

2024 COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Information included here may change as further information is released.

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Workplace Safety, Face Coverings, PPE, Workplace Cleaning

1. Where can I find more information relevant to City of Dallas employees?

The following webpage provides City employees with information about the COVID-19 outbreak including FAQs, guidance, and point-of-contacts, and to link you to resources developed for the public.

<https://dallascityhall.com/departments/humanresources/Pages/COVIDEMP.aspx>

For general information regarding COVID-19, see links to CDC and DCHHS see links below:

- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>
- <https://www.dallascounty.org/covid-19/>

2. Can I wear a mask while at work?

Yes, a mask can be worn at work if the employee chooses to wear one.

3. How can I protect myself from COVID while at work?

The CDC recommends everyone that is 6 months or older receive the new updated COVID vaccine (available September 2023) to protect against the serious outcomes of COVID-19 illness. A mask can be worn at work if the employee chooses to wear one.

- See CDC recommendations for preventing COVID-19 please visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/respiratory-viruses/downloads/RVG-Summary-Graphic-508.pdf>

4. What do I do if I need access to protective equipment and cleaning supplies?

Departments are responsible for ordering and maintaining their own PPE inventory. Departments should reach out to Express Business Center for PPE and cleaning products that are available to order. BSD Custodial will maintain/refill sanitizing stations that it installed in facilities. Sanitation stations installed by customer departments will be the responsibility of the department that installed the additional equipment.

- See CDC recommendations for [Cleaning and Disinfecting your Facility](#) 

5. What are the guidelines for cleaning my work area if someone has tested positive for COVID-19?

The City of Dallas follows the CDC recommendations for cleaning and disinfecting City facilities.

- See CDC recommendations for [Cleaning and Disinfecting your Facility](#)

6. How should an employee handle a COVID-19 related concern in the workplace, such as employees that appear to have COVID-19 related symptoms at the office?

Employees who feel uncomfortable in the workplace or have any concern related to COVID-19 protocols or adherence to the established protocols, please speak with your Supervisor or Manager. You may also contact COVID19@dallas.gov, CODemployeesupport@dallas.gov, or your HR Partner if you have further questions or concerns. Our priority is your safety as well as ensuring our residents receive needed services.

Testing, Close Contact & Reporting

7. Will information about a positive COVID-19 test be kept confidential?

Yes. Supervisors and the City must maintain confidentiality as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (“ADA”) and other applicable laws. When requesting leave please send test results and vaccination status to COVID19@dallas.gov. If you have concerns about maintaining confidentiality, please contact the City’s Privacy Officer, Rosie Reyes at Rosie.Reyes@dallas.gov.

Testing Positive and Isolation Guidance

8. I tested positive for COVID-19, what are next steps?

An employee who tests positive for COVID-19 should already be isolating awaiting the test results.

- a. *Continue self-isolation and continue to monitor for symptoms.*
- b. *Notify Supervisor you will not be at work for operational and timekeeping purposes.*
- c. *Email HR at COVID19@dallas.gov for questions regarding leave eligibility and for assistance in receiving additional information regarding COVID-19.*
- d. *If you test positive for COVID-19, you can request the Q-Leave Civilian Paid Leave code; documentation of a positive COVID-19 test, and proof of vaccination will be required. The required request form is available [here](#). PLEASE NOTE: Send completed form, test results, and vaccination status to COVID19@dallas.gov.*
- e. *The city is prohibited from requiring its employees to wear masks at work. City management is requiring a full 5-day isolation period for employees who test positive for COVID-19. Employees may return to work after their symptoms have improved and they are fever free without fever reducing medication for 24 hours if they voluntarily wear a well-fitted mask for 5 calendar days once they return. Employees who are unwilling to wear a mask for 5 days after they return must isolate for the full 5 days.*

9. I have developed symptoms of COVID-19, what are next steps?

An employee who has developed COVID-19 symptoms should:

