

Guide for Teleworking COVID-19 – Effective, March 23, 2020

Statement

Northwestern State University, as a first priority, is committed to protecting the health and safety of the students, faculty, and staff at our university. Our continued monitoring of the spread of the COVID-19 virus makes clear that proactive guidance to our community members is essential. Recognizing the uniqueness of our University, we aim to provide guidance that is both effective and flexible. **To limit the number of employees on campus to help flatten the transmission curve of coronavirus, Northwestern State University will implement teleworking arrangements for most employees beginning Monday, March 23, 2020.** Given the fluidity of the current crisis, considerable discretion shall be exercised as to the most appropriate immediate actions to be taken.

Guidance for Employee Teleworking

This guidance is for teleworking arrangements to be employed effective Monday, March 23, 2020, in response to the COVID-19 crisis. As a business necessity, all employees whose presence on campus is considered nonessential (full-time faculty and staff) are now to work and conduct business off-campus at their home or other appropriate locations. This may include the employee's home or other private and isolated workspaces. Teleworking is at the direction and discretion of the University. Employees must immediately return to their regular work location when directed by the University.

The following sections provide guidance to teleworking employees and supervisors of teleworking employees:

Instructions for Notifying Human Resources

- A. Supervisors must notify Human Resources and their respective Vice President which of their employees will telework or take appropriate leave.
- B. Supervisors, please email Human Resources at covid19hr@nsula.edu and cc your respective Vice President indicating your employees' intentions.

Hours of Work and Leave

- A. Teleworking employees are expected to maintain their same work schedule, the same level of availability, levels of production, and quality of work as though the employees were still working at their primary worksite.
- B. Teleworking may not be used solely for child or adult care or to perform other personal business during work hours, or for any purpose for which leave should be requested. If an employee is tending to a dependent child or adult and not performing official duties, the employee must take leave as appropriate.
- C. Should circumstances arise whereby an employee cannot work at the alternate work location, (i.e., loss of electricity, home emergencies, etc.), the employee must contact their supervisor and they may be required to report to the primary work location or a different designated and approved alternate work location, or appropriate leave may be granted.

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- D. Teleworking may not be used in place of annual, sick, Family Medical Leave, or any other type of leave. Requests to use leave must be approved in following University policy and departmental guidelines.
 - E. Employees may work compensatory time/overtime only with supervisory approval under University policies.

Responsibilities of Teleworking Supervisors

Supervisors whose employees are teleworking shall be responsible for the following:

- A. Supervisors must notify Human Resources and their respective Vice President which of their employees will telework or take appropriate leave.
- B. Supervisors, please email Human Resources at covid19hr@nsula.edu and cc your respective Vice President indicating your employees' intentions.
- C. Establish expectations for and monitoring of employee performance.
- D. Ensure the employee has the appropriate equipment to telework and completes the *Request for Temporary Removal of State Movable Property* form if requesting use of University property/equipment (see attached).
- E. Establish how the teleworker will maintain regular contact with office coworkers and supervisors.
- F. Determine how the department will handle restricted access materials, security issues, and taking electronic or paper records from the primary workplace.
- G. Ensure practices are consistent and compliant with state and university procedures and state and federal law in the use of technology.
- H. Ensure that individual work schedules and reporting for non-exempt employees comply with Fair Labor Standards Act regulations and university procedure.

Responsibilities of Teleworkers

Employees shall follow all guidelines of this procedure when working in the alternate work location.

- A. Consistently meet all performance expectations and standards set forth and agreed upon by their supervisor.
- B. Maintain satisfactory evaluations, attendance, and conduct.
- C. Follow all agreed-upon regulations concerning communication and reporting expectations.
- D. Follow all agreed-upon regulations concerning working hours, maintenance of equipment, and workplace safety and incident reporting.
- E. Complete the *Request for Temporary Removal of State Movable Property* form if requesting use of University property/equipment (see attached).

Confidentiality & Security

All University documents, materials, and data that are removed from campus are the responsibility of the employee and must be kept confidential and secure at all times.

Guidance for Employees Unable to Telework

This guidance is for essential and nonessential employees (full-time classified and unclassified staff) who are unable to work, in response to the COVID-19 crisis. The following sections provides guidance to leave usage for employees unable to work due to COVID-19.

Families First Coronavirus Response Act

The Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) , requires the University, to provide employees paid sick leave and expanded family and medical leave for specified reasons related to the COVID-19. These provisions will apply from April 1, 2020 through December 31, 2020. Eligible employees who are unable to work, including unable to telework because the employee:

- Is subject to a Federal, State, or local quarantine or isolation order related to COVID-19;
- Has been advised by a health care provider to self-quarantine related to COVID-19;
- Is experiencing COVID-19 symptoms and is seeking a medical diagnosis;
- Is caring for an individual subject to an order described in (1) or self-quarantine as described in (2);
- Is caring for his or her child whose school or place of care is closed (or childcare provider is unavailable) due to COVID-19 related reasons; or
- Is experiencing any other substantially similar condition specified by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Healthcare Providers and Emergency Providers

Time off without the loss of pay, annual or sick leave may be granted to any healthcare provider or emergency responder who was exempted from the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) by the Governor's Proclamation and who has tested positive for COVID-19 or who has been advised by a healthcare provider to self-quarantine related to COVID-19, or experiencing COVID-19 symptoms and seeking a medical diagnosis. Such special leave shall not extend beyond 15 working days and will be in addition to any other leave benefits afforded by law.

Asymptomatic Employee

Employees who are directed by the Appointing Authority to self-quarantine due to possible exposure to COVID-19 will be placed on special leave not to extend beyond 14 calendar days as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Return to Work

Employees who are instructed to report on-site for work and do not report for duty, when required, must use available compensatory and annual leave time. These employees do not have an eligible leave reason, or a high-risk immunological disorder, that prevents them from reporting for duty due to risk exposure. Employees will not be eligible to be paid sick or special leave. Once compensatory and annual leave have been exhausted, the employee will receive LWOP.

Employees Not Covered by Leave Provisions

Employees whose reason for being away from work is not covered by one the leave provisions above will be required to report to work as directed. The supervisor may, at their discretion, allow these employees to use available compensatory and annual leave time. Employees who have exhausted all annual and compensatory leave or who are not eligible to earn leave will not automatically be placed on leave without pay. Leave without pay must be approved in advance by the President. Employees without available annual or compensatory time will be required to report to work until LWOP is approved. These employees are not eligible to use sick or special leave.

Employees should direct any questions regarding employee leave to the Department of Human Resources, covid19hr@nsula.edu.