

## LADWP Response to COVID-19: Keeping Our Workforce Safe and Healthy

### Frequently Asked Questions & Answers March 26, 2020

Our employees are our greatest strength and keeping you safe and healthy during LADWP's response to the COVID-19 pandemic is our first priority. Understandably, many of you have questions about how we are doing that so we have prepared frequently asked questions and answers to help reassure you that we are doing everything possible to keep you healthy, so you can help us keep the water and power flowing to our customers. While this situation is changing day to day, our goal is to provide you with regular updates to reassure you that every step is being taken to protect the health and wellbeing of our workforce. We will continue to update you and share more information as it becomes available.

#### WORKPLACE SAFETY

**Q. What is LADWP doing to keep our workplaces safe during the COVID-19 pandemic?**

**A.** We are carefully following all public health directives and guidelines on physical distancing, hygiene, and keeping workers who show signs of illness out of the workplace.

Currently, more than 1,500 employees are telecommuting, which significantly reduces the risk for those of us who must continue to work in office settings. Customer Service Centers have been closed to the public, and we have spread out staff who are required to work from the office, while also working to deploy technology to allow even more of our workforce to work from home. All in-person meetings and interactions within offices also require 6 feet of social distancing.

We have taken additional infection control measures, including increasing the frequency of workplace cleaning; making hand sanitizers and wipes readily available to employees at all facilities.

We have amended the administrative leave and sick time policies to enable you to stay home longer without losing pay, including suspending doctor's notices for workplace absences.

The steps we are following are working, and we will continue to take all recommended measures to keep the workplace safe.

**Q. What can I do to protect myself from the virus at work?**

**A.** Whether you are at work, or going about your daily life, the most important practices we all need to follow include:

- Keeping a six-foot social distance between yourself and others.
- Washing your hands regularly, and use hand sanitizer frequently.

Please review the Public Health Department's Coronavirus website for information on social distancing, home quarantine, COVID-19 symptoms, and other useful information: <http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/Coronavirus/>

Remember that it can take two to 14 days to show symptoms, according to the LA County Department of Public Health (Public Health) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Please be vigilant and follow these simple tips to keep yourself and others around you safe.

**Q. Are our internal custodial services enough to protect the office from COVID-19 exposure?**

**A.** LADWP's custodial staff is working continuously to clean and sanitize our work areas, including extra cleaning in offices and areas when necessary. They are using proven products that kill all viruses. Please remember to give them extra thanks when you see them. Their work, together with your commitment to social distancing and regular hand washing, are critical elements in protecting against the spread of COVID-19.

**SAFETY IN THE FIELD**

**Q. How LADWP protecting employees who work in the field?**

**A.** We have taken steps to protect the health and safety of our field employees, such as reducing the number of people who ride in trucks together. If you are uncomfortable

being in a vehicle with someone else, you are allowed to commute in your own vehicles and obtain mileage reimbursement.

The goal is to make sure you have adequate distance from others to perform your function. If we're not close together, and we're careful about what we touch, we will not transmit disease around the workplace.

**Q. Are Department vehicles also being cleaned and sanitized?**

**A.** Fleet Services motor pool staff is taking all necessary steps to sanitize each motor pool vehicle prior to each use. They are using a disinfectant spray designed to kill viruses throughout the interior and exterior of our vehicles. For your health and safety, Fleet Services is asking for employees who check out vehicles to wash and/or use hand sanitizer prior to use of our vehicles.

Please note: If you are using a motor pool vehicle outside of the JFB at an unstaffed location, Fleet Services will be unable to provide this cleaning service. You are requested to wipe the vehicle down with sanitizing wipes to ensure your own and others' safety.

## **GENERAL HEALTH CONCERNS**

**Q. Have any employees tested positive for COVID-19?**

**A.** Yes. The reality is that with more testing, we'll see more cases. The goal is to flatten and ultimately reduce the rate at which we are seeing positive cases and keep our workforce as healthy as possible. But some employees inevitably will test positive.

**Q. What happens when LADWP learns an employee has tested positive?**

**A.** All employees who have come into contact with an affected employee are immediately notified and placed on administrative leave with the advice that they self-quarantine. This includes employees working in proximity to the affected employee, attending the same meeting, or who otherwise had more than incidental contact. These employees are identified by discussing recent activities with the employee and reviewing calendars and other information.

Any potentially impacted facility is cleaned according to public health guidelines so that it is safe for others to return to work. This is the standard, health-department recommended step whenever there is a reasonable risk that someone could have been exposed.

**Q. How will I know if I was in contact with an employee who tested positive for COVID-19?**

**A.** If you work in proximity, attended a meeting with, or were part of an interaction with an affected employee going back to a time as advised by public health guidelines, **you will be notified.** Once notified of the possible exposure, you will be provided instructions on what steps to take next to keep yourself and others safe, including instructions for testing if needed. We are being sensitive and thorough and erring on the side of caution. If we suspect you may have been exposed, you will be contacted and placed on paid-administrative leave to self-quarantine.

**Q. What about the air in my office? Can Coronavirus be spread through office air circulation?**

**A.** Health experts have stated that Coronavirus is spread through large droplet transfer. This means droplets that are too large to remain airborne and are spread through coughing and sneezing within a fairly close range of other people. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) puts this range at about six feet. That is why it is essential to maintain social distancing and to sanitize surfaces such as desks, tables and doorknobs.

**Q. How likely is it that more LADWP employees will be infected by the virus?**

**A.** We have more than 10,000 employees spread across a large geographic region. And although we have had a few employees with positive test results so far, we already have other employees out on a 14-day leave as precautionary measures. This includes the full range from entry-level workers to top-level managers. Everyone is being treated and handled the same, for their and your safety. With your commitment to social distancing and regular hand washing, together we can reduce the rate and likelihood of future positive cases.

**Q. What do I do if I'm not feeling well or think I may have COVID-19 symptoms?**

**A.** If you are sick, do not come to work. Do not infect the workplace and place your coworkers at risk.

If you call in sick, you have the option to be placed on seven (7) calendar days Paid Administrative Leave. Your sick bank will not be charged.

If you come to work and show signs of an upper respiratory illness, flu or other symptoms consistent with COVID-19, you will be placed on Paid Administrative Leave and sent home. Please be reminded that employees on Paid Administrative Leave are functionally at work, available, and have reporting requirements. This is not free time off. It is to protect those in the workplace.

**Q. What do I do if I receive confirmation that I've been exposed to a person who has tested positive for COVID-19 outside of work?**

**A.** Contact your supervisor immediately. If you are not at work, do not come to work but do notify your supervisor immediately so you can be provided information and instructions regarding Administrative Leave. And please, respect the privacy of your fellow employees.

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**For the latest updates on the City and County of LA's response to COVID-19, visit <http://corona-virus.la/> and <http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/Coronavirus/>.**

**Links to COVID-related Videos, Bulletins and Announcements:**

[GM Video Message](#)

[Update 3/24/2020](#)

[Update 3/19/2020](#)

[Workplace Policy Updates 3/19/2020](#)

[Letter from General Manager 3/17/2020](#)

[COVID-19 Response 3/16/2020](#)

[View All Bulletins](#)