

City of Boston Protocol for Employees Traveling (as of March 6, 2020)

Seasonal Flu

The flu season is currently upon us and has not yet peaked. The flu virus can be transmitted from person-to-person in your home, community, or schools if people infected with the virus come in close contact with other people. Symptoms of the flu include:

- Fever (100.4° F or greater using an oral thermometer)
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Muscle or body aches
- Headaches
- Fatigue (tiredness)
- Some people may have vomiting and diarrhea

Any employee experiencing flu-like symptoms should stay home utilizing sick leave until they are free of fever and any other flu-like symptoms for at least 24 hours, without the use of fever-reducing or other symptom-altering medicines (e.g., cough suppressants). Employees should notify their supervisor if they are staying home sick with flu-like symptoms, as the City will be monitoring the incidents of flu throughout the organization. Employees who develop or exhibit flu-like symptoms or other illness while at work will be directed to go home. Please go to www.bphc.org for more information on flu-like symptoms.

In order to prevent the spread of flu and cold:

- Wash hands often with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds.
- Avoid touching your eyes and face.
- Clean things that are frequently touched (like doorknobs and countertops) with household cleaning spray or wipes.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or the inside of your elbow.
- Stay home when feeling sick.
- Get a flu shot.

Coronavirus (COVID-19)

The City is continuing to monitor the coronavirus outbreak. Coronaviruses are respiratory viruses and are generally spread through respiratory secretions (droplets from coughs and sneezes) of an infected person to another person. Symptoms are similar to the seasonal flu as are preventative measures. The City is diligently monitoring the spread of coronavirus and will continue to support efforts to educate the public about the virus and promote prevention.

It is important to understand, however, that as of March 4, 2020, the CDC has advised that anyone returning to the United States from countries or places with a level 3 alert (currently China, South Korea, Iran, and Italy) should stay home and monitor their health for 14 days after returning to the US. Anyone returning to the United States from countries or places with a level 2 alert (currently only Japan) should monitor their health and limit interactions with others for 14 days after returning to the US.

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This includes:

- Taking your temperature with a thermometer twice a day and watching for a fever. A fever is a temperature 100.4°F/38°C or higher.
- Watch for other symptoms including a cough, trouble breathing, shortness of breath.

If you have traveled to one of these areas and experience a fever (100.4°F/38°C or higher) or any other symptoms, call your health care provider immediately. Call ahead before you go to a doctor's office or emergency room.

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The City of Boston has temporarily modified our business travel policy to prohibit travel to any places [a Level 2 or Level 3 alert as identified by the CDC](#).

Before you travel for personal reasons, we encourage you to consult the CDC list of places with a [countries or places with a Level 2 or 3 alert](#).

City of Boston employees who have traveled to [countries or places with a Level 2 or 3 alert due](#) to coronavirus are required to notify their Department personnel officers in writing, including where they traveled to and the dates of travel, and will be required to stay home to monitor for symptoms during this 14-day period. You may also be asked to provide a letter or certification indicating that you have been cleared to return to work prior to your returning after the 14 days. Upon submission of the certification, absences during the 14-day period will be excused, except that employees whose job responsibilities can be performed remotely may be required to work from home during this 14-day period.

Employees opting to travel after today, March 6, 2020, [to any country with a level 2 or 3 alert](#) will be required to use accrued benefit time during the 14-day period they are absent from work unless they are able and authorized to work from home. These locations are subject to change based on the latest guidance from the CDC.

Human Resources professionals in each department will be asking employees who have been absent for more than 72 hours if they have traveled and where to upon return to work.

Employees absent beyond 14 days must comply with existing rules and policies governing attendance, leaves of absence, and use of benefit time. These procedures will remain in effect until further notice and are subject to change. If you have questions about this please contact Department personnel officers and/or directors.

For additional information, visit the CDC's Coronavirus Disease 2019 webpage with information for travelers: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html>

Information on COVID-19 continues to evolve rapidly. Planning continues and further guidance may be forthcoming. The Boston Public Health Commission will provide updates on our website bphc.org or you may contact the Mayor's Health Line at 617-534-5050 with any questions.

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Attached is information on related temporary modifications to the City of Boston absence policy. Should you have any questions about time away from the workplace, please contact your Department Personnel Officer/Human Resources Department or the Office of Human Resources at 617-635-3370. Boston Public Schools employees should contact the Office of Human Capital at 617-635-9255 or OHCleaves@bostonpublicschools.org for questions and employee support.