

## South Dakota – Employee Guidance and Communication

**TUESDAY, MARCH 24**

Good Morning,

Thank you for the leadership and flexibility you are showing in this unprecedented time. As the situation continues to evolve please consider this additional guidance as we stretch partial closures through Friday, May 1st.

Employee situations should continue to be handled on an individualized basis. Please have your supervisors work directly with your partner HRM and Generalists when they have employee issues regarding COVID-19 that need additional consideration, including self-quarantine after travel. These HR Business Partners and I are meeting three times per week to talk about specific COVID-19 related issues across agencies in order to address them as consistently as possible.

Please work with your HRM if essential employees refuse to work due to COVID-19. Individual situations will determine the appropriate alternatives, including leave available to the employee.

We are assessing the recently passed federal legislation regarding the expansion of FMLA and its impact on the State of South Dakota as an employer. More specific information on this will be coming as soon as possible from your HRM. Employees who have tested positive for COVID-19 or are caring for a family member who has tested positive for COVID-19 may be eligible for Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA).

Immediately reassess who you have designated as essential in Beadle County; remember other counties are likely to be designated as having substantial community impact in the future. Communities will likely look to our agency actions to determine the steps they will take in their businesses and organizations.

- Can the work be delayed and for how long?
- Begin to work from home if they are not already doing so.
- No longer report to an office before starting outdoor work, i.e. Conservation Officers, DOT Technicians, etc.
- Take extreme social distancing measures at work and when not at work to reduce exposure and transmission.

Please consider additional opportunities for work and continue services to the public in a controlled manner:

- Curbside pick-up and drop-off of required materials
- Services by appointment only
- Rotating office availability between staff to reduce the opportunity for spread, but remote work remains the first choice
- Training staff, essential and non-essential, to take on different work to temporarily replace individuals who become ill or unavailable

It is also imperative that you and your teams, and perhaps with other agencies, plan for the what-if situations. Questions to start that conversation:

- If we cannot open facilities to the public for two months how would that impact my department?
- The facility that we currently use is controlled by someone else or may be needed for other purposes, i.e. county courthouse, national guard armory, federal building, shared space. What alternatives are there for us to utilize?
- Who can back-up essential employees that become ill?
- Can forms or other paperwork be made available or acceptable in electronic formats for submission?
- Which team members have the capacity to take on higher level work or leadership roles?
- Which employees are not performing at the required level?

Please post phone numbers on your homepages for your various services, physically post phone numbers on the doors of all your offices, and include updates through social media on ways the public can contact you.

Send me any questions you have or broad guidance concerns by Wednesday (tomorrow). I will compile the questions and provide as many answers as possible back to the group by the end of the week.

For those of you that will have limited interactions with the public, please follow [the DOH guidelines](#).

If there is anything further that the BHR team can do to support you, please let me know.

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#### **PREVIOUS GUIDANCE FOR YOUR REFERENCE**

##### **THURSDAY, MARCH 19**

The Governor issued Executive Order 2020-06 this morning, essentially extending Executive Order 2020-05, regarding state employees and offices through Saturday, March 28 at 11:59 p.m. Generally, the guidance from last week remains unchanged (see below).

Non-essential employees will continue to work remotely as it is possible next week. Because this will be our second week responding to COVID-19 in this way, more people will need to be in state offices to maintain normal operations. You, as a Cabinet member, have flexibility to deem who does and does not work remotely.

If local offices are currently closed to the public, they should remain so next week. It might be essential to have some people working in those offices, though access won't be open to the public.

As you work with your agency's leadership team to move forward with work requirements and obligations, please keep in mind that you are allowed to:

- Expand or change the list of essential employees as you see fit through next week.
- Increase the number of employees reporting to offices and institutions as needed.
- Keep offices closed to the public.

- Non-essential employees may be provided work opportunities in support of the EOC.
- Continue to be as flexible as possible, particularly with employees whose children are not in school.

Monday, March 23 is a payroll period end. Be assured that payroll will be done for April 1. Because some employees will not have access to TKS, we are asking managers to make sure time forms are entered and signed by 6 p.m. CT on Monday, March 23. This may require the manager to enter hours and sign on behalf of the employee in this special circumstance. We will provide managers with information on how to log into TKS from outside of the office later this week.

Please update your leaders and staff today regarding decisions for your agency and offices next week.

Let me know if you have any questions or concerns as we move forward. Thank you.

## **FRIDAY, MARCH 13**

### **Essential Personnel**

- Essential personnel who must perform their work on-site should report to work as scheduled unless directed otherwise.
- For essential personnel that are able to perform their job duties remotely, they must work remotely.

### **Non-essential Personnel**

- Non-essential personnel are ordered to work remotely, if possible.
- If not possible, they may take administrative leave for those hours they would normally be scheduled to work. Some non-essential personnel may be able to work remotely for part of the week and need to take administrative leave for the remainder of the week.
- Please work with your team to determine each person's roles next week.
- Report hours as normal, regardless of location from which they are worked next week.
- Non-essential personnel are not to report to work, whether or not they are able to work remotely.

All work-related out-of-state travel scheduled during the time frame above is prohibited.

We encourage you to be as flexible as possible with employees that may have to take care of children due to school and daycare closures.

If your office is fully staffed by non-essential personnel, your office will be closed next week. Before you leave today, post a note on your door with a number the public may call in order to reach staff.

Your HR Manager will be available to work with you on specific situations. It is important we all adhere to the Governor's order to assist in mitigation efforts for this outbreak.

We appreciate your cooperation.