

Dear Colleagues:

The Alexandria Health Department continues to advise that the general public in Alexandria is currently at low risk for exposure to the COVID-19 coronavirus, and we are continuing to implement best practices to further reduce risk for staff and customers. City government remains in normal operating status with core services in place, and our facilities remain open even though some programs and activities are affected.

## Pay

It is my goal to ensure that City employees continue to be paid during this COVID-19 health crisis. You are the core of what makes City government operate so well, and it is our obligation to keep your pay continued whether you are working on the front lines or working from home.

## Telework

**Beginning Monday, March 16, with the approval of department management, many City employees can telework to the extent feasible, provided internal and external service commitments continue to be met.** City government remains open and operational for the residents and businesses who depend on us. Our ever-present mission is public service.

Please note the following key points:

- Departments must maintain current in-person services unless an exception has been approved by the City Manager's Office. Departments should evaluate the feasibility of telework for as many employees as feasible, to ensure that City services remain available to the public. It may be necessary for employees to perform different job duties than usual at home or in the workplace, or for an employee who might otherwise telework to perform duties in the workplace. Some jobs must be performed on-site and are not feasible to perform at home.
- The standard formal telework agreement is not required until further notice, but departments should still refer to the [Employee Telework Agreement form](#) on AlexNet to guide the discussion and go through a checklist of considerations. There must be written documentation, however minimal, of each employee's telework parameters.
- Telework should only be performed to the extent it can be done safely and while protecting the confidentiality of any records or other information involved.

- The existing policy prohibiting children from being present during telework is temporarily waived, provided the work can be satisfactorily and safely performed with children present.
- Information Technology Services offers [remote worker training sessions](#). Contact the ITS Help Desk or your department IT coordinator to understand technology-related needs and responsibilities.
- Test remote access (including mail and calendar access via [AlexNet](#)) prior to teleworking and report any problems to [techsupport@alexandriava.gov](mailto:techsupport@alexandriava.gov). Please be patient given the current volume of technical support requests and have a backup plan in case technology resources are unavailable.
- City-issued laptops and other mobile devices may be used in conjunction with approved telework. Desktop computers should not be removed from the workplace without approval from ITS.

Whether we are working at home or in the office, two things are the same. First, we are still currently at a low risk of being exposed to COVID-19. Second, we can further reduce our risk by washing hands frequently; using hand sanitizer; coughing and sneezing into a tissue and then washing hands; maintaining personal space; and avoiding others when we or they are sick.

## Unscheduled Leave

In light of Governor Northam's [order](#) closing all K-12 schools in Virginia through at least March 27, I am making unscheduled leave available to all non-essential employees for the same period. Unscheduled leave means employees can use their existing leave without scheduling it in advance, but all leave must still be approved by supervisors. Please contact your supervisor to determine whether your position is considered essential for the purpose of unscheduled leave.

## Other Pay and Leave Issues

I know employees are concerned about the potential pay and leave impacts of COVID-19 on different categories of employees and contractors. Updated guidance and administrative regulations on these topics will be distributed to all employees no later than March 18. In the meantime, I want to share the values and priorities we are using to develop these interim policies:

- Our first priority is the health and safety of employees and customers. We want to make it easier for everyone to stay out of the workplace if they're sick or are under quarantine. The interim policies will address pay and leave for employees with symptoms of COVID-19 and other respiratory illness.

- We know many employees are worried about having to use their own leave if they are under quarantine or their children's schools are closed. We are drafting policies that will provide for these absences to be paid for without using your own leave balances.
- The interim policies will address employees whose family members have COVID-19 symptoms or are under quarantine.

These policies will not be in place until the formal regulations are issued, but I want everyone to know what we're working towards. We want you to be able to take care of yourself, your family, and your customers. In return, the City will do its best to take care of you. Thank you for your continued dedication during this challenging time.

Mark Jinks  
City Manager



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