

Temporary Remote Work/Sick Leave Guidelines

These guidelines apply to Staff Employees (staff) who are temporarily unable to be in the workplace due solely to a COVID-19 related reason. Staff should ensure that they are informed of and familiar with [University's COVID-19 Protocols](#) and the safety precautions implemented in their specific work area and adhere to those protocols and precautions. These University protocols are derived from and consistent with CDC and state guidelines.

The presence and contributions of staff are critical to the University's mission, and regular business operations must resume. Nonetheless, temporary remote work may be available depending on your job function and unit. You and your supervisor should consider the nature of your work based on your unit's mission and related work activities, as well as other factors, to determine if remote work is appropriate.

Temporary remote work can be considered under the following circumstances:

- 1. A staff member states that they have a medical condition that prevents them from being on campus.**

The supervisor should direct the staff member to SAM 02.E.09 - *Reasonable Workplace Accommodations for Employees with Disabilities* and advise them that they can file a [Request for Workplace Accommodation Form](#) with EOS, who will work with the staff member and the department to determine if and what accommodations may be appropriate. Once a determination has been reached, the employee, their supervisor, and the ADA Coordinator, or their designee, will sign a form documenting the decision.

- 2. An employee states that they have been diagnosed with COVID-19.**

The supervisor should direct the staff member to the [UH Reporting Diagnosis Form](#) and instruct them to stay home per the [UH COVID-19 Protocols](#). Human Resources may request documentation of test results for compliance purposes. If at the time of notification the staff member indicates their symptoms will not interfere with their daily job duties, then the supervisor may ask the staff member questions to determine if the temporary remote working environment is appropriate to allow the staff member to fulfill their full-time University job duties and responsibilities while working remotely. See factors that should be considered by Supervisors below. It is within the discretion of the immediate supervisor and Division Vice President to approve/deny the staff member's remote work request in its entirety. If temporary remote work is not approved, then the staff member will be required to take sick leave or other available leave. If temporary work is approved, the staff member completes the [University of Houston System COVID-19 Telecommuting form](#).

3. A staff member states that they have had potential or ongoing COVID-19 exposure.

The supervisor should direct the staff member to the [UH Reporting Potential Exposure Form](#) and instruct them to comply with [University's COVID-19 Protocols](#) and seek a timely COVID-19 test. Human Resources may request documentation of test results for compliance purposes. If the asymptomatic staff member is required to quarantine **per [UH COVID-19 Protocols](#)** (generally for a period up to 10 days), then the staff member may request leave or request temporary remote work. The supervisor may ask the staff member questions to determine if the temporary remote working environment is appropriate given the nature of the work based on the unit's mission and related work activities. The supervisor may also ask questions to determine if the staff member can fulfill their University job duties while working remotely. See factors that should be considered by Supervisors below. It is within the discretion of the immediate supervisor and Division Vice President to approve/deny the staff member's remote work request in its entirety. If temporary remote work is not approved, then the staff member will be required to take sick leave or other available leave.

4. A staff member states that they are not feeling well and might be sick, but they do not know if they have COVID-19 and would like to work from home.

If the staff member is not well enough to come to work or exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms that interfere with their ability to work, then the staff member should take Sick Leave. In the absence of available sick leave, the staff member may use other available leave. Additionally, if the staff member suspects that the symptoms could be COVID-19, then the staff member should get tested and self-quarantine in compliance with the [UH COVID-19 Protocols](#). Human Resources may request documentation of test results for compliance purposes.

5. A staff member states that they need to care for an immediate family member due to a COVID-19 related event, including school or daycare closures.

The period of time allowed to work remotely under these circumstances has a limitation equal to the staff member having to quarantine due to exposure to COVID-19 (generally for a period up to 10 days) **per [UH COVID-19 Protocols](#)**. Staff should contact their supervisor to discuss their situation. Supervisors can contact Human Resources to discuss possible leave options. Human Resources may request supporting documentation for compliance purposes. The staff member and the supervisor should determine the nature of work to be performed based on the unit's mission and related work activities in considering if temporary remote work is appropriate. If temporary remote work is a possibility, then the staff member should submit a **[request for remote work](#)**. The immediate supervisor must review the request with the department head to determine the staff member's eligibility and evaluate department issues/needs that may be impacted by temporary remote work scheduling. See factors that should be considered by Supervisors below. It is within the discretion of the immediate supervisor and Division Vice President to approve/deny the staff member's remote work request in its entirety.

- Please note sick leave and other leave options may be available to care for sick family members. Staff should contact their supervisor and Human Resources to discuss their situation.

Steps a staff member should take to request temporary remote work, as described above when they are unable to be in the workplace due to quarantine requirements or illness related to COVID-19.

Staff who are not seeking a workplace accommodation through EOS should contact their immediate direct supervisor to request temporary remote work. The staff member and supervisor should consider the nature of the work based on the unit's mission and related work activities to determine if temporary remote work is appropriate. In addition to completing the [University of Houston System COVID-19 Telecommuting Form](#), the request should outline the time parameters for the request (generally for a period up to 10 days), the proposed schedule, and the basis for the request (e.g., If an staff member has a potential exposure, is exhibiting no symptoms, and is required to quarantine, then the request should include the time parameters to account for exposure). The immediate supervisor must review the request with the department head to determine the staff member's eligibility and evaluate department issues/needs that may be impacted by temporary remote work scheduling. See factors that should be considered by Supervisors below. It is within the discretion of the immediate supervisor and Division Vice President to approve/deny the staff member's remote work request in its entirety. Supervisors must submit authorizations for temporary remote work for the approval of the Division Vice President.

FOR SUPERVISORS ONLY: Several factors should be considered while determining if temporary remote work should be approved:

- As of August 2, 2021, all University staff are expected to be fully on campus. If the staff member needs to stay at home due to a COVID-19 diagnosis or requirement to quarantine and is requesting approval to work remotely, then the supervisor should then determine:
 - Whether the staff member's temporary remote working supports and furthers the University's mission.
 - Whether the position can be appropriately conducted remotely without diminishing the quality of the work or disrupting the productivity of an office.
 - Whether the staff member has a demonstrated ability to work remotely with minimal supervision.
 - Whether the staff member has a thorough knowledge and understanding of the job tasks and operations, for which they are responsible.

- Whether the staff member's temporary remote working environment is conducive to allowing the staff member to fulfill their full-time University job duties and responsibilities while working remotely.

To submit a request for temporary remote work, due to quarantine requirements or illness related to COVID-19, a staff member must complete and submit the [University of Houston System COVID-19 Telecommuting Form](#) to an immediate supervisor.