

# Bulletin 1 for Leaders: Coronavirus

## Frequently Asked Questions (updated March 16, 2020 at 6 a.m.)

It is recommended that you use this to facilitate conversations with your teams and inform yourself of the City's processes; *it is not intended to be distributed to staff.*

### Key Messages:

There is now a COVID-19 presence in Saskatchewan. Although the risk level in Saskatchewan remains low, you may be getting questions from your staff.

The City of Regina takes the health and safety of our employees and citizens very seriously.

The City has been in, and continues, ongoing contact with the Saskatchewan Ministry of Health and the Public Health Agency of Canada to monitor the situation, share information and prepare a coordinated response.

### Frequently Asked Questions:

#### **Has a case of novel coronavirus (COVID-19) been confirmed in Saskatchewan?**

There are now cases present in Saskatchewan. According to medical experts the risk of widespread outbreak remains low at this time. To stay up-to-date on this information, visit [Saskatchewan Health](#).

#### **I have an employee who is concerned about getting sick at work. What should I do?**

The risk for Saskatchewan is still considered low. Employees are required to report to work as usual. However, employees who are experiencing distress should be reminded of support and resources available through the Employee & Family Assistance Program (EFAP).

Employees who have existing health conditions and are at high risk for becoming sick should consult their manager to develop a plan to work remotely.

#### **I have an employee who has recently travelled to an area where there is an outbreak. Is it ok for them to come to work right away?**

As of March 14, 2020, the Public Health Agency of Canada has classified ALL countries as Level 3. This means non-essential travel is not recommended outside of Canada. Employees who have travelled abroad or on a cruise ship and are returning home on or after March 14, 2020 are required to self-quarantine at home for 14 calendar days.

Employees who left the country prior to March 16, 2020:

- upon return will be required to self-quarantine at home for 14 calendar days
- where possible, will work remotely
- if unable to work remotely, will be on leave with pay for the duration of the 14-day quarantine

Employees who leave the country on or after March 16, 2020:

- upon return will be required to self-quarantine at home for 14 calendar days
- where possible, will work remotely



- if unable to work remotely, employees will use their sick leave accrual. If sick leave is or becomes exhausted, employees may use other entitlements including vacation time, LDO, SDO or time-in-lieu options
- If none of the previous are available, employees can apply for EI illness benefits through Service Canada (the usual waiting period has been removed for COVID-19 by the federal government)

[Saskatchewan Health](#) is providing guidance on recent travel and what precautions people should take, including self-isolation recommendations for employees returning from certain areas. You should direct your employee there for more information.

### **Is our travel insurance benefit affected at this time?**

Check with Manulife, our health insurance provider:

- [Website updates](#)
- Call 1-800-268-6195

### **Are employees required to disclose travel plans or contact with travelers?**

Yes. Employees travelling out of country, returning from out-of-country travel, or in close contact with someone who has, are required to disclose by speaking with their manager.

### **I have an employee who returned from a Level 1 location that was subsequently upgraded in risk status, should they self-quarantine?**

Employees returning from out-of-country travel on or after March 14, 2020 will be asked to self-quarantine. Employees who returned prior to March 14 are asked to work with their manager on a case-by-case basis to identify measures to keep themselves and our workforce safe.

Travelers should monitor the [travel risk level set out by PHAC](#).

### **I have an employee who is sick, can I direct them to take a sick day or work from home?**

If an employee is sick and unfit for work, they should be directed to stay home. They can use their sick leave accrual. If that is or becomes exhausted, they can use other entitlements including vacation leave, LDO, SDO or time-in-lieu options. If none of those are available, they can apply for EI illness benefits through Service Canada (the traditional waiting period has been removed for COVID-19 by the federal government).

### **Will sick notes be required for flu-like symptoms?**

Not during the pandemic period.

### **An employee needs to be a caregiver, what should I do?**

Consider options for working at home. Otherwise, employees can use their sick leave accrual. If that is or becomes exhausted, they can use other entitlements including vacation leave, LDO, SDO, or time-in-lieu options.

