



## Employee COVID-19 FAQ and Requirements – March 16, 2020, 10 am (!)

NCAC leaders are making decisions and providing information as fast as we can, but we literally cannot finish a sentence sometimes before the government or others make announcements that change everything from the previous minute. We are sure that many of you feel the same way regarding your personal decisions and circumstances. The following is the best we know at this time, but please understand that it could change in a moment. We know this makes for uncertainty for all of us, but these are unprecedented times. So, most of all be kind and patient with yourself and others and take the prevention advice seriously.

### What does it mean that campus is only open for “essential” personnel?

While all of our staff are essential to the success of the agency, only certain positions are “essential” for on-campus work during an emergency such as this one. As Chris announced via email, the NCAC has moved to a remote workplace and stopped almost all campus-based and in-person activities for at least the next two weeks. This is consistent with the current medical and government advice regarding social distancing and helping to reduce the spread of COVID-19. The only exceptions for employees to be on campus will be for those who are:

- providing emergent forensic interviews and clinical services with supervisor approval,
- handling some administrative tasks to support NCAC continued operations, and
- collecting necessary items from offices in order to work from home.

If you are in the third category, please minimize your time and interactions in the office and consider stopping in outside of usual business hours. **If those of us who do not have to be on campus minimize our time there, then we reduce the exposure for those who do have to be on campus.** Individual departments will clarify who falls in the other two areas and the expectations for their particular positions.

### Will the NCAC campus close completely at some point?

As announced, NCAC is moving to a remote work environment. We do not know when or if the campus will be closed completely. However, we do know the following:

If someone at NCAC has been directly exposed or diagnosed with a confirmed case of COVID-19 we will close immediately, and for the following day, so that we can:

- Notify individuals who may have come into contact
- Complete appropriate cleaning tasks

- Consult with local authorities to complete any other steps determined to help limit exposure and to determine when to re-open

We will be as transparent as possible and follow government requirements in place at the time.

See also the above question regarding who can be on campus for now.

### **What are the requirements for working from home?**

We encourage everyone who can easily work at home for all or part of their job to prepare to do so and to start as soon as their supervisor and department director approves. (See also the related questions regarding being unavailable to work and approvals for taking leave or working reduced hours.) Individual departments are already discussing how to handle working from home and what additional changes or resources may be needed for some jobs. Departments may also choose to rotate working from home and essential on-campus responsibilities so to minimize the number of people in office at any given time. All employees working from home (who were not already in a telework job) will need to complete a form that their supervisor will provide. This form outlines the general requirements including sending your supervisor a brief email at the end of each day summarizing your activities for the day. We need this to help supervisors keep up with who is doing what, to have a record of what work is being accomplished in case we may need it for grants or other crisis-related reporting, and for other possible reasons such as knowing the status of a project in the event an employee is unexpectedly unavailable to work the next day. Your supervisor will provide you more details.

### **For staff members who need to come to campus, what are the requirements before coming to work each day?**

Check your email to be sure the campus has not closed and notify your supervisor of your intent to go on campus. Supervisors will be aware of others coming to campus and will coordinate visits to limit contact with others in person and to promote social distancing.

Review the campus screening questions. Do not come to work if any of these questions apply to you.

1. Have you had a fever in the past week?
2. Have you experienced coughing or shortness of breath?
3. Have you been exposed to someone who has tested positive for COVID-19?

### **What are the requirements when I arrive on campus and throughout the day?**

Check for any new signage at the door and follow instructions.

Wash your hands for 20 seconds upon entering a building, periodically throughout the day, and right before leaving for the day.

Use the hand sanitizer when washing your hands is not an option.

Avoid in person meetings whenever possible. Consider phone calls or other methods instead. If you have to meet in person, follow social distancing guidelines and wash your hands before you return to your office.

Do not share food - this may be a hard one for us, but best to cut out shared dishes at this time.

### **What are the requirements when I leave for the day?**

If you have tasks that you can do at home, then take whatever you need for the next week in case the campus completely closes. This includes laptop, password hints, paper files, etc. Start now setting up a folder or a bag of items that you will bring home each day.

