

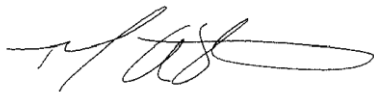
Date: March 23, 2020

From: Executive in Charge, Office of the Under Secretary for Health (10)

Subj: Authority to Approve Weather & Safety Leave for Employees Affected by COVID-19 (VIEWS 2589455)

To: VHA Senior Leaders, VISN Directors

1. To assist Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) employees within the Veterans Health Administration (VHA), whose employment has been disrupted due to COVID-19, I am expanding the delegation of authority to approve Weather & Safety Leave in excess of 7 consecutive days to local officials beyond what was previously issued. On February 12, 2020, I delegated approval to local officials for up to 15 days of Weather & Safety Leave for those who were subject to quarantine or isolation in connection with exposure to COVID-19. Since that time, circumstances under which Weather & Safety Leave may be used have expanded significantly and local officials need additional latitude.
2. This delegation of authority allows local officials to approve Weather and Safety Leave for employees under their supervision, in increments up to 15 days with review before continuation on a case-by-case basis, until the conclusion of the COVID-19 pandemic response. This leave may be authorized for: employees who have known contact and direct exposure to COVID-19 who are not able to work or telework; employees who are not able to work due to state closures (daycare, school, etc.); state shelter in place or stay at home orders; or other situations where the local official determines that the employee is unable to safely travel to or perform work at the facility or telework from home.
3. If you have any questions regarding this recommendation, please contact the Office of the Assistant Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Workforce Services at wmc@va.gov.



Richard A. Stone, M.D.

Attachment:

Scenario:	Appropriate Type of Leave	Approving Official
Employee is healthy (not showing any symptoms) but has been exposed to COVID-19 and stays at home because a local health authority determines the employee would jeopardize the health of others if allowed to return to work (quarantined).	<p>Telework</p> <p>If Telework isn't available, Weather & Safety Leave up to 15 Days and in additional increments of up to 15 Days</p>	<p>Supervisor or local official with the authority to grant telework</p> <p>At the discretion of Medical Center Directors, Network Directors, or SES VHA CO Program Director or appropriate Official under VA Handbook 5011</p>
Employee displaying symptoms or incapacitated for work by illness	<p>Sick Leave</p> <p>Telework-Depending on the severity of the symptoms if not completely incapacitated</p>	<p>Supervisor or other leave approving official</p> <p>Supervisor or other local authority</p>
Healthy employee does not want to come to work because they are afraid of exposure to COVID-19	<p>Annual Leave, Compensatory Time, Leave Without Pay</p> <p>Telework, if appropriate based on mission requirements</p>	<p>Subject to approval by local authority based on mission requirements</p> <p>Subject to approval by local official with the authority to grant telework</p>
Employees who are not able to work due to shelter-in-place orders	<p>Most of these are not applicable because they excuse health care employees, and all VHA employees are determined to be essential.</p>	<p>Please consult with the OCHCO guidance from the Attorney Guidance and/or your District Counsel regarding exceptions to these specific orders.</p>
Healthy, telework-eligible employee who has been told to telework during the pandemic has a child who attends an elementary or secondary school that is closed due to the COVID-19 Pandemic	<p>Annual Leave (Also, Compensatory Time and Leave Without Pay)</p> <p>Telework</p>	<p>Subject to the approval of Supervisor or other local authority based on mission requirements</p> <p>Telework may be approved, on a case-by-case basis, for time which is not spent directly caring for children unable to care</p>

		<p>for themselves.</p> <p>There is no authority to approve Weather & Safety Leave or Excused Absence for childcare.</p>
<p>Healthy employee for whom no offsite work is available who has a child who attends an elementary or secondary school that is closed due to the COVID-19 Pandemic</p>	<p>Annual Leave (Also, Compensatory Time and Leave Without Pay)</p>	<p>Subject to the approval of Supervisor or other local authority based on mission requirements</p> <p>There is no authority to approve Weather & Safety Leave or Excused Absence for childcare.</p>
<p>CBOC is closed, and employee is unable to telework.</p>	<p>Efforts should be maximized to assign employees work (screening patients, assisting with sanitizing, scanning VetPro documents, whatever work needs to be performed for the good of the agency and appropriate to assign) at an open site or via telework.</p> <p>Weather & Safety Leave, if it is not possible to assign the employee any work, up to 15 days and in additional increments of up to 15 days</p>	<p>Supervisor. Supervisors may also explore alternative telework-appropriate tasks</p> <p>At the discretion of Medical Center Directors, Network Directors, or SES VHA CO Program Directors or appropriate Official under VA Handbook 5011</p>

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