands accurate documentation of hours worked. If the employee cannot work from home, then the time would be considered paid administrative leave.

For further clarification or questions, contact human resources.

**Q 3. How should I screen myself prior to coming to work?**

**A 3.** Employees are required to complete a self-assessment before coming into work each day. The self-assessment questions are found on the CDC website: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/quarantine-isolation.html> (scroll down to the section titled "How do I know if I need to be in isolation or quarantine?"). Please follow the appropriate "Steps to take . . ." in answering the questions. **If you are sick, please stay home.**

Employees who are required to stay at home or isolate due to one of the above reasons must follow their manager/supervisor's regular call-in procedures.

**Q 4. Should we require a certification of fitness to work for employees who are sick with any acute respiratory illness, including Coronavirus?**

**A 4.** The CDC recommends that managers/supervisors do not require a medical practitioner's note for employees who are sick with any acute respiratory illness, like Coronavirus, to validate their illness or to return to work, since medical practitioner offices and medical facilities may be overburdened and unable to provide such documentation timely.

If a manager/supervisor has a special circumstance where they believe a certification of fitness to work from a medical practitioner might be necessary, please contact human resources first.

**Q 5. Should a manager/supervisor treat an employee or family member differently if the employee or employee's family member is high risk as defined by the CDC?**

**A 5.** Employees falling into the CDC [high-risk](#) categories may continue to work remotely until July 13, 2020, and may continue to do so after that with supervisor approval. The employee and supervisor will develop a return to work plan, which shall outline when the employee returns to work and enhanced measures to protect the employee while in the workplace.

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The [Families First Coronavirus Response Act](#) allows for paid sick leave or expanded family and medical leave for specified reasons related to COVID-19. Employees seeking leave under the FFCRA should contact their supervisor. Upon requests, the manager/supervisor will discuss how to proceed with SCA HR.

**Q 6. What is the CDC's definition of high risk?**

**A 6.** According to the CDC, the definition of [high risk](#) are:

- [Older adults](#)
- People of all ages with underlying medical conditions, including:
  - People with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)
  - People who have serious heart conditions, such as heart failure, coronary artery disease, or cardiomyopathies
  - People who are immunocompromised from solid organ transplant
  - People with obesity [\(body mass index \[BMI\] of 30 kg/m<sup>2</sup> or higher but < 40 kg/m<sup>2</sup>\)](#)
  - [Severe Obesity \(BMI ≥ 40 kg/m<sup>2</sup>\)](#)
  - People with Type 2 diabetes mellitus
  - People with chronic kidney disease
  - People with sickle cell disease
  - People with cancer
  - [Smoking](#)
  - [Pregnancy](#)

If the employee is uncertain if they have a meet the CDC's definition of high risk, they should call/contact their medical practitioner. If the employee has self-identified as high risk and is placed on administrative leave, a medical provider verification for the medical condition will be required at a later time.

**Q 7. How do I find out Coronavirus information specific to Iowa?**

**A 7.** Governor Kim Reynolds and the Iowa Department of Public Health have developed a [website](#) for Coronavirus information specific to Iowa.

**Q 8. How do I protect myself from the Coronavirus?**

**A 8.** The [CDC recommends](#) that you:

- understand how it spreads,
- take steps to protect yourself,
  - wash your hands often
  - avoid close contact
- take steps to protect others,
  - [stay home](#) if you are sick
  - cover coughs and sneezes
  - wear a facemask if you are sick
  - [clean and disinfect](#)

Hand washing is the most important! Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use a 60% alcohol-based hand sanitizer. The following video is very informative but without words <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=cbX0xwKORjk> . The CDC also has great information on handwashing <https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/>.

**UPDATED 5/17/2021 Q 9. Are wearing face coverings required?**

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**UPDATED 5/17/2021A 9. .If you are fully vaccinated you are not required to wear a mask. Fully vaccinated is defined as:  
2 weeks after second in a 2-dose series, such as the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines, or  
2 weeks after single-dose vaccine, such as Johnson's and Johnson's Janssen vaccine**

Employees that are not fully vaccinated shall wear cloth or disposable face coverings in the following situations:

- From the time entering the building until arrival at cubicle/private workstation, and at any time leaving the workstation, or moving around common areas (e.g., in hallways, elevators, stairwells, restrooms, breakrooms, etc.).
- If assigned to an area where workstations are less than six feet apart, and someone is present in an adjacent cubicle.
- When entering any common areas (anywhere other than private offices) where someone else is present.

Employees are not required to wear cloth face coverings in the following situations:

- While eating in a breakroom as long as no one else is seated within six feet.
- When working alone in segregated spaces (e.g., cubicles with walls, private offices, etc.).

The judicial branch will issue cloth or disposable face coverings to employees; however, employees may choose to wear their own face covering. Nothing in these policies requires an employee to wear a mask or cloth face covering if doing so would be contrary to his or her health or safety because of a medical condition. Employees shall speak with their supervisor to obtain the granting of an exception.

**Q 10. Are there exemptions for wearing a face mask?**

**A 10.** A non-vaccinated employee can be exempt from wearing a face mask due to a medical condition. An employee would need to complete, sign, and submit the [Face Coverings Exemption Form](#) to their supervisor. For medical reasons, the employee needs to provide a note from a medical practitioner. If any employee is requesting to not wear a mask for non-medical reasons, the employee would need to discuss the accommodation request with their supervisor/manager and the supervisor/manager would discuss this with Human Resources before making a decision about the request.

**Q 11. How do I wear a cloth face covering?**

**A 11.** Before a cloth face covering should be used, you should wash your hands and face covering. Cloth face coverings should:

- fit snugly but comfortably against the side of the face
- be secured with ties or ear loops
- include multiple layers of fabric
- allow for breathing without restriction
- be able to be laundered and machine dried without damage or change to the shape

Please review the CDC's website on [how to select, wear, and clean your mask](#).

**Q 12. How should a cloth face covering be maintained?**

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**A 12.** They should be washed in hot water after every use. If the cloth face-covering becomes damp or humid, the face-covering should be replaced. Never reuse a face-covering without washing it first. Please review the CDC's website on [how to select, wear, and clean your mask](#).

**Q 13. How do I safely sterilize/clean a cloth face covering?**

**A 13.** A washing machine after each use will suffice to sterilize/cleaning a cloth face covering. Please review the CDC's website on [how to select, wear, and clean your mask](#).

**Q 14. How do I make a cloth face covering?**

**A 14.** Doctor Jerome Adams, U.S. Surgeon General, has directions on the following link: <https://youtu.be/tPx1yqvJgf4>

**Q 15. How do I safely remove my face covering?**

**A 15.** The following instructions should be used to remove face coverings:

- Do not to touch your eyes, nose, and mouth,
- For masks with stings, untie the bottom ties before the top ties,
- Drop the mask directly into the washing machine and clean it thoroughly with soap and water (do not lay it in the laundry basket), and
- Wash hands for 40 seconds or use 60% alcohol-based hand sanitizer immediately after removing.

Please review the CDC's website on [how to select, wear, and clean your mask](#).

**Q 16. Can I wear gloves?**

**A 16.** In the workplace, it is appropriate to wear gloves when cleaning and disinfecting items and areas. Always wear gloves suitable for the chemicals being used when cleaning and disinfecting. Employees may wear gloves for the mailroom, handling cash, etc., but the gloves need to be disposed of after completing that task.

