

Office of the Director

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Governor Gavin Newsom
Secretary, Government Operations Agency Yolanda Richardson
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March 17, 2020

Dear Colleagues,

Thank you for all you are doing to ensure the continuity of your operations and that necessary services are provided to all Californians. As the COVID-19 emergency continues to evolve, we need to shift from the immediate response guidance that has been provided previously to longer-term planning for how to keep our workforce safe and healthy so our work can continue. The following directive on behalf of the administration is provided to all departments.

For workforce planning, these are some of the critical functions that the public will expect the government to continue providing that departments may consider while prioritizing workloads. This list is meant as a guide and not as an exhaustive list of options.

- Government Leadership
- Emergency Management
- Social Services/Education
- Information Technology/ Communication
- Public Safety
- Medical/Health
- Critical Infrastructure
- Food Supply
- Environmental Protection
- Public Information

Effective immediately departments should establish a staff management plan that allows for effective social distancing for those in the office, takes into consideration stay-at-home directives from state and local public health departments, and protects the health of employees over the entire length of this crisis. This plan must ensure that mission critical (“critical”) functions and services are maintained, consistent with public health needs arising from this emergency.

Departments should do the following:

1. Determine which critical employees cannot telework and need to continue to report to the office and establish appropriate social distancing protocols to keep them safe in the office.

2. Establish a telework schedule for all other employees who are eligible for telework.
3. For anyone whose job duties are not immediately critical to the continuity of operations, and are not viable for telework, a review should be conducted to determine if the employee can be redirected to other work that is either critical (#1) or eligible for telework (#2).
4. As a last resort, for anyone who is not eligible for telework and cannot be redirected, Administrative Time Off (ATO) will be provided, regardless of available leave balances. Departments should report all staff on ATO to CalHR for possible redirection to appropriate work in another department. All staff on ATO should be provided with directions on how to stay in contact with management for assignment of duties.
5. In establishing telework schedules, departments should prioritize those employees who are considered at greatest risk and employees who are impacted by school closures.
 - For employees 65 and older and those with chronic health conditions, departments should consider all available options for telework and flexible work schedules. Those employees not eligible for these options and subject to a local stay-at-home directive shall be provided ATO.
 - This does not include people in essential classifications who are needed to protect our most vulnerable residents, such as hospital and health care workers, pharmacists, peace officers, firefighters, etc.

Rotational Telework Program

All departments should review their ability to implement a rotational telework program where a number of support staff need to be physically present in the office. Support staff can be pooled to cover departmental needs on a rotational basis. For example, each day two staff will be scheduled to report to work, and two will be scheduled as back-ups. The support staff not scheduled to report to work are expected to be teleworking.

It is the public policy of the state to continue to operate effectively during this emergency. This approach will keep as many employees as possible engaged and will allow departments to deploy state staff to critical functions as absenteeism due to illness increases.

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Other Important Changes

In our effort to further support social distancing directives, effective immediately all non-essential travel should be cancelled. All options for using technology solutions to conduct meetings should be considered.

Consistent with updated CDC guidance, anyone with a family member who has been confirmed to have positive test for COVID-19 should remain home. Employees in this situation are eligible to use all available leave types.

All department office closures should be reported up through their respective agencies and to GovOps to track. Guidance on this has been sent out. If you have not received it, please contact julie.whitten@govops.ca.gov.

In responding to this emergency situation, departments should work with their labor relations office to ensure that appropriate, timely notice is provided to employee representatives concerning implemented changes. Please direct Human Resources questions to CalHR's Personnel Services Branch at psb@calhr.ca.gov.

All departments are required to submit daily absenteeism counts via the new absenteeism tracker sent out by GovOps. If you have not received information about the daily absenteeism tracking, check with your agency admin chief or contact krista.canellakis@govops.ca.gov.

As we shift to longer term planning, CalHR will provide additional guidance on employees with similar classifications who could be deployed to backfill gaps in services as well as additional information about the use of retired annuitants (RAs).

CalHR will also provide a letter tomorrow that we ask you to share with all state employees.

Sincerely,

Eraina Ortega
Director