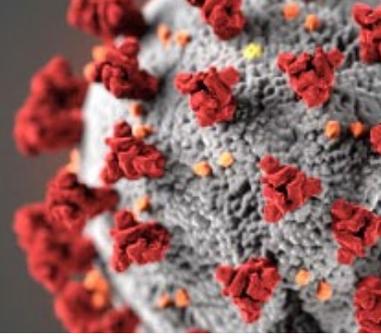




# CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE UPDATE ON CORONAVIRUS March 11, 2020



This bulletin addresses the protocols established by the City of Fort Lauderdale (City) in response to the outbreak of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19). These protocols are designed to protect City employees and address the needs of employees who may have been exposed to the virus. The following information may be updated as needed.

## **What is COVID-19?**

COVID-19 is an abbreviation for **CO**rona**VI**rus **D**isease **2019**, which was initially detected in December 2019. COVID-19 is a new disease, caused by a novel (or new) coronavirus that has not previously been seen in humans.

## **Who can contract this virus?**

Anyone can contract this disease, although it is generally the elderly and those with pre-existing respiratory conditions that suffer the most adverse effects.

## **What are some common symptoms for this virus?**

Reported effects have ranged from mild symptoms to severe illness and death for confirmed COVID-19 cases.

The following symptoms may appear **2-14 days after exposure**:

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath

## **How does the virus spread?**

Coronaviruses are generally thought to spread mainly between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet) through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. It may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads.

## **What can I do to protect myself?**

There is currently no vaccine to prevent COVID-19. The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus. However, as a reminder, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) always recommends everyday precautionary actions to help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases, including:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Stay at home when you are sick.
- Cough or sneeze into the corner of your arm; or cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.
- Wash your hands often with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
  - If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Always wash hands with soap and warm water if hands are visibly dirty.



- Follow the CDC’s recommendations for using a facemask.
  - CDC does not recommend that people who are well wear a facemask to protect themselves from respiratory diseases, including COVID-19.
  - Facemasks should be used by people who show symptoms of COVID-19 to help prevent the spread of the disease to others. The use of facemasks is also crucial for health workers and people who are taking care of someone in close settings (at home or in a health care facility).

### **What can I do if I feel I may have been exposed and want to be checked?**

If you are concerned that you may have been exposed to COVID-19, please call the Florida Department of Health in Broward County at **954-412-7300** before traveling to any healthcare facility.

As an alternative, employees may call the City’s Health and Wellness Center at **754-206-2420** which is prepared to answer questions based on the most up-to-date protocol provided by the Florida Department of Health and provide guidance based on your exposure history, symptoms, and risk.

If you are not a member of the City’s health plan, your primary care physician should be prepared to provide you with the necessary guidance.

If a healthcare practitioner believes you may have contracted the virus, they will work with you and the county’s health department to coordinate testing. If you are tested and the result is positive, you will be required to stay at home and follow instructions for treatment. **Employees who test positive or who have come in close contact with a household member who has tested positive will be required to self-report to Jerome Post, the Deputy Director of Human Resources, by telephone at 954-828-5307 and will be required to be cleared by a doctor before returning to work.**

### **What is the City’s policy on employee travel?**

The CDC has advised against traveling to affected geographic areas with widespread or sustained community transmissions of COVID-19. The following locations are currently identified as Level 2 and Level 3 areas:

- Level 2 Areas (currently Japan) – indicates there is sustained (ongoing) transmission of the outbreak. The CDC recommends that older adults or those who have chronic medical conditions consider postponing travel to Level 2 destinations.
- Level 3 Areas (currently China, Iran, Italy, and South Korea) – indicates that there is widespread sustained (ongoing) transmission of the outbreak and there may be restrictions on entry to the United States. The CDC recommends that all nonessential travel to these countries or regions be avoided.
- Cruise Ship Travel The U.S. State Department and the CDC warns U.S. citizens, particularly older travelers and travelers with underlying health conditions, not to travel by cruise ship as there is an increased risk of infection of COVID-19.