**Q 17. What is the life of the COVID -19 virus on surfaces?**

**A 17.** The New England Journal of Medicine published the following chart showing the life of the COVID-19 virus on various surfaces: [COVID-19 Surfaces Chart](#)

**Q 18. How do I clean and disinfect my vehicle after someone who is sick was in my vehicle?**

**A 18.** The following are general guidelines for cleaning and disinfecting vehicles. Similar guidance can be found for cleaning and disinfecting [homes](#), [community facilities](#), and [EMS vehicles used to transport](#) persons with suspected or confirmed COVID-19.

At a minimum, clean and disinfect commonly touched surfaces in the vehicle at the beginning and end of each shift and between transporting passengers who are visibly sick. Ensure that cleaning and disinfection procedures are followed consistently and correctly, including the provision of adequate ventilation when chemicals are in use. Doors and windows should remain open when cleaning the vehicle. When cleaning and disinfecting, individuals should wear disposable gloves compatible with the products being used as well as any other PPE required according to the product manufacturer's instructions. The use of a disposable gown is also recommended, if available.

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- For hard non-porous surfaces within the interior of the vehicle such as hard seats, armrests, door handles, seat belt buckles, light, and air controls, doors and windows, and grab handles, clean with detergent or soap and water if the surfaces are visibly dirty, prior to disinfectant application. For disinfection of hard, non-porous surfaces, appropriate disinfectants include:
  - [EPA's Registered Antimicrobial Products for Use Against Novel Coronavirus SARS-CoV-2](#), the virus that causes COVID-19. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for concentration, application method, and contact time for all cleaning and disinfection products.
  - [Diluted household bleach solutions](#) prepared according to the manufacturer's label for disinfection, if appropriate for the surface. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for application and proper ventilation. Check to ensure the product is not past its expiration date. Never mix household bleach with ammonia or any other cleanser.
  - Alcohol solutions with at least 70% alcohol.
  
- For soft or porous surfaces such as fabric seats, remove any visible contamination, if present, and clean with appropriate cleaners indicated for use on these surfaces. After cleaning, use [products that are EPA-approved for use against the virus that causes COVID-19](#), and that is suitable for porous surfaces.
  
- For frequently touched electronic surfaces, such as tablets or touch screens used in the vehicle, remove visible dirt, then disinfect following the manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products. If no manufacturer guidance is available, consider the use of alcohol-based wipes or sprays containing at least 70% alcohol to disinfect.

Gloves and any other disposable PPE used for cleaning and disinfecting the vehicle should be removed and disposed of after cleaning; [wash hands](#) immediately after removal of gloves and PPE with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available. If a disposable gown was not worn, work uniforms/clothes worn during cleaning and disinfecting should be laundered afterward using the warmest appropriate water setting and dry items completely—Wash hands after handling laundry.

**Q 19. How do I clean and disinfect my vehicle?**

**A 19.** With the COVID-19 pandemic upon us, our cars have become our protective bubble as we go out into the world. Just when you thought you were done cleaning your house from the Coronavirus, now you need to clean your car. But we need to make sure it's clean from the virus as well. Chances are you already have the cleaning supplies you need to clean your vehicle, and luckily it's not too complicated.

**Interior surfaces to clean: High-touch areas**

You should start off with the most frequently touched surfaces: the outside and inside door handles, steering wheel, gear shift, turn and wiper signal levers, any buttons on your radio and climate control unit, seat upholstery, seat belts, mirrors, driver and passenger armrests, grab handles and seat adjustment levers on both driver and passenger seats according to Consumer Reports.

**Basic products to clean your car**

Soap, water, and alcohol solutions such as disinfectant wipes that contain at least 70% isopropyl alcohol are the most effective household products to kill the Coronavirus, according to the Centers for Disease

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Control and Prevention. Just like washing your hands for 20 seconds, which applies to your car's interior surfaces too. Any product will need a few more seconds to breakdown the virus, so take your time before you wipe it clean.

Most imitation leather and leather seats have a protective urethane coating, so using alcohol-based products can lead to damage if used too often. Therefore, soap is the safest for fabrics and leather seats. Gently clean the upholstery, making sure not to scrub too aggressively. Use small amounts of water, so you don't soak through to the cushions beneath. For leather seats, a good conditioner applied afterward is recommended to avoid cracking. Wear disposable gloves while cleaning your car's interior to protect yourself from any possible contaminants. Pay special attention to sensitive surfaces such as touch screens and electronics.

**Don't use these products to clean your car's interior**

It's not recommended you use bleach, hydrogen peroxide, or ammonia-based products in your car, even though they kill the virus. They can damage the upholstery, plastic, and other surfaces in the interior.

**Products to keep in your car**

It's a good idea to keep hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes in your car to clean your hands before you touch the steering wheel and other surfaces.

**Cleaning other modes of transportation**

Just like cars, any other modes of transportation you use will need to be sanitized. Any frequently touched surfaces should get a good cleaning.

Any helmets, gloves or eye protection can use a quick wipe down with a disinfectant wipe.

**Q 20. How can employees cope with job stress and build resilience during the COVID-19 pandemic?**

**A 20.** Whether you are going into work or working from home, the COVID-19 pandemic has probably changed the way you work. Fear and anxiety about this new disease and other [strong emotions](#) can be overwhelming, and workplace stress can lead to [burnout](#). How you cope with these emotions and stress can affect your well-being, the well-being of the people you care about, your workplace, and your community. During this pandemic, it is critical that you recognize what stress looks like, take steps to build your resilience and manage job stress, and know where to go if you need help.

Recognize the symptoms of stress you may be experiencing.

- Feeling irritation, anger, or in denial
- Feeling uncertain, nervous, or anxious
- Lacking motivation
- Feeling tired, overwhelmed, or burned out
- Feeling sad or depressed
- Having trouble sleeping
- Having trouble concentrating

**Know the common work-related factors that can add to stress during a pandemic:**

- Concern about the risk of being exposed to the virus at work
- Taking care of personal and family needs while working
- Managing a different workload
- Lack of access to the tools and equipment needed to perform your job



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- Feelings that you are not contributing enough to work or guilt about not being on the frontline
- Uncertainty about the future of your workplace and/or employment
- Learning new communication tools and dealing with technical difficulties
- Adapting to a different workspace and/or work schedule

**Follow these tips to build resilience and manage job stress.**

- Communicate with your co-workers, supervisors, and employees about job stress while maintaining social distancing (at least 6 feet).
  - Identify things that cause stress and work together to identify solutions.
  - Talk openly with employers, employees, and unions about how the pandemic is affecting work. Expectations should be communicated clearly by everyone.
  - Ask your supervisor about how to access mental health resources.
- Identify those things which you do not have control over and do the best you can with the resources available to you.
- Increase your sense of control by developing a consistent daily routine when possible — ideally, one that is similar to your schedule before the pandemic.
  - Keep a regular [sleep schedule](#).
  - Take breaks from work to stretch, exercise, or check in with your supportive colleagues, co-workers, family, and friends.
  - Spend time outdoors, either being physically active or relaxing.
  - If you work from home, set a regular time to end your work for the day, if possible.
  - Practice [mindfulness techniques](#).
  - Do things you enjoy during non-work hours.
- Know [the facts](#) about COVID-19. Be informed about how to [protect yourself and others](#). Understanding the risk and sharing accurate information with people you care about can reduce stress and help you make a connection with others.
- Remind yourself that each of us has a crucial role in fighting this pandemic.
- Remind yourself that everyone is in an unusual situation with limited resources.
- Take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories, including social media. Hearing about the pandemic repeatedly can be upsetting and mentally exhausting
- Connect with others. Talk with people you trust about your concerns, how you are feeling, or how the COVID-19 pandemic is affecting you.
  - Connect with others through phone calls, email, text messages, mailing letters or cards, video chat, and social media.
  - Check on others. Helping others improves your sense of control, belonging, and self-esteem. Look for safe ways to offer social support to others, especially if they are showing signs of stress, such as [depression and anxiety](#).
- If you feel you may be misusing alcohol or other drugs (including prescription drugs) as a means of coping, reach out for help.
- If you are being treated for a mental health condition, continue with your treatment, and be aware of any new or worsening symptoms.

