



MARION COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

UPDATE ON COVID-19

March 13, 2020



This bulletin addresses the protocols established by the Marion County Board of County Commissioners (County) in response to the outbreak of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19). These protocols are designed to protect County employees and address the needs of employees who may have been exposed to the virus, and will remain in effect until further notice. 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.
- 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 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 water if hands are visibly dirty.



MARION COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS | UPDATE ON COVID-19 | MARCH 13, 2020

- 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 of Marion County at 1 (866) 779-6121 or (352) 629-0137 before traveling to any healthcare facility.

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 Amanda Tart, Human Resources Director by telephone at (352) 304-0885 and will be required to be cleared by a doctor before returning to work.**

What is the County's policy on employee travel?

The CDC has advised against traveling to affected geographic areas with widespread or sustained community transmissions of COVID-19. Updates to these locations can be found on the CDC website.

- Level 2 Areas - 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 - 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.

Marion County 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 or have traveled by cruise ship during the last 14 days are required to do the following:

- Immediately contact one of the following Human Resources staff members:
 - Amanda Tart, Human Resources Director (352) 304-0885
 - Sheri Wiley, Risk and Benefits Manager (352) 425-1530
 - Robin Robarge, Registered Nurse and Clinic Manager (352) 671-8437
- 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.



MARION COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS | UPDATE ON COVID-19 | MARCH 13, 2020

Employees **who are planning to travel** to or from a Level 2 or Level 3 area or travel by cruise ship 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.

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.

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 County policy or the terms of the collective bargaining agreement applicable to their respective employee group.

Employees that traveled prior to March 13, 2020 or had their annual leave approved prior to March 13, 2020 and require a self-isolation period based on the information in this bulletin may use sick time if they do not have adequate annual leave time.

Employees traveling after March 13, 2020 and planning to visit a location requiring a self-isolation period based on the information in this bulletin must plan vacation hours to include the self-isolation period.

During this state of Emergency the County Administrator is allowing a special open enrollment of the Sick Leave Donation Pool through March 31, 2020. During this time, employees may join the pool with a minimum of 16 hours of sick and annual leave combined. If you are interested in joining the pool please see your payroll specialist for an enrollment form or contact Human Resources.

What is Marion County doing to safeguard my health?

Marion County 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
- Increasing the amount of hand sanitizer available in County facilities that have a high volume of public use
- Maintaining a sufficient amount of cleaning supplies, including



MARION COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS | UPDATE ON COVID-19 | MARCH 13, 2020

- Hand soap
- Hand sanitizer
- Sanitizing wipes
- Paper towels

The County's contracted cleaning company will enhance cleaning and disinfecting efforts at County facilities that have a high volume of public use.

Finally, County 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 County's Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week by calling toll-free 1 (800) 624-5544 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 which the public can use for questions or clarifications on issues related to the virus.

Marion County will provide an update to the community every Monday and Thursday. This information will be shared with employees via County email.

Where can I obtain additional information on this disease?

www.CDC.gov

<http://marion.floridahealth.gov/>

www.who.int

www.floridahealth.gov