

March 13, 2020

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## **Guidance Concerning COVID-19**

This guidance document is intended provide standardized guidance concerning COVID-19. This guidance applies to all HU locations, including Harrisburg, Philadelphia, and the Steelton-Highspire Aquaponic Laboratory.

This guidance document provides information and recommendations to assist leaders, supervisors, and employees in addressing concerns related to COVID-19. The recommendations below will help prevent its spread.

HU will act in accordance with all applicable public health directives. HU's guidance and policies cannot conflict with public health orders issued by the Federal Government or the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

For updates issued by HU, go to [www.Harrisburgu.edu](http://www.Harrisburgu.edu).

## **FAQs Concerning HU and Managing COVID-19**

### ***What precautionary measures should the HU Community take concerning COVID-19?***

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that everyone should be informed of the precautionary measures that they can take to stay healthy, as follows:

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze; then, throw away the tissue.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you blow your nose, cough or sneeze. If soap and water are not available, alcohol-based hand cleaners with at least 60% alcohol are also effective.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread that way.

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- Try to avoid close contact with anybody who has a fever and symptoms of an upper respiratory tract infection.
  - If you get sick, the CDC recommends that you stay home from work or school and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them.
  - Employees may experience stress and anxiety as a result of the uncertainties surrounding COVID-19. Employees are encouraged to contact Employee Assistance (student employees are encouraged to contact their student counseling centers).
  - Leaders should take the opportunity to remind employees that we must not stigmatize anyone in our community based on national origin. Someone who has a cough, or a fever does not necessarily have coronavirus.

For additional information concerning COVID-19, visit the CDC website: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/index.html> or the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's Emergency Management Agency (PEMA): [www.pema.pa.gov](http://www.pema.pa.gov).

***What steps should be taken if an employee becomes ill with fever, cough or other concerning symptoms?***

Supervisors should recommend that employees who are sick remain on PTO until symptoms resolve, and that they seek medical assistance, as appropriate. Employees should not return to work until they can present from their doctor a fitness-for-duty statement if they are absent longer than three days.

Anyone sick and believed to be at risk for COVID-19 infection should be advised to seek medical assistance and follow the CDC recommendations:

- Stay home except to get medical care.
- Separate yourself from other people in your home and avoid sharing personal household items.
- If you have a medical appointment, call the health care provider and tell them that you are concerned about the possibility of COVID-19 infection before going to the doctor's office.
- Wear a facemask when you are around other people.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue.

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- Clean your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
  - Avoid sharing personal household items.
  - Seek prompt medical attention if your illness is worsening.
  - If you are placed under active monitoring, or facilitated self-monitoring, follow the instructions provided by your local health department or occupational health professional, as appropriate.
  - Consult with your health care provider before discontinuing home isolation.

**For the period of the pandemic only, employees will be permitted to advance up to two weeks of PTO should they contract COVID-19 or are subject to quarantine due to COVID-19. Any employee who leaves HU employment prior to accruing the leave taken will require to reimburse HU in their final paycheck for any remaining unaccrued time. Employees are required to enter their leave upon return to work.**

If an employee becomes ill while at work and declines to take leave, the supervisor should consult human resources for assistance in determining whether there is objective evidence of illness. If there is objective evidence of illness, and an employee refuses to take leave, a supervisor may, over the objection of the employee, require that the employee leave the workplace. In such circumstances, the absence should be recorded as “approved.”

Supervisors should seek assistance from human resources before taking any action to ensure that all appropriate options have been considered. Action should not be taken based solely on a manager’s or supervisor’s subjective assessment of an employee’s medical condition.

**Does the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) entitle an employee to take leave to avoid contracting COVID-19?**

FMLA entitles employees to job-protected leave when they have a serious health condition or when they need leave to care for covered family members who have a serious health condition. Leave for the purpose of avoiding exposure to the COVID-19 is **not** protected under the FMLA.

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*Should HU require an employee who is out sick (not due to COVID-19) to provide a health care provider's note?*

No, unless the employee is out three days or longer as is the normal protocol.

*May HU prohibit an employee from coming to work if the employee is known to have contracted COVID-19 themselves, or to have had close contact with someone who has?*

HU is obligated to provide a safe workplace and may take necessary and reasonable steps to minimize health risks for its employees, such as requiring that employees not come to work if they have COVID-19 or have had close contact with someone who has a confirmed case of COVID-19.

*What symptoms may indicate that an employee has become ill with COVID-19?*

The CDC reports that COVID-19 symptoms include fever, cough and shortness of breath. At present, the CDC also includes epidemiologic risk factors, such as a history of travel from affected geographic areas within 14 days of symptom onset or close contact with a laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 patient within 14 days of symptom onset.

*Must HU grant leave to an employee who is sick with COVID-19?*

Employees who are ill with COVID-19 should be advised to **remain at home until medically cleared** to minimize the spread of the virus. All employees should follow normal procedures of contacting their supervisors if they are unable to report to work or contact HR at [hr@harrisburgu.edu](mailto:hr@harrisburgu.edu) in the event a supervisor is unavailable.

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An employee who is sick may also be entitled to leave under FMLA. FMLA entitles eligible employees to take up to 12 workweeks of unpaid, job-protected leave in a calendar year if they have a serious health condition. Some instances of COVID-19 may qualify as a “serious health condition.” FMLA leave is further explained in the 2019 Employee Handbook.

***Must HU allow employees who are parents or caregivers time off from work to care for sick family members with COVID-19?***

Employees who are healthy but whose family members are home sick with COVID-19 should notify their supervisor.

If certain members of an employee’s family are sick, the employee may be entitled to leave under FMLA. FMLA entitles eligible employees to take up to 12 work weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave in a calendar year to care for certain family members with a serious health condition. At HU, this group includes the employee’s spouse or domestic partner, parents and children. COVID-19 may qualify as a “serious health condition.” FMLA leave is further explained in the 2019 Employee Handbook.

Even if it is not covered by the FMLA, an employee may nevertheless be entitled to take leave to care for a family member who is ill. Your specific situation should be discussed with Human Resources.

***What should I do if I am on PTO ill for a period in excess of three days?***

Please notify your supervisor and HR at [hr@harrisburgu.edu](mailto:hr@harrisburgu.edu) so that paperwork concerning FMLA can be sent to you.

***Does the foregoing advice, with regard to leave, also apply to academic employees?***

The basic principles set forth above for ensuring a safe workplace apply to all employees with the exception that academic employees do not accrue PTO.

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***What is the status of HU business travel and personal travel?***

All HU-related domestic and international air travel is suspended absent the approval of the President or the Chief Operating Officer (COO).

HU strongly recommends against personal international or domestic air travel until further notice.

***What about holding large gatherings and visitor access?***

Decisions about hosting large meetings or gatherings, and general access such as visitor access are on a case-by-case basis. HU encourages limiting non-essential meetings and leveraging the use of technology in lieu of in-person meetings or gatherings.