**Updated June 18, 2021 Q 21. What are the social distancing requirements?**

**Updated June 18, 2021 A 21.**

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According to the supervisory order of June 17, the chief judge in each judicial district may use their discretion to establish guidelines on physical distancing and cleansing in court-controlled spaces. <https://www.iowacourts.gov/iowa-courts/covid-19-information-and-updates/>

Employees, working in SCA, who are not vaccinated are required to socially distance.

**Q 22. How do I clean and disinfect a face shield?**

**A 22.** When manufacturer instructions for cleaning and disinfecting face shields are unavailable, the following instructions are available from the CDC:

- 1) While wearing gloves, carefully wipe the inside, followed by the outside of the face shield using a clean cloth saturated with neutral detergent solution or cleaner wipe.
- 2) Carefully wipe the outside of the face shield using a wipe or clean cloth saturated with EPA-registered hospital disinfectant solution.
- 3) Wipe the outside of face shields with clean water or alcohol remover residue.
- 4) Fully dry (air dry or use clean absorbent towels).
- 5) Remove gloves and perform hand hygiene.

**Q 23. Should I wear mask in layers?**

**A 23.** The CDC recommends wearing masks in layers. The medical (disposable) mask should be worn under the multi-layer cloth masks. The recommendation doesn't include wearing two disposable (medical) masks, only a disposable and cloth mask. The cloth mask that was distributed with the judicial branch seal is an example of a cloth mask that is acceptable. The following CDC statement provides further clarity: [CDC's new recommendations](#)

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**SECTION B: POSITIVE CASE/QUARANTINE**

**Q 1. What are the responsibilities of a manager/supervisor when an employee in the workplace states that they have tested positive for the Coronavirus?**

**A 1.** Employees shall inform supervisors of any evidence of the Coronavirus that could seriously endanger the health of the public or others in the workplace.

If an employee is confirmed to have Coronavirus, managers/supervisors should inform fellow employees of their possible exposure to Coronavirus in the workplace, but maintain confidentiality by not giving the name of the employee testing positive. Employees exposed to a co-worker with confirmed Coronavirus should refer to CDC Guides to [how to protect yourself](#).

Supervisors shall also immediately notify their-district court administrator/chief judge. The district court administrator/chief judge will contact the State Court Administrator or the State Court Administrator's designee. In any health emergency, managers/supervisors shall consult with state and local health officials on an ongoing basis to determine the severity of the situation and the actions to be taken. Consistent with any directive issued by the chief justice or the chief justice's designee, the manager/supervisor and employees shall adhere to any communicable disease orders of state and local public health agencies to prevent transmission of the Coronavirus.

If your office is in a county facility, please also follow their communication plan as it relates to other county offices and citizens.

**Q 2. How do I determine who needs quarantined in the office that has an employee that test positive for COVID-19?**

**A 2.** Interview with Symptomatic Employee – The symptomatic employee needs to be interviewed. Interview information can be provided verbally, electronically, or in written form. The following information will be collected from symptomatic employees:

- i. Employee's work hours
- ii. Employee's work duties
- iii. Parts of the building the employee traveled through
- iv. Did the employee feel ill while they were at work? If so, what date and what time?
- v. What was the last day the employee was at work?
- vi. Who did the employee have close contact with **wearing a mask or no mask** (physical contact **within 6 feet for more than 15 minutes of cumulative exposure over a 24 hour period up to 48 hours before employee became ill.**) 48 hours before the employee became ill or during their last day at work? (For example David has tested positive for COVID-19 on Wednesday. David was in the office on Monday and Tuesday. David reports the only employee he had contact with was Tiffany on Tuesday when he met with Tiffany within 6 feet 3 different times for a total of 15 minutes)
- vii. At the end of the interview, the symptomatic shall be advised to self-isolate at

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home, contact their healthcare provider, and follow instructions from their healthcare provider.

**Q 3. If an employee is quarantined, what are our responsibilities as the manager/supervisor?**

**A 3.** If an employee is quarantined by a public health official and is unable to work from home, the employee shall be granted paid administrative leave until/if the employee becomes sick (at which time sick leave must be taken) or returns to work. If the employee is able to work from home, the employee may not enter into the judicial branch offices while under quarantine. The manager/supervisor is not required to communicate about employees in quarantine with other employees in the work unit. The employee can be required to provide a certification of fitness to work upon return; please consult with human resources first.

**Q 4. How does a manager/supervisor handle a self or medical practitioner quarantine?**

**A 4.** Employees who self-quarantine or medical providers recommend self-quarantine can work from home, if possible. If working from home is not possible, the employee can use sick, vacation, banked compensatory time, or approved leave without pay. Employees are permitted to work from home during this time and should be paid for all time worked. (See Section 11.11 Telework of the Employee Handbook) (Chart Eliminated)

The employee should be encouraged to self-monitor their temperature and contact their medical practitioner if they develop any symptoms (e.g., fever, cough, or difficulty breathing). The employee should also notify their manager/supervisor.

If no symptoms develop, the manager/supervisor need not take additional steps with respect to other employees, but still should be careful to encourage good sanitation. If the affected employee had contact with any other employee or workplace while sick, the manager/supervisor should inform other potentially affected employees (taking care to keep the affected employee's identity and medical information private to the extent possible) and ask those who have any symptoms to self-quarantine by staying at home either on a leave status or working from home for 14 days from their last exposure.

The manager/supervisor should contact their facilities office to request the disinfecting of the workplace so that it may provide assurances to other asymptomatic employees that it is safe to return to work.

In taking the above actions, the manager/supervisor must be careful to avoid discrimination against individuals who are perceived as having contracted Coronavirus or who may be from high-risk areas. Additionally, the manager/supervisor must make sure to comply with the confidentiality restrictions imposed by the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) and Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), and similar state and local laws; in particular, the person who contracted Coronavirus or symptoms should not be identified to other employees.

**Q 5. Is there any duty for a manager/supervisor to report potential Coronavirus cases?**

**A 5.** State health agencies and media outlets may seek voluntary information from larger employers about the number of employees infected. With the exception of manager/supervisor-sponsored self-insured health benefit plans, the regulations of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) that protect individually identifiable health information do not apply to employers. However, managers/supervisors should still exercise diligence in sharing information about specific employee

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cases, both internally and externally. For affected employers that wish to disclose information, such employers may consider providing aggregate counts in response to requests from state agencies or media outlets (e.g., 14 of our employees have been infected by Coronavirus). Inquiries of this nature should be directed to State Court Administration human resources.