- a. *Self-isolate and continue to monitor symptoms.*
- b. *Notify Supervisor you will not be at work for operational and timekeeping purposes.*
- c. *Employees need to have a positive, current COVID-19 test clearly identifying the employee’s name and the date of the test to be eligible for Q-Leave Civilian AND have full vaccination status emailed with your Q-Leave request form. Employees will need to email COVID19@dallas.gov to submit a request for the Q-Leave Civilian Paid Leave code. Additional documentation may be required. A request form is available [here](#). If approved, the Time Entry Code for Civilians is “Q-Leave Civilian Time Off.”*
- f. *The city is prohibited from requiring its employees to wear masks at work, city management is requiring a full 5-day isolation period for employees who test positive for COVID-19. Employees may return to work after their symptoms have improved and they are fever free without fever reducing medication for 24 hours if they voluntarily wear a well-fitted mask for 5 calendar days once they return. Employees who are unwilling to wear a mask for 5 days after they return must isolate for the full 5 days.*

10. I have been isolating due to COVID-19 symptoms and/or a positive test. When can I return to work from Isolation?

An employee who has been isolating at home due to COVID-19 symptoms or a positive test, may be cleared to

return to work when they meet the criteria below:

- **Positive COVID-19 Test:** The city is prohibited from requiring its employees to wear masks at work, city management is requiring a full 5-day isolation period for employees who test positive for COVID-19. Employees may return to work if they do not have symptoms or a fever for 24 hours and voluntarily agree to wear a well-fitted mask for 5 calendar days after returning. Employees who do not voluntarily agree to wear a well-fitted mask for a 5-day period may not return to work until a 5-day isolation period has passed.
- After you have ended isolation, if your COVID-19 symptoms recur or worsen, restart your isolation at day 0. Talk to your Healthcare Provider if you have questions about your symptoms or when to end isolation.
- Civilian employees with unknown vaccination status are not eligible for Q-Leave and will need to utilize their personal leave balances in the event they test positive for COVID-19.
- For details, please access the HR microsite at <http://bit.ly/covidcodemployees>

11. Do I need to quarantine if I had a close contact?

If you were exposed to someone with COVID-19, you may have been infected with the virus. Follow the Center for Disease Control's recommendations for preventing the spread of the virus. This includes recommendations to wear a high-quality mask when indoors around others, improving ventilation, staying up to date with vaccines, testing, and monitoring yourself for symptoms.

Employee Leave & Absence Guidance

12. What types of leave related to COVID-19 are available to city employees?

Civilian employees in need of leave related to COVID-19 may be eligible for 40 hours of Q-Leave Civilian Paid Leave one time in a calendar year.

- a. Employees need to have a positive, current COVID-19 test **clearly identifying** the employee's name and the date of the test to be eligible for Q-Leave Civilian AND provide proof of vaccination status via email. Fully vaccinated status must include documentation of initial vaccination regimen (2 Pfizer or Moderna or 1 Johnson and Johnson) or COVID-19 vaccination/booster in the last 12 months. For the CDC's COVID vaccination schedule please click [here](#).
- b. Employees will need to email their positive test results clearly displaying their name and date of test, proof of full vaccination, and the [request form](#) to COVID19@dallas.gov to submit a request for the Q-Leave Civilian Paid Leave code. *Additional documentation may be required. The request form is available here: [Application for Q-Leave.pdf \(dallascityhall.com\)](#)*
***Please note that all requests for Q-Leave are subject to approval by the department Director.**
- c. If approved, the Time Entry Code for Civilians is "Q-Leave Civilian Time Off." If employees have not received approval for Q-Leave when completing time for payroll processing, employees should use their accrued time off starting with Sick leave. If the employee receives approval for Q-Leave after payroll has processed, the employee may request a time correction through Workday and their supervisor.
- d. Employees should use their accrued leave starting with Sick leave to take care of a family member who is COVID-19 positive.

Traditional Family and Medical Leave (FMLA) is also available to eligible employees and may be appropriate for employees who need leave for themselves or to care for a family member. FMLA Source manages the FMLA program for the City. You may contact them between the hours of 7:30 AM and 9:30 PM Central Time at 833-515-0767. You can also email them at fmlacenter@fmlasource.com and or contact them at any time by logging on to www.fmlasource.com.

13. Are City of Dallas part-time employees eligible for Q Leave Civilian paid leave?

Yes, part-time employees may be eligible for 20 hours of paid leave. See question above for instructions to request.

14. Is the City accepting at home test kits for the purposes of granting Q Leave Civilian leave?

Yes, the City accepts at home tests as proof of a positive test result for the purposes of granting leave. However, we are requiring that the **employee's name and the date they took the test be written physically on the test itself** somewhere, as well as sending a picture of how to read the test results if it is not obvious.