### **Who do I contact if I am going to be absent (i.e. not available to work from home or on campus that day)?**

1. Contact your supervisor or follow your department's designated process.
2. If your absence is COVID-19 related, also immediately email your department director (if not already contacted), Michelle Krohn and Chris Newlin.

### **What are the options for absences or reduced availability due to school closures?**

Depending on your particular situation, the following options or combination of options may be available if the school closures affect your family. (None of these will impact your full-time/part-time status or related benefits.)

- a. Work from home for your full schedule
- b. Work from home for a reduced schedule
- c. Use annual leave
- d. Use unpaid leave

**What about working from home or taking off work because I am concerned for my own health due to being in a high-risk group or concerned for someone in my household who is in a high-risk group?**

Most staff will already be working from home or taking leave, but this applies to those who are in “essential” jobs that must come to the NCAC for work. If you or a household member is in a high-risk group due to health issues or age, we encourage you to work from home for as much of your job as possible or to take leave. Depending on your particular situation, the following options or combination of options may be available. (None of these will impact your full-time/part-time status or related benefits.)

- a. Work from home for a reduced schedule
- b. Use annual leave
- c. Use unpaid leave

**What if I or someone in my household has COVID-19 symptoms or has had direct exposure to COVID-19?**

We want you to focus on good health for yourself and your family. Even if you feel fine, do **NOT** come to the NCAC or have any direct client interactions. Additionally, you should notify your supervisor, Michelle Krohn, and Chris Newlin immediately via email or text. If you determine that you have COVID-19 or have been exposed, you must follow the quarantine guidelines from the Alabama Department of Public Health or CDC. If you have symptoms but it is determined that you do not have COVID-19, then please also let us know immediately. We will then discuss the circumstances and an appropriate return to work time.

Depending on your particular situation, the following options or combination of options may be available. (None of these will impact your full-time/part-time status or related benefits.)

- a. Work from home for your full schedule
- b. Work from home for a reduced schedule
- c. Use sick or annual leave until recovery and/or the quarantine has been met based on current medical guidelines
- d. Use unpaid leave

**What if none of the above applies but I would just like to be off work for part or all of the next week or two?**

Depending on your job, that may be completely fine or even encouraged. You have the option of taking annual leave or unpaid leave with supervisor approval. If you take unpaid leave and thus have less than 40 hours for a few weeks, it will not affect your benefits eligibility. However, we really have no idea where all this is headed and if you are healthy and your coworkers end up sick, we may need you to help out at least from home if there are critical tasks that need coverage.

**What if I cannot work for any reason but have already used all my paid leave or am not eligible for paid leave? Is my only option unpaid leave?**

We are currently discussing if there are any other options, including alternative assignments, that are affordable to the agency as well as monitoring the current federal legislation being debated regarding employee sick leave benefits. We do not know for sure if there will be any other options or not, but plan to have an update soon.

**How can I prevent myself from getting sick or spreading illness to others?**

Please take the prevention methods seriously not only to protect yourself and your household but also to protect our colleagues and clients who are at higher risk or are caregivers. According to health experts, it will take all of us working together to slow down the spread. Follow the prevention recommendations from the CDC's website. They also have a daily newsletter and many constantly updated resources on this topic.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/prevention.html>

**What else do I need to do?**

**Update your contact information:**

Within the next day, please email your cell phone number and your emergency contact information to Cindy Miller **AND** your supervisor or designated department representative.

**Follow the new sick leave request process:**

If you are requesting sick leave, you must include details in the "notes" section of your Paychex request for time off before it will be approved by your supervisor. (If you are the person who is ill, then your supervisor or a member of the HR or payroll staff can help you with this.) One of the reasons we are requiring this is in anticipation of information we may need for grants and other reporting. Please include the following details. More than one may apply.

- is the absence to care for yourself OR for another person?
- is the absence due to a confirmed COVID-19 case for yourself and/or a household member?
- is the absence due to complying with a COVID-19 quarantine, including self-quarantine?
- is the absence a health issue that is not related to COVID-19?