**Q 6. Can I inform employees if an employee is quarantined or diagnosed with the Coronavirus?**

**A 6.** The manager/supervisor can inform employees they have been exposed to someone who has tested positive for Coronavirus, but you cannot disclose the employee's name.

**Q 7. What are the differences between isolation and quarantine?**

**A 7.** Quarantine is used to **keep someone who might have been exposed to COVID-19 away from others**. Quarantine helps prevent the spread of disease that can occur before a person knows they are sick or if they are infected with the virus without feeling symptoms. People in quarantine should stay home, separate themselves from others, monitor their health, and follow directions from their state or local health department.

Isolation is used to **separate people infected with the virus (those who *are sick* with COVID-19 and those with no symptoms) from people who are not infected**. People who are in isolation should stay home until it's safe for them to be around others. In the home, anyone sick or infected should separate themselves from others by staying in a specific "sick room" or area and using a separate bathroom (if available).

Both quarantine and isolation involve a separation of people to protect the public, help limit further spread of COVID-19, and can be done voluntarily or by required by health authorities.

**Q 8. What do I do while I wait for my COVID-19 test results?**

**A 8.** The CDC recommends taking three steps to stop the spread of COVID-19 while waiting for your test results.

- 1) Stay home and monitor your health.
- 2) Think about the people you have recently been around.
- 3) Answer the phone call from the health department.

More information about these three steps can be found in the [3 Key Steps to Take While Waiting for Your COVID-19 Test Results](#).

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**SECTION C: STAFFING/OPERATIONS**

**Q 1. How should we handle an increase in employee absence related to potential Coronavirus illness or suspected illness?**

**A 1.** Chief Judges, in conjunction with district court administrators, should communicate with the State Court Administrator if staffing reaches a point where only critical functions can be performed.

**Q 2. If an employee is quarantined or sick, what are the call-in procedures?**

**A 2.** The employee needs to follow normal call-in procedures. If the employee's health status changes, the employee must notify the manager/supervisor immediately.

**Q 3. Am I required to allow all employees to work from home?**

**A 3.** No. Managers are encouraged to allow employees to telework and provide flexibility in work schedules when possible. Supervisors may continue to allow employees to work remotely following the parameters outlined in Section 11.11 of the [Employee Handbook](#).

**Q 4. Is the Judicial Branch going to continue having training and conferences?**

**A 4.** All judicial branch sponsored training sessions and conferences are canceled until further notice. Online training materials specific to the various employee groups are being developed. We are also encouraging court officials throughout the judicial branch to hold any meetings by video or phone conference.

**Q 5. Can a manager/supervisor require employees to work overtime?**

**A 5.** Yes. Managers/supervisors may require employees to work more than 40 hours per pay week. However, only employees who are non-exempt from FLSA are eligible to be paid for more than 40 hours in a pay week. You should seek approval from State Court Administration human resources before requiring any non-exempt employee to work more than 40 hours in a pay week. (Note: this will have an impact on your budget.) Employees who are FLSA exempt may be required to work more than 40 hours per pay week and will receive the same pay. Refer to the [Classification and Compensation Guide FY20](#) to determine if the employee's classification is non-exempt or exempt. Managers/supervisors should also make sure to maintain a healthy work/life balance.

**Q 6. Can pro se litigants who come in for personal e-filing assistance be told that the Clerk's Office is not providing in-person e-filing assistance at this time due to the COVID-19 virus emergency and provide written instructions to that litigant and ask them to try it at home?**

**A 6.** As long as social distancing can be maintained, employees are expected to assist customers at the kiosks with e-filing. If social distancing can't be maintained, they may give written instructions and told to call if they have questions.

**Q 7. How do I use my personal phone without a customer obtaining my personal phone number?**

**A 7.** To block your personal phone number, the following instructions will block your personal number:

- Pick up the phone.
- Dial \*67.
- Wait for a second dial tone.
- Dial the intended number.

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**Q 8. What paperwork is required if an employee is going to work from home?**

**A 8.** If an employee has been approved by their supervisor to temporarily work from home after July 13, 2020, until COVID-19 is over, neither the Telework Application, Telework Agreement, nor the Telework Safety Assessment is required from HR. However, the supervisor may require some or all of the paperwork to be completed. For more information, see Q 9 for the definitions of temporary and the end of COVID-19.

If an employee requests and is approved to work from home permanently (either part-time or full-time) after July 13, 2020, the Telework Application, Telework Agreement, and the Telework Safety Assessment are required to be completed and sent to HR to be placed in the employee's HR file.

**Q 9. When talking about teleworking, how do we define temporary, and how do we know when COVID-19 is over?**

**A 9.** Currently, if the employee is requesting to work from home due to COVID-19 and intends to return to work the office, the request constitutes as temporary. If the employee is asking to work from home and does not expect to return to work in the office, barring unusual circumstances, the request is considered permanent. At this time, we do not know when COVID-19 will be over. We will continue to assess and determine if paperwork is required if employees continue to telework due to COVID-19 into the calendar year 2021.

**Q 10. Is there a difference between teleworking temporarily due to COVID-19 and permanently teleworking?**

**A 10.** Teleworking is defined as working at an alternate location outside of the employee's regular office location, typically at an employee's home. The duration of the employee teleworking (permanently or temporarily due to COVID-19) does not impact if the employee is teleworking or not. Due to the pandemic, the telework paperwork is not required to be completed.

**Q 11. Is it possible for an employee to telework and work a flexible schedule?**

**A 11.** Teleworking is defined as working at an alternate location outside of the employee's regular office location, typically at an employee's home. A flexible schedule refers to the specific days of the week and hours during the day the employee is working. With their supervisor's permission, an employee may telework and work a flexible schedule at the same time.

**Q 12. In the Temporary Judicial Officer and Employee Policies To Safely Restore Judicial Services During COVID-19, Returning to Operations, 2. Employees in High-Risk Health Categories, who is considered the employee's supervisor?**

**A 12.** An employee's supervisor is generally defined as the person who hired them, provides day-to-day direction, approves time-off, assesses their performances, etc. The employee's supervisor is who the employee requests to telework and who can approve the request. However, higher-level supervisors (e.g., Chief Juvenile Court Officer, District Court Administrator, or Chief Judge) may request to review telework requests prior to approval.

**Q 13. If employees are approved to telework due to COVID-19, when is COVID-19 over, and when can I expect the employee back in the office?**

**A 13.** When COVID-19 is over or when it gets better is subjective. Rather than allowing employees to

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telework until COVID-19 is over or has improved, evaluate the employee's ability after a certain amount of time. That amount of time will vary depending on the employee, position, and office. Other considerations may include IDPH and CDC guidance, directives from the State Court Administrator, Supervisory Orders, and the needs of the judicial branch.

**Q 14. What type of leave is an employee required to take when their child is sent home from school to quarantine?**

**A 14.** When an employee's child is sent home to quarantine, and the employee is unable to telework, the employee is required to take family care leave, vacation, or approved leave without pay. In the event the employee has exhausted their sick leave, they may borrow up to 80 hours of sick leave, including family care leave.