The City of Fort Lauderdale has suspended all business travel to Level 2 and Level 3 areas. Employees **who have traveled** to or from a Level 2 or Level 3 area during the last 14 days are required to do the following:

- Immediately contact Jerome Post, Human Resources Deputy Director, at (954) 828-5307.
- Self-isolate for 14 days from the date of your return. If during this period of self-isolation you develop a fever, cough, difficulty breathing, or other symptoms of respiratory illness, you should immediately contact a healthcare provider **by phone** to discuss recent travel and symptoms. Your healthcare professional will work with the Florida Department of Health to determine if you need to be tested for COVID-19.



- Obtain medical clearance from your healthcare provider before returning to work.

The City of Fort Lauderdale has suspended all business travel to Level 2 and Level 3 areas. Employees **who have traveled** on a cruise ship during the last 14 days are required to do the following:

- Immediately contact one of the following Human Resources staff members:
  - Jerome Post, Deputy Director (954) 828-5307
  - Janeen Richard, Employee Relations Manager (954) 828-5310
  - Guy Hine, Risk Manager (954) 828-5494
  - Nicole Archie, ODL Manager (954) 828-5309
- Monitor your health and limit interactions with others for 14 days after returning to the United States. If during this period you develop a fever, cough, difficulty breathing, or other symptoms of respiratory illness, you should immediately self-isolate and contact a healthcare provider **by phone** to discuss recent travel and symptoms. Your healthcare professional will work with the Florida Department of Health to determine if you need to be tested for COVID-19.

Employees **who are planning to travel** to or from a Level 2 or Level 3 area are required to do the following:

- Immediately contact one of the Human Resources staff members listed above. The same 14-day self-isolation requirements will apply.

Employees **who are planning to travel** by cruise ship are required to do the following:

- Immediately contact one of the Human Resources staff members listed above.

Visit the CDC's COVID-19 and Cruise Ship Travel website <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/page/covid-19-cruise-ship> prior to traveling to be alerted of current recommendations, advisories, and risks associated with cruise ship travel. If reports of the coronavirus are issued that include the cruise ship you plan to travel on, you may be required to self-isolate for 14 days from the date of your return.

For the latest travel information, alerts, and warnings, please visit the CDC's Coronavirus Disease 2019 Information for Travel website <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html>.

### **What happens if I am under quarantine or self-isolation?**

If quarantine or self-isolation is warranted, employees may use sick and vacation leave in accordance with City policy or the terms of the collective bargaining agreement applicable to their respective employee group. If an employee has insufficient sick and vacation leave available, every effort will be made to expedite a request for donated sick leave.

### **What is the City doing to safeguard my health?**

The City is taking the following preventative actions to help protect employees as well as neighbors who use our facilities and depend on us for important services:

- Promoting awareness by posting reminders on how to prevent the spread of the virus



- Disseminating information and updates via email, our website, social media, and other communication tools
- Limiting employee meetings by:
  - Using electronic conferencing when possible
  - Minimizing the number of attendees
  - Restricting meetings to specific areas
  - Cleaning meeting rooms regularly with disinfectants
- Installing hand sanitizer dispensers in City facilities that have high volume of public use
- Maintaining a sufficient amount of cleaning supplies, including
  - Hand soap
  - Hand sanitizer
  - Sanitizing wipes
  - Paper towels

The City's contracted cleaning company will enhance cleaning and disinfecting efforts at their serviced locations. Finally, City staff continues to monitor the most important and pertinent information on the virus to keep you updated and protected during this evolving situation.

**Who can I contact if I'm interested in counseling or assistance?**

The City's Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week by calling toll-free 1-877-622-4327 for confidential assistance, counseling, crisis support, and help with other personal and family issues.

**For More Information**

The Florida Department of Health has established a dedicated call center at 1-866-779-6121 that is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, as well as a dedicated e-mail address at [covid-19@flhealth.gov](mailto:covid-19@flhealth.gov) which the public can use for questions or clarifications on issues related to the virus.

**Where can I obtain additional information on this disease?**

[www.CDC.gov](http://www.CDC.gov)

[www.broward.org](http://www.broward.org)

[www.who.int](http://www.who.int)

[www.floridahealth.gov](http://www.floridahealth.gov)