### **Should City employees stay off work as a precaution?**

It is important that we are all fit for work in the performance of our duties. As a general guideline, any employee who is at risk from exposure or has symptoms of illness should contact their doctor or HealthLine 811.



If you are unwell and have been advised to stay at home by a medical professional, you should stay at home. If you are well and have not been advised to stay at home by a medical professional, you are expected to report to work as usual unless advised by your supervisor.

### **Can employees work from home?**

At this time, if employees are not sick and have not been advised by a medical professional to stay home, normal practices for working from home should apply (i.e. at your discretion).

If your employee has an existing health condition and is at high risk for becoming sick, work to develop a plan for the employee to work remotely, if possible.

If employees are not sick but need to be at home to attend to a sick relative, consider the possibility of working remotely.

### **I have an employee who is asking if they can wear gloves and or mask when working with citizens. Can they?**

According to [Public Health advice](#), it is not currently necessary to wear gloves and masks. Although travel-related cases have been identified, the risk for Saskatchewan is still considered low. Public health measures are in place to quickly identify potential cases and prevent the infection from spreading.

There are many common respiratory viruses circulating in Saskatchewan and globally, such as influenza. This will be the most likely cause of a respiratory infection, unless the ill person recently returned from an area where COVID-19 is circulating. To help protect against all respiratory illnesses, including the flu and coronavirus, everyone should:

- Use good hygiene practices, such as frequent handwashing.
- Stay at home and away from others if they are feeling ill.
- Contact their primary health provider or Healthline 811 if they have questions or concerns about their health.
- Clean their workspace frequently

### **Are any City facilities being closed?**

As of Monday March 16, 2020 the risk level in Saskatchewan and Regina continues to be low. As a preventative measure to help slow the rate of COVID-19 infection in Regina and protect vulnerable populations including seniors and people with compromised immune systems, City of Regina owned and operated facilities are closed to the public at the end of business on March 16, 2020. This is in effect until further notice and includes City Hall. Staff affected will be advised and alternative work arrangements will be discussed with them over the coming days.

As of Friday March 14, 2020 all City facilities remain open as the risk level is considered low by medical professionals. However, we are actively monitoring the situation and will continue to evaluate our approach in collaboration with Saskatchewan Health. The health, safety and well-being of the public and our employees is the City's top priority.

### **Are events restricted as a precaution?**

The Chief Medical Health Officer of Saskatchewan has made the following order pursuant to Section 45 of The Public Health Act effective Monday, March 16:



- The Chief Medical Health Officer orders that no public gathering of over 250 people in any one room take place. This does not include settings where people are distributed into multiple rooms or buildings, such as schools, universities or workplaces.
- The Chief Medical Health Officer orders that no events of over 50 people with speakers or attendees who have travelled internationally in the last 14 days take place.
- Retail locations and Faith based organizations are exempt, however, they should have measures (such as crowd size monitoring) that support safe social distancing and should seek guidance from the local medical health officer if necessary.

The City of Regina is postponing all scheduled events until further notice.

### **Can staff refuse to work under Occupational Health and Safety Regulations?**

Occupational Health and Safety work refusals typically deal with situations that are deemed unusually dangerous, the health risk in Saskatchewan and Regina is considered low.

Employees are encouraged to practice good hygiene and social distancing to minimize the risk of contracting and spreading the virus. Employees with pre-existing medical conditions and are at high risk for becoming ill, should discuss working from home options with their manager/supervisor. Other employees are expected to report to work. If an employee files a work refusal as per OHS regulations, the standard investigative processes will proceed.

### **Where can I direct my human resource and safety-related questions?**

Please call Workplace Health and Safety at 306-777-7116. This phone number is not monitored outside regular work hours. Alternatively, you can contact [Jay Lamont](#) or [Brent Lustig](#) if you require additional support in the management of employee health or attendance support questions.