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**SECTION D: BENEFITS**

**Q 1. Is anytime an employee is absent due to being quarantined or actually sick covered by FMLA?**

**A 1.** If an employee is sick, and it has been absent for three or more days, the employee needs to contact the Reed Group. Additionally, HR needs to be notified by sending an email to [SCAHR@iowacourts.gov](mailto:SCAHR@iowacourts.gov) with the employee's full legal name, dates of absence, and if they have tested positive for the Coronavirus. Reed Group will determine if the employee's medical condition is covered under FMLA. If the employee is quarantined and not ill, the employee does not need to contact the Reed Group.

**Q 2. Is anytime an employee is absent due to being quarantined or actually sick covered by workers' compensation?**

**A 2.** An employee should file a First Report of Injury Form (FROI) after the diagnosis, and our third-party administrator, Sedgwick, will make a determination regarding causation and whether the claim is compensable. In addition to filling out an FROI, an employee should contact their manager/supervisor immediately and call their medical practitioner if they feel they have potential exposure. If an employee believes that he or she has been exposed to COVID-19 in the workplace or through the performance of work, Workers Compensation may cover a diagnosis of COVID-19 if the exposure can be shown to have occurred through the performance of the work and results in a positive test for COVID-19. Employees should notify their supervisor immediately and call their primary care provider if they believe they have potential exposure.

**Q 3. Will the State of Iowa employees incur costs related to testing for COVID-19?**

**A 3.** The State of Iowa has worked with Wellmark to waive testing costs for COVID-19. Please see Wellmark's [website](#) for further information.

**Q 4. What additional resources do employees have to seek medical care in addition to a medical practitioner's office?**

**A 4.** Employees are encouraged to take advantage of virtual care by utilizing [Doctors on Demand](#) to avoid the spread of germs. Email: [support@doctorondemand.com](mailto:support@doctorondemand.com) Phone: 1-800-997-6196

**Q 5. If an employee works from home, either part-time or full-time, may the employee submit dependent care flexible spending accounts claims for dependent care services incurred while the employee is working at home?**

**A 5.** Yes. Claims may be submitted for any services received, which allowed the employee to work, regardless of whether the employee worked from home or the employee's workplace.

**Q 6. If employee's dependents are no longer receiving services (e.g., no longer attending daycare), and they are currently contributing money in the dependent care flexible spending through payroll deduction, can the employee lower the dependent care flexible spending accounts annual election or cancel coverage?**

**A 6.** Yes. To lower the annual election or cancel coverage, employees log into [IowaBenefits](#) and submit "daycare change" as a life event and select the new annual election amount or to cancel coverage. The update in [IowaBenefits](#) must happen within 30 days of the change in daycare. The coverage and

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contribution change will be effective for the first of the month following the month in which the life event is submitted in [IowaBenefits](#).

Once the daycare services resume, employees log into [IowaBenefits](#) and submit “daycare change” as a life event and select the new annual election amount or to re-enroll. The update in [IowaBenefits](#) must happen within 30 days of the change in daycare. The coverage and contribution change will be effective for the first of the month following the month in which the life event is submitted in [IowaBenefits](#).

More information is available on the [DAS](#) website, the [ASIFlex](#) website, or by calling ASIFlex at 800-659-3035.

**Q 7. May an employee enroll in a dependent care flexible spending accounts if school closures or other events have resulted in the need for daycare?**

**A 7.** Yes. Employees wishing to enroll in DCFSa may do so using the life event of “daycare change.” See above for more information. More information is available on the [DAS](#) website, the [ASIFlex](#) website, or by calling ASIFlex at 800-659-3035.

**Q 8. Are holding fees reimbursable through dependent care flexible spending accounts?**

**A 8.** No, holding fees (a fee charged by a daycare provider to hold a space open for a child) are not reimbursable.

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**SECTION E: TIMESHEETS**

**Q 1. How does the employee's timesheet get completed and submitted if the employee is quarantined or sick?**

**A 1.** The manager/supervisor should complete their timesheet to the best of his or her knowledge on behalf of the employee. When the employee returns, the manager/supervisor is expected to verify the timesheet with the employee, and the employee is expected to submit any leave requests, as applicable.

If the employee is working from home, the employee should be required to complete his or her timesheet and leave requests as normal. The leave slip and/or timesheet may be sent electronically to the manager/supervisor. If electronically is not an option, the employee may notify the manager/supervisor via phone call.

**Q 2. How are timesheets and time-off requests reviewed and processed if the employee's manager/supervisor is out sick?**

**A 2. *Time off Requests:*** If e-Leave is used, each manager/supervisor should designate an alternate approver in order to review time-off requests while the manager/supervisor is out of the office. If e-Leave is not used, each manager/supervisor should designate (and communicate to) another manager/supervisor to review and approve time-off requests. The alternate approver should also be communicated to the impacted employees.

*Timesheets:* If HRIS is used, each manager/supervisor should designate an alternate approver in order to process time sheets while the manager/supervisor is out of the office. Note: Please ensure that you work with human resources to ensure your alternate approver has access to the timesheets. If HRIS is not used, each manager/supervisor should designate an alternate approver in order to process time sheets while the manager/supervisor is out of the office. The alternate approver and employees should be communicated with to inform them of the process. Timesheets should be sent electronically to HR at [SCAHR@iowacourts.gov](mailto:SCAHR@iowacourts.gov).

The leave slip and/or timesheet may be sent electronically to the manager/supervisor. If electronically is not an option, the employee may notify the manager/supervisor via phone call.

If assistance is needed with time-off requests or to process timesheets, please contact human resources.

**Q 3. If I send HR paper/electronic timesheets (outside of HRIS), how will timesheets be processed and approved if HR is sick?**

**A 3.** If HR is sick and unable to process and approve timesheets, the manager/supervisor should send the timesheets to [SCAHR@iowacourts.gov](mailto:SCAHR@iowacourts.gov) to be approved and processed.

**Q 4. How are timesheets completed when an employee is on paid administrative leave?**

**A 4.** If the employee completes the [FY20 Timesheet](#), instead of selecting 010 Regular Time, the employee should choose 333 Administrative Leave Paid from the drop-down list. If the employee uses HRIS to complete their timesheet, instead of selecting 010 Regular Time, the employee should enter the time type code of 333 Admin Leave Paid.

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**Q 5. How do employees code their timesheet if they are working from home?**

**A 5.** Employees who are working, regardless of where they are working (including from home), should code their timesheet as 010 Regular Time. Code 330 Other Regular Time should not be used. 333 Administrative Leave Paid should not be used.

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**SECTION F: LEAVE/PAID STATUS**

**Q 1. If we require employees to stay home due to an emergency evacuation, public health emergency, building closure, or minimum staffing, what are the employees' pay status?**

**A 1.** The chief justice or designee upon his or her directive or a chief judge upon approval of the chief justice or designee may instruct employees to work from home. If employees work from home, the employee is in a regular paid status for time worked. Employees who are barred from performing their usual duties in the office or at home due to an emergency evacuation or closing will remain in paid administrative leave status and must remain ready for work assignments during all scheduled work hours. Employees must be available to return to work during all scheduled work hours. To remain in pay status, employees must provide the manager/supervisor with a telephone number at which an employee can be reached during normal work hours.

Iowa Judicial Branch policies for the accumulation of sick, vacation, and other leave shall apply in the event of a declared public health emergency. Employees do not have to use paid accrued vacation or compensatory leave, nor shall employees be subject to leave without pay. However, if employees had preapproved vacation, sick, leave without pay, or another leave status shall charge leave to the appropriate leave balance until the end of the scheduled days off during a public health emergency, even if employees are directed not to report to the workplace.

