



February 29, 2020

Dear colleagues,

As we continue to learn more about the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), I ask you to take steps to stay healthy and help us proactively prepare as a City. We understand your concerns about a potential outbreak, and the health and safety of our employees is our priority.

In January, the Mayor asked department directors to begin planning citywide. We are in close communication with Public Health – Seattle & King County (PHSKC) and monitoring COVID-19 response across our region. It's important we prepare now in order to reduce the number of illnesses and negative effects that could occur in our community. The actions taken by the community and the City will depend on the severity of the outbreak. We will provide you with updates as the situation evolves based on guidance from the CDC, Washington State Department of Health, and Public Health – Seattle & King County. Each department has been developing guidance for its employees.

As you may know, COVID-19 is a new virus strain that presents symptoms similar to the flu. **Here are steps you can take to prevent spread of the flu or common cold, and reduce your exposure:**

- **Stay home while you are sick and avoid close contact with others.**
- Wash hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds. If not available, use hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid contact with people who are sick.
- Cover your mouth/nose with a tissue or sleeve when coughing or sneezing.

**There are also steps we need you to take in the workplace:**

- Clean and disinfect your work area on a more regular basis.
- Become familiar with the signs and symptoms of the flu including fever, headache, extreme fatigue, chest discomfort. If you get sick at work with flu-like symptoms, contact your supervisor or manager.
- Know your level of risk as it applies to your job:
  - **Very High** – Medical staff doing direct patient care with high-risk procedures
  - **High** – First Responders including Police Officers, Medics, Navigation Team members
  - **Medium** – Those with regular contact with the public, e.g., FAS, HSD, Parks, SPU, SCL employees
  - **Lower** – Office workers with limited public contact

Please contact your team's safety representative or manager if you have questions about your ability to do your job safely. If you have any resource needs such as cleaning products, questions about personal protective equipment, or questions about absence from work and leave use, please contact your supervisor or your work area's assigned Human Resources staff.

For more information about COVID-19, view this [2-page backgrounder](#). To learn about preparations and daily updates, visit the [PHSKC website](#). If you have questions about what is happening in Washington

state, how the virus is spread, and what to do if you have symptoms, please call 1-800-525-0127 and press #.

In addition, the City of Seattle will have a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document available for City employees shortly, and this document will be updated regularly as the situation develops. Please check <https://seattlegov.sharepoint.com/> and look out for the FAQ and other updates.

We understand that this may be a stressful time. Remember that the [Employee Assistance Program](#) is always available to you (in person, tele-video or via phone) – including counseling, health, wellness and other resources.

Thank you for your important actions to prevent risk and exposure – to take care of yourself and your families, and help the City prepare proactively. We are grateful for your work. We will provide you with timely updates and guidance as the situation evolves.

Sincerely,

Bobby Humes  
Director  
Seattle Department of Human Resources