

Good Afternoon;

Please take a few minutes to read this message.

As we get updates and information about this ever-important topic of Coronavirus (COVID-19), Lewis and Clark County continues to consider and respond to new factors. We are following the guidelines and recommendations of our Public Health Department and the CDC. We are monitoring updates and information from all levels of government as it comes in. We wanted to let you know some of the things we are doing at Lewis and Clark County to monitor, plan, and respond.

As of now we intend to continue our operations and providing services to the citizens of Lewis and Clark County. We will revisit that decision as necessary.

With the schools and daycares closing for a few weeks, we will be working hard to address the staffing challenges and the challenges this will cause for you and your families. We are also identifying options and capabilities for telework. Instructions to access your voice mail and your Office 365 Portal from any device were sent out on Friday so you are able to review updates that are sent out. You can also visit [this link](#) to access the instructions for accessing the Office 365 portal. Please work with your supervisor in determining your options.

Our Public Health Department has been working tirelessly at using all resources available to educate and update our local schools, businesses, community partners and individuals in our community so that we, as a community, can take proactive measures to reduce the impact of this virus. We will follow their guidance as we continue to monitor, plan, and prepare. We are asking you to follow the recommendations they've provided as well. **We want to emphasize the importance of practicing social distancing.** The best way to prevent getting the disease is to avoid exposure to the virus. Lewis and Clark County hasn't had a diagnosed case as of the time this message is being written, but there are few key things you can do to limit your exposure:

- Practice social distancing
 - Avoid in-person events that consist of 50 people or more
 - Avoid close contact with people who are sick
 - Put at least 6 feet of distance between yourself and other when out in public
- Practice [good hygiene habits](#).
 - Protect yourself by washing hands frequently with soap and water for 20 seconds, using hand sanitizer when warm water and soap are not available, keeping your hands away from your face.
 - Protect others by covering coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your elbow; make sure used tissues get in the garbage.
 - Clean your work area throughout the day
 - Sanitize meeting rooms after a meeting. If there is not someone that is already responsible for this, it makes the most sense for the meeting organizer to take care of it.
- **Stay home or go home if you're feeling sick.** Watch for [symptoms](#), which may appear 2-14 days after exposure: Fever, cough, and shortness of breath.

- [Follow travel restrictions and guidelines.](#) There are currently four Level 3 Travel Health Notices to avoid non-essential travel to China, Iran, South Korea, most European countries, United Kingdom, and Ireland. Employees returning from any of these designated countries are asked to stay home for 14 days after returning to the United States. Travel advisories for countries experiencing COVID-19 at epidemic levels are updated on a regular basis. [Click here](#) to view the CDCs current travel notices for both outside the country and within the United States.
 - **Until further notice, any non-essential work-related travel that is scheduled to happen over the next 30 days should be cancelled and no new non-essential travel requests will be approved.** The essential nature of any planned travel for training or conferences will be determined by the Department Head or Elected Official. You should work with your supervisor to discuss such arrangements.

Employees who have traveled within the United States should pay close attention to their health the 14 days following returning home. If you have travelled by airline or have attended a large gathering, you should monitor your health closely. Do not come to work if you are not feeling well and [follow the guidance provided by the CDC.](#)

Employees unable to come to work due to the school and daycare closures will meet Emergency Leave provisions. That time off will not be charged to their leave. Employees with kids high-school age and older may choose to stay home, but the time off must be covered by either vacation leave or comp time.

If you are quarantined because you test positive or are adhering to a requirement to quarantine due to exposure to or symptoms of Coronavirus, you will be covered by Emergency Leave. If you have been in contact with someone who has tested positive or believed to have Coronavirus, you will be contacted by Public Health.

If you must care for a family member quarantined because of a positive test or who is adhering to a requirement to quarantine due to exposure to or symptoms of Coronavirus, you will be covered by Emergency Leave.

We understand that there are scenarios and situations that fall in the gray area of these provisions. If you are required to take time off for a situation you feel is no fault of your own, but don't meet the provisions above for Emergency Leave, you can send a request for the Emergency Leave, using a new form developed for this situation. The form will be provided with instructions by Human Resources to departments when its ready. It can be submitted to HR for final review by the CAO.

The County will have no gatherings of more than 50 people on County grounds or in County buildings for the next 30 days. Again, this will be re-evaluated as necessary. We recommend setting up virtual meetings where possible.

If you are sick with a fever and cough, or have trouble breathing, call your health care provider **before** seeking medical attention. Calling instead of going in to your provider is important for a few reasons. It will minimize your exposure to sick people, it will reduce the number of people you may unknowingly expose, it allows the provider to screen for applicable symptoms and determine if you should be tested. You should continue to follow the established procedures for calling in sick and requesting leave. It will be important to stay in communication with your supervisor.

In addition to following the updates and guidance of our Public Health Department and the CDC, we are utilizing the other valuable resources. Reese Martin, the County's Disaster and Emergency Services (DES) Coordinator, is working closely with the State DES office to make sure we are informed and prepared to respond as necessary. We have a working group that has started meeting regularly to discuss updates and contingency plans covering many areas: legal challenges, issues related to personnel, ability to provide services, other challenges departments and employees may face.

For any employees and dependents enrolled in our health plan, coverage for COVID-19 testing and the related office visits from in-network providers and labs will be covered at 100% and not subject to the deductible. This applies to members enrolled in both the Traditional and HDHP.

As this situation evolves rapidly, we must work together and we must each do our part in minimizing the impact to our families and our community. Please be sure to review the weekly updates sent to County employees by Gayle Shirley, Communications and Systems Improvement Manager from our Public Health Department.

If you have questions, please talk to your supervisor if you have questions. You may also contact one of the Human Resources staff and they will do their best to address your questions.

Below are some links to websites that have many helpful resources:

<https://www.lccountymt.gov/health/disease-control/covid-19.html>

<https://dphhs.mt.gov/publichealth/cdepi/diseases/coronavirusmt>

[Montana Response: COVID 19](#)

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

Our County will continue to monitor and respond to new information and issues on this matter as they arise. Thank you for all that you do for our County.

Roger Baltz

Chief Administrative Officer
Lewis and Clark County
316 N. Park
Helena, Montana 59623

PH. (406) 447-8311