**Q 2. What type of leave can an employee take if their daycare and/or school closes?**

**A 2.** If the employee's children's daycare/school closes, the employee should be allowed to work from home, if possible. If working from home is not possible, the employee can **take family care leave or vacation. In the event the employee has exhausted their sick leave, they may borrow up to 80 hours of sick leave, including family care leave.**

**Q 3. When is an employee on paid administrative leave after July 13, 2020?**

**A 3.** An employee is on paid administrative leave for one of three reasons:

- 1) The employee is unable to work from home and is available to work. For example, the manager/supervisor splits the office up into two teams, and only one team is working at a time. The team not working is on administrative leave because they are available to work.
- 2) The employee does not have any work to perform and is available to work.
- 3) If the employee's office is closed, they are unable to work from home, and the employee is available to work.

**Q 4. Can paid administrative leave be used to calculate overtime?**

**A 4.** No. Paid administrative leave does not count towards time worked when calculating overtime.

**Q 5. How does an employee report their time when the employee is available to work, but unable to work because of IT issues?**

**A 5.** If the employee is available to work and has work to perform but is unable to because of an IT outage/issue, the employee would report their time as regular hours worked.

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SECTION G: INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

**Q 1. Are employees allowed to take their desktop computer home?**

**A 1.** To determine if an employee can take their desktop computer home, contact the JBIT helpdesk at [help.desk@iowacourts.gov](mailto:help.desk@iowacourts.gov) or (515) 348-4800.

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**SECTION H: TRAVEL**

**UPDATED 4/13/2021** **Q 1. What should I do if an employee is returning to work after traveling outside of the United States for personal travel?**

**UPDATED 4/13/2021** **A 1**

For cruises - If you are not vaccinated, you are to quarantine for 10 days upon your return, unless you get tested between 3-5 days after travel, and the results are negative, you can return after 7 days of quarantine. [Note: This takes the place of number 4 in this section related to cruises.](#)

International Travel - If you are vaccinated and get tested between 3-5 days after travel, you do not need to quarantine, unless you test positive. If you are not vaccinated and get tested between 3-5 days after travel, and the results are negative, you can return after 7 days of quarantine.

Domestic Travel - If you are not vaccinated and have been notified that you were exposed COVID-19 (within 6 feet of a person with COVID-19 for 15 minutes or longer), please refer to Section K Return to Work for the quarantine time required.

**Q 2. Can we restrict employees' personal travel?**

**Q 2.** No, we will not restrict employees' personal travel. Employees who are returning to work after traveling are required to check and follow the CDC's travel website to determine what, if any, precautions should be made when [returning from international travel](#) and [traveling within the United States](#).

Upon returning from travel outside of Iowa, employees are not required to self-quarantine unless they have symptoms of COVID-19, and/or been directly exposed to COVID -19, or have tested for COVID -19 and tested positive.

If the employee is subsequently quarantined after personal travel and working from home is not an option, the employee can take vacation.

**Q 3. What can we do if our employee does not have any symptoms of illness, the employee performs an essential function and has refused to come to work or travel because of concerns related to Coronavirus?**

**A 3.** The manager/supervisor should listen to employee concerns and, if they are genuine, explore alternative working arrangements such as working from home, particularly for FLSA exempt employees.

If the employee falls into the CDC's [high-risk](#) category, the manager/supervisor should allow the employee to work from home, if possible, until July 13.

When an essential employee is not at high risk and working from home is not an option, employees may be given the opportunity to take vacation, banked compensatory time, or authorized leave without pay.

If there are any particular circumstances, contact human resources for the next steps.

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**Q 5. If I have traveled and under quarantine, can I come into the office after hours (when there are no employees in the office) to pick up work, computer, office items, etc.?**

**A 5.** No. Employees who are under quarantine may not come into any office until the quarantine period has ended.

**Q 6. How do the changes advanced under the supreme court supervisory orders impact senior judges?**

**A 6.** As specified in 602.9203(2)(c), senior judges must make themselves available to perform judicial duties as assigned by the supreme court for an aggregate period of thirteen weeks out of each successive twelve-month period. We recognize that the opportunity to provide thirteen weeks of service is impacted by any period of time; the judicial branch is conducting limited operations in accordance with the supreme court's supervisory orders. We also recognize that some senior judges fall into the CDC's [high-risk](#) category and therefore have advised their district that they will not be working at the courthouse. We assure you these matters will be taken into account.



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[SECTION I: FAMILY FIRST CORONAVIRUS RESPONSE ACT](#)

**SECTION J: RESTORING JUDICIAL SERVICES**

**Q 1. If I am a high-risk employee, will I be required to return to the office after July 13, 2020, immediately?**

**A 1.** Employees falling into the [CDC high-risk categories](#) may continue to work remotely until **July 13, 2020**, and may continue to do so after that with supervisor approval. The employee and supervisor will develop a return to work plan, which shall outline when the employee returns to work and enhanced measures to protect the employee while in the workplace.

**Q 3. What options does a supervisor have if a high-risk employee is not approved to telework and refusing to return to the office?**

**A 3.** The supervisor should explain to the employee the expectation is that they are not approved to telework, and the expectation is they will be returning to the office on July 13. Additionally, explain all of the precautionary measures that will be taken in each office (PPE, Social Distancing, Screening Visitors and Employees, etc.). If afterward an employee still expresses concerns about returning to work, the supervisor should have a conversation about their specific concern and determine if it is appropriate and if there are any additional precautionary measures that can be taken to ensure the employee will be safe at work. If the employee is only fearful, there are not any additional precautionary measures that we can take.

**Q 4. Is pregnancy considered high-risk? What is the supervisor's option if a pregnant employee is not approved to telework and refusing to return to the office?**

**A 4.** COVID-19 is a new disease. Currently, there are limited data and information about the impact of underlying medical conditions and whether they increase the risk for severe illness from COVID-19. Based on what the CDC knows at this time, women who are pregnant might be at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19. [Learn more about pregnancy and COVID-19.](#)

The supervisor should explain to the employee the expectation is that they are not approved to telework, and the expectation is they will be returning to the office on July 13. Additionally, explain all of the precautionary measures that will be taken in each office (PPE, Social Distancing, Screening Visitors and Employees, etc.). If afterward an employee still expresses concerns about returning to work, the supervisor should have a conversation about their specific concern and determine if it is appropriate and if there are any additional precautionary measures that can be taken to ensure the employee will be safe at work. If the employee is only fearful, there are not any additional precautionary measures that we can take.

If during the discussion the employee is saying that can't come in due to COVID-19, they would need to contact the REED Group to see if they qualify under the [Families First Coronavirus Response Act](#) which allows for paid sick leave or expanded family and medical leave for specified reasons related to COVID-19. This may or may not be approved, depending on the specific situation.

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Finally, if needed, the supervisor may direct the employee to return to the office, and if they still choose not to follow the directive, they should be investigated and are subject to discipline. If it does get that far, contact Human Resources first.

**Q 5. How do I conduct a self-health assessment prior to coming into the office each day?**

**A 5.** Employees are required to complete a self-assessment before coming into work each day. The self-assessment questions are found on the CDC website: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/quarantine-isolation.html> (scroll down to the section titled “How do I know if I need to be in isolation or quarantine?”). Please follow the appropriate “Steps to take . . .” in answering the questions.