15. Is absence on a holiday considered holiday or Q-Leave?

It should be coded as holiday, per the Personnel Rules (34-22 (k)).

16. Can I take civilian Q-Leave more than once in a calendar year?

Q-Leave for Civilians is granted at a maximum of 40 hours for full time employees and 20 hours for part time employees per calendar year. If the employee has an approved need to use Q-Leave again in the same calendar year, they may use the remaining balance of the 40 hours if they did not use all 40 hours during their first occurrence of Q-Leave. Employees will not be granted additional hours in that calendar year beyond the 40 hours granted.

17. What if I am having problems entering Q-Leave?

Please work with your supervisor or department timekeeper first to resolve any issues with Q-leave time entry. If the issue cannot be resolved, please have the supervisor or timekeeper contact COVID19@dallas.gov.

18. Is Q-Leave approval automatic for civilians?

No. There is an approval process through Human Resources (via the COVID19@dallas.gov email address) that includes a Q-Leave request form, documentation of a positive COVID test, verification of vaccination status and approval by the department director.

19. How do I enter time if I have not yet received approval for Q-Leave?

Please enter sick leave or other leave type until you have received the result of your Q-Leave request. If necessary, your department can adjust your time if you are approved for Q-Leave.

20. Can an employee on initial probation take sick leave or be eligible for Q-Leave if they test positive for COVID-19?

Employees who are on initial probation who meet the requirements for Q-Leave may be eligible for Q-Leave. Every permanent employee accrues and may use sick leave upon initial appointment. (Personnel Rules 34-22 (a)).

Vaccine Incentives and Vaccines

21. Can I still earn vaccine incentive hours?

No. The vaccine incentive program ended on November 1, 2021. You must have been an active employee vaccinated **before** November 1, 2021, and entered your vaccine information into Apricity@Work **before** November 1, 2021 to be eligible for vaccine incentive hours.

22. How can I use my vaccine incentive hours?

Vaccine incentive hours can be used as paid time off following your department or work group's guidelines for requesting and using paid time off. Vaccine incentive hours do not expire; however, they cannot be transferred to another employee, and they will not be paid out when an employee retires or leaves employment with the City.

23. What if I have additional questions about my specific health situation regarding the vaccine and boosters?

Please contact your healthcare provider for guidance regarding your specific health situation.

Medical Exceptions/Reasonable Accommodation

24. How do I request a medical exception or reasonable accommodation?

Employees who need an accommodation because the employee is in a high risk category and must take extra precautions to avoid exposure to COVID-19, can contact Human Resources at FamilyLeave@dallas.gov to obtain a request form. Other than employees aged 65 or older, documentation from a physician will be required for all requests, which will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Once an employee requests an accommodation, the City will engage with the employee in an effort to determine what, if any, reasonable accommodation can be provided.

- For questions regarding what conditions are considered as high risk, please see the link below for an updated list of conditions according to the Centers for Disease Control:
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-with-medical-conditions.html>

Health and Wellness Resources

25. What other resources are available for City of Dallas employees that need health and wellness related support, such as Telehealth or employee assistance?

There are programs and resources available for support, including:

- Employee Assistant Program (EAP):
 - Phone: Call Anytime, 1- 844-213-8968; Website:
<https://dallascityhall.com/departments/humanresources/benefits/Pages/EAP.aspx>
- Blue Cross Blue Shield Telehealth:
 - Call 1-800-400-MDLIVE or go to www.MDLIVE.com.
- CareATC:
 - Questions about the vaccine, have COVID-19 symptoms, or are ill. Call 1-800-993-8244, or email dallascityhall@careatc.com for virtual assessment and assistance.
- City of Dallas Human Resource COVID-19 Microsite:
 - www.dallascityhall.com/departments/humanresources/Pages/COVIDEMP.aspx
 - Use COVID19@dallas.gov for questions regarding leave or other HR related questions.

Travel Guidance

26. Where can I find information about travel?

The City will follow the CDC and the DCHHS's guidelines on travel.

Links to CDC Resources: Check the links.

Travel recommendations: <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/yellowbook/2024/infections-diseases/covid-19>

For questions not addressed in this document, please email the question to COVID19@dallas.gov.