

# **USG COVID-19 Campus FAQs for Employees**

As of March 13, 2020

## **What can I do to protect myself?**

The most important responsibility we each have is to practice prevention. Prevention is paramount. Please take appropriate measures such as:

- Wash hands regularly.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with tissues.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Be responsible and courteous to others and stay home if you are sick. If you are experiencing symptoms, contact your health provider.
- Respect personal space when greeting others and during conversations.
- Be mindful of those in high-risk populations such as those with underlying health conditions and the elderly.

We take very seriously the responsibility to make prudent choices for the well-being of the USG community. The Governor has issued a directive to reduce the number of employees on-site at any one time and prioritize teleworking and flexible scheduling.

## **What action is the University System taking to protect students, faculty and staff from COVID-19?**

We continue to monitor COVID-19 and to take safety actions as warranted. We are operating in conjunction with our local, state and national health agencies to include regular updates with the World Health Organization (WHO), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH).

Each college and university president has established a task force composed of leaders from across campus who are working to continually assess the institution's readiness plans and execute protocols related to medical health and safety, business continuity, emergency preparedness and travel.

## **What should I do if I am sick?**

Employees should not come to work when they are sick. Employees should stay home and use appropriate leave. If an employee appears to be exhibiting symptoms associated with coronavirus while at work, a manager should excuse the employee from work and advise them to seek care from a healthcare provider. Regular benefits-eligible employees have leave available to them to cover absences. Employees should follow standard request and approval procedures. The employee will be expected to use appropriate leave to cover the time away and may be expected to provide a release from a healthcare provider to return to work.

### **What do I do if I have symptoms of COVID-19?**

Symptoms of COVID-19 include fever, cough and shortness of breath; you should contact your primary care physician or institution health center, if applicable for students.

### **What if I have been exposed but am not showing any symptoms?**

Employees who believe they have been directly exposed to COVID-19, but are not showing symptoms, should self-quarantine consistent with DPH and CDC guidelines. Employees must contact their supervisor if they are unable to come to work or need to make a telework arrangement. Employees should contact their healthcare provider if they become sick and remain home.

### **What if I have been exposed and am showing symptoms?**

Employees who believe they have been directly exposed to COVID-19 and are showing symptoms should seek care from a healthcare provider and may be required to self-quarantine. During this time, employees should not come to work and should inform their manager. Managers have the discretion to determine if an employee's duties and responsibilities can reasonably be performed from an employee's home location, and, when they can, the manager may elect to offer the employee the option to telework.

### **Will FMLA cover me if I become ill with the COVID-19?**

It depends...

If you are eligible for FMLA and you have **tested positive** for COVID-19, then yes FMLA will be available to you.

If employees have only been **exposed** to the virus, FMLA is not applicable. However, they may still need to be quarantined, and applicable non-FMLA leave (to include sick leave) could be an option subject to standard request and approval procedures.

### **Will FMLA cover me if an immediate member of my family contracts COVID-19?**

Yes, FMLA allows an eligible employee to take FMLA leave if either the employee or an immediate family member, defined as spouse, child or parent, contracts the virus.

### **Can a manager consider telework or flex schedules for employees?**

Employees should consult with their supervisors about teleworking and flexible schedule options. Supervisors have increased flexibility to approve telework and flexible schedules in order to comply with the Governor's directive to reduce the number of employees on-site at any given time. Authorized managers can waive the requirement to complete the usual telework agreement and may use email to confirm approval to telework.

### **What guidance is available for home quarantine and isolation?**

The CDC has guidance on this topic found at the website: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/>.

### **If my job involves travel and I'm concerned about potential risks, what should I do? What if I am a manager of an employee who is scheduled to travel for work?**

All non-essential business travel is suspended in order to comply with the Governor's directive. Managers have the authority to rescind prior travel approval. Required in-person meetings should be transitioned to an electronic format or rescheduled. USG official travel to a CDC Level 3 or higher country is not authorized and will not be reimbursed.

### **Will I be reimbursed for travel if my meeting is cancelled?**

Employees should explore all options to obtain refunds or credits for cancelled or rescheduled conferences and business meetings. Employees will be reimbursed for expenses that cannot be refunded due to COVID-19 assuming the travel was properly authorized consistent with travel regulations.

### **What if I am planning personal travel or have traveled out of the state or country?**

Employees should use their best judgement regarding travel plans to destinations other than CDC Level 3 or higher locations. Anyone planning to travel, either domestically or internationally, is encouraged to stay up-to-date with current travel alerts from the CDC.

Currently, **CDC recommends travelers should avoid nonessential travel to any country at a Warning Level 3 or higher**. Employees who have traveled to or plan to travel to CDC Level 3 or higher locations must not return to any USG campus or facility for 14 days following their return. In addition, employees returning from a Level 3 or higher country are required to self-quarantine in accordance with the DPH and CDC guidelines.