- 1) Have you recently come into close contact with a person with COVID-19?
- 2) Have you been diagnosed, waiting on test results, or have symptoms of COVID-19?
- 3) Have you recently traveled from somewhere outside the US or on a cruise ship or riverboat?

**If you are sick, please stay home.**

Employees who are required to stay at home or isolate due to one of the above reasons must follow their manager/supervisor’s regular call-in procedures.

**Q 6. Can I wear gloves?**

**A 6.** In the workplace, it is appropriate to wear gloves when cleaning and disinfecting items and areas. Always wear gloves suitable for the chemicals being used when cleaning and disinfecting. Employees may wear gloves for the mailroom, cash handling, etc., but the gloves need to be disposed of after completing the task.

**Q 7. Can I wear a disposable face mask?**

**A 7.** Yes, disposable face masks are acceptable.

**Q 7. What is considered an appropriate mask?**

**A 7.** Appropriate face coverings include disposable surgical masks **or** cloth masks that fit snugly against the side of the face, completely cover the nose and mouth, are secured with ties or ear loops, and include multiple layers of fabric.

**Q 8. Which masks are not acceptable?**

**A 8.** Face shields, bandanas, **exhalation valves or vented mask** and a **neck gaiter with or without a filter** are not considered acceptable face masks.

**Q 9. In the districts, who is required to approve an employee or judicial officer’s telework?**

**A 9.** The chief judge must approve any judicial officer, court reporter, and any other direct reports. The district court administrator must approve all court administration, juvenile court, and clerk’s office employees’ requests to telework.

**Q 10. One of my employees falls into one of the CDC’s high-risk categories and will remain working from home after July 13, 2020. When can I expect the employee will return to the office?**

**A 10.** When the employee returns to the office will be determined on an individual case-by-case basis. An employee who falls into one of the CDC’s high-risk categories may work from home after July 13, with their supervisors’ permission. The supervisor will work with the employee to develop a return-to-work plan. The return-to-work plan will include, but not limited to, a discussion on what precautionary

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measures are currently being taken and what additional precautionary measures needed to protect the employee in order for the employee to return to the workplace. For further guidance, please contact Human Resources.

**UPDATED 5/17/2021 Q 11. Is it mandatory for masks to be worn to enter the courtroom and Clerk of Court offices? Who supplies them on a day to day basis?**

**UPDATED 5/17/2021 A 11.** If the county is requiring masks to be worn, you will need to wear a mask until you arrive in the court controlled space.

**Note:** Face coverings. Pursuant to CDC guidelines, fully vaccinated people entering court-controlled areas are not required to wear face coverings, and thus the face mask or face shield requirements in paragraph 4 and 5 of the supreme court's amended November 24, 2020 order do not apply to fully vaccinated people. Signage in court-controlled areas shall be modified to reflect this change. The face covering requirements of paragraph 4 and 5 of the amended November 24, 2020 order otherwise remain in effect for unvaccinated people. Judges shall inform attendees at the start of court proceedings that those who have been fully vaccinated may remove their face coverings, leaving to attendees to provide for their own compliance. "Fully vaccinated people" is defined under CDC guidelines to refer to individuals at least two weeks after they have received the second dose in a two-series of the Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna COVID-19 vaccine, or at least two weeks after they have received a single-dose Johnson and Johnson (J&J/Janssen) COVID-19 vaccine. "Unvaccinated people" refers to individuals who have not completed a vaccination series. All other requirements in the supreme court's prior COVID-19-related supervisory orders, including physical distancing requirements, remain in effect. Supreme Court's Order May 14, 2021.

**Q 12. Are there exemptions for wearing a face mask ~~and/or face shield~~?**

**A 12.** An employee can be exempt from wearing a face mask ~~and/or a face shield~~ due to medical reasons. An employee is required to complete, sign, and provide the [Face Covering and Face Shield Exemption Form](#) to their supervisor. For medical reasons, the employee is required to provide a note from a medical practitioner. If any employee is requesting to not wear a mask ~~or face shield~~ for non-medical reasons, the employee would need to discuss the accommodation request with their supervisor/manager, and the supervisor/manager would discuss this with Human Resources before deciding on the request.

**Updated June 18, 2021 Q 13. What are the cleaning and disinfecting protocol for the courtroom and clerk's office?**

**Updated June 18, 201 A 13.** "According to the supervisory order of June 17, the chief judge in each judicial district may use their discretion to establish guidelines on physical distancing and cleansing in court-controlled spaces. <https://www.iowacourts.gov/iowa-courts/covid-19-information-and-updates/> **Q 14. My children will be attending school both online and virtually, what options do I have when my children are attending school virtually?**

**A 14.** Employees who have children attending school virtually, may discuss with their supervisor the ability to telework on the days their children are learning virtually. Employees may also discuss the possibility of a flexible schedule. Employees may also request vacation, family care leave, or authorized leave without pay. **In the event the employee has exhausted their sick leave, they may borrow up to 80 hours of sick leave, including family care leave.**

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**SECTION K: RETURN TO WORK**

**Q 1. When can an employee who is ill with symptoms consistent with COVID-19 but has not been tested return to work?**

**A 1.** The employee who had been out ill with symptoms consistent with COVID-19 but has not been tested shall remain at home under quarantine until:

- 1) At least three days (72 hours) have passed since the resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications;
- 2) Improvement in respiratory symptoms (cough, shortness of breath); and
- 3) At least ten days have passed since symptoms first appeared.

**Note – This does not apply to an employee that lives with a person that tests positive for COVID-19. For that situation, please refer to question and response 6 below.**

**Q 2. When can an employee who is ill with symptoms similar to COVID-19 and has tested negative for COVID-19 return to work. (This response does not include employees that were exposed to a person that tested positive to COVID-19)**

**A2.** The employee can return to work once they have a medical practitioner provide a doctor's note stating they are able to come back to work

**Q 3. When can an employee who has tested positive for COVID-19 return to work?**

**A 3.** The employee who has tested positive for COVID-19 may return to work if all the following requirements are met:

- 1) Free from fever without the use of fever-reducing medications;
- 2) Improvement in respiratory symptoms (cough, shortness of breath); and
- 3) 10 days have passed since the date the employee had a positive test; and
- 4) The employee's medical practitioner can provide a doctor's note stating they are able to come back to work.

**Q 4. When can an employee return to work if they tested positive, but were asymptomatic?**

**A 4.** Any employee who has tested positive for COVID-19 may return to work if all of the following requirements are met:

- 1) The employee has not developed symptoms associated with COVID-19;
- 2) 10 days have passed since the date the employee had a positive test; and
- 3) The employee's medical practitioner can provide a doctor's note stating they are able to come back to work.

**Q 5. An employee was in close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, is asymptomatic, and has developed and recovered from COVID-19 within the previous 3 months from close contact. When can the employee return to work?**

**A 5.** People who have tested positive for COVID-19 do not need to quarantine or get tested again for up to 3 months from the date they tested positive as long as they do not develop symptoms again. People who develop symptoms again within 3 months of their first bout of COVID-19 may need to be tested again if there is no other cause identified for their symptoms.

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**Q 6. If an employee lives with someone who has COVID-19 and is unable to avoid contact, when can the employee return to work?**

**A 6.** The employee should avoid contact with others outside the home while the person they live with is sick. The employee's quarantine period begins when the person with COVID-19 ends home isolation and ends after 10 days if you do not get tested or 7 days if you are tested on day 5 through 7. For example, if the employee's family member ends their home isolation on December 9, the employee's quarantine period begins December 10 and ends on December 19 (if the employee doesn't get tested). If the employee gets tested on December 15 gets a negative test result they can come back to work on December 16.

**Q 7. On Sunday, Mark attended a social gathering with Mary and didn't social distance himself (at least 6 feet apart for more than 15 minutes). Monday, Mark returned to work and was in close contact with Brian. On Tuesday, Mark learned that Mary has tested positive for COVID-19. When can Brian and Mark return to work?**

**A 7.** Mark can return to work after quarantining for 10-days **IF** no symptoms are experienced during the quarantine period and he has not been tested for COVID -19. Mark can return after 7-days **IF** he receives a COVID-19 test on the fifth day or later of the quarantine period and it comes back negative. Brian can return to work immediately because he is not required to quarantine unless he develops symptoms. If Mary worked for the judicial branch, she could return to work after meeting the requirements in Section K, A3.

**Q 8. When can an employee return to work if someone that lives with the employee comes into contact with someone with COVID-19?**

**A 8.**

- Scenario 1: If the person the employee lives with is symptom-free, the employee may return to work immediately.
- Scenario 2: If the person they live with develops symptoms, the employee must quarantine.
  - Negative Test - If the employee is negative for COVID-19, the employee can return to work after their 7 day quarantine period. Note: The employee's negative COVID-19 test can't be taken before day 5 of their quarantine period. For example, if the person the employee lives with ends their isolation on July 9, the employee's quarantine begins July 10 and ends July 17. The employee can return to work on July 18.
  - No Test - If the employee is not tested for COVID-19, they can return to work after their 10 day quarantine period ends. For example, if the person the employee lives with ends their isolation on July 9, the employee's quarantine begins July 10 and ends July 20. The employee can return to work on July 21.
- Scenario 3: If the employee develops symptoms, the employee may return to work after meeting the requirements in Section K, A 1, or A 2.

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Regardless if the employee returns to work after their 10 or 7 day quarantine period, they are required to watch for symptoms through day 14 of exposure, immediate isolate if symptoms develop, and continue current preventative measures (wear a mask, social distance, wash hands, avoid crowds, etc.).

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**NEW 12/22/2020 SECTION L: VACCINE**

**Q 1. Should I get vaccinated for COVID-19?**

**A 1.** The Branch strongly recommends you get vaccinated. The vaccine will help protect you from getting COVID-19. If you still get infected after you get vaccinated, the vaccine may prevent serious illness. By getting vaccinated, you can also help protect people around you.

**Q 2. Can the vaccine give me COVID-19?**

**A 2.** No. None of the COVID-19 vaccines currently authorized for use or in development in the United States use the live virus that causes COVID-19. However, it typically takes a few weeks for the body to build immunity after vaccination. That means it's possible you could be infected with the virus that causes COVID-19 just before or just after vaccination and get sick.

**Q 3. If I already had COVID-19 and recovered, do I still need to get vaccinated?**

**A 3.** Yes. CDC recommends that you get vaccinated even if you have already had COVID-19, because you can catch it more than once. While you may have some short-term antibody protection after recovering from COVID-19, we don't know how long this protection will last.

**Q 4. Is it safe to get a COVID-19 vaccine if I have an underlying medical condition?**

**A 4.** In many cases, the COVID-19 vaccination can be especially important for people with underlying health problems like heart disease, lung disease, diabetes, and obesity. People with these conditions are more likely to get very sick from COVID-19. Learn more about the vaccine:

[https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/info-by-product/clinical-considerations.html?CDC\\_AA\\_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fvaccines%2F covid-19%2Finfo-by-product%2Fpfizer%2Fclinical-considerations.html](https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/info-by-product/clinical-considerations.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fvaccines%2F covid-19%2Finfo-by-product%2Fpfizer%2Fclinical-considerations.html)

**Q 5. Does it cost to get the COVID-19 vaccine?**

**A 5.** No. The COVID-19 vaccine is provided at no cost to you by the federal government.

**Q 6. Is it better to get natural immunity to COVID-19 rather than immunity from a vaccine?**

**A 6.** No. While you may have some short-term antibody protection after recovering from COVID-19, we don't know how long this protection lasts. Vaccination is the best protection, and it is safe. People who get COVID-19 can have serious illnesses, and some have debilitating symptoms that persist for months.

**Q 7. Why do I need two COVID-19 shots?**

**A 7.** Currently authorized vaccines, and most vaccines under development, require two doses of vaccine. The -first shot helps the immune system recognize the virus, and the second shot strengthens the immune response. You need both to get the best protection.

**Q 8. Will the shot hurt or make me sick?**



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A 8. There may be side effects, but they should go away within a few days. Possible side effects include a sore arm, headache, fever, or body aches. This does not mean you have COVID-19. Side effects are signs that the vaccine is working to build immunity. If they don't go away in a week, or you have more serious symptoms, call your doctor.

**Q 9. How do I know if the vaccine is safe?**

A 9 All COVID-19 vaccines were tested in clinical trials involving tens of thousands of people to make sure they meet safety standards and protect adults of different ages, races, and ethnicities. There were no serious safety concerns. CDC and the FDA will keep monitoring the vaccines to look for safety issues after they are authorized and in use.

**UPDATED 03/05/2021 Q. 10. If I get vaccinated and become exposed to a person with COVID-19 (within 6 feet for 15 minutes or longer), do I need to quarantine?**

**Updated 8/11/2021A.10. Yes If you a come into contact (within 6 feet for 15 minutes or longer mask or no mask) with a person whom has COVID-19 less than two weeks from second dose of the 2-dose series, or less than two weeks following the one dose of a single-dose (Johnson & Johnson) vaccine.**

**Updated 8/11/2021No.** You don't have to quarantine if you come into contact (within 6 feet for 15 minutes or longer mask or no mask) with a person who has COVID-19 if:

\*It has been longer than two weeks following receipt of the second dose in a 2-dose series, or more than two weeks following one dose of a single-dose (Johnson & Johnson) vaccine.

\*Have remained asymptomatic since exposure.

**Q11. Am I required to take sick leave to get the COVID-19 vaccine?**

**A11. No.** If the only option is to receive the COVID-19 vaccine is during work time, sick leave is not required to be used. However, you are required to notify your supervisor that you will be out of the office for that time period. If sick leave has already been taken for the COVID-19 vaccine, employees should contact their HR team member for their sick leave to be returned. Vaccine time includes the fifteen (15) minutes of wait time to determine if there is a reaction to the vaccine. Travel time is only to and from the vaccine location within a reasonable location from the work location. Employees will not receive mileage or overtime for their travel time or time to obtain the vaccination.

**UPDATED 5/17/2021 Q12. Am I required to show my vaccination card to my supervisor to prove I have received my COVID-19 vaccine?**

**UPDATED 5/17/2021 A12. No.** Supervisors' can ask if you have been vaccinated but cannot ask employees to show their vaccination card, since the judicial branch does not require employees to be vaccinated

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Source: Learn more at [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/vaccines](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/vaccines)