Good morning!

Here are some of the latest information/questions we’ve received…

**Do I have to wear a mask in public?**

Currently CDC and IDPH are recommending all people wear homemade face masks whenever going out in public for essential errands. I attached another easy way to make homemade face masks for you and your family. (t-shirt masks are not recommended for donation to hospital/clinics, please refer to IDPH guidance in previous email)

**Can we still proceed with our normal large extended family Easter plans?**

Easter and spring holidays are a traditional time of family gatherings, celebrations and observances. Like many other events and activities, these observances should be different this year. We know many families gather together over Easter and Passover. But, like school, shopping and most other activities, we’re asking residents to modify their plans in light of COVID-19. Gatherings of family and friends, whether in Taylor or Adams County, or by travel to other states, is discouraged. When people come together, the chances of spreading the COVID-19 virus grow. Although people with symptoms of the virus (coughing, fever and shortness of breath) obviously should not be around other people, even those who are seemingly well should do the same. We are learning that some people with coronavirus don’t have any symptoms, and that even those who later develop symptoms can pass the virus to others before showing symptoms. This is why even people who do not feel ill should stay home. Families and friends are encouraged to find alternate ways to observe holidays and to stay connected. Try Skype, Zoom, FaceTime or other electronic means of connecting, and phone calls and letters are especially welcome during this time of social distancing.

**I have questions about temporary staff layoffs, who do I contact?**

This is a guide from Iowa Workforce Development (IWD).  Should you have additional questions, please contact Iowa Workforce Development at 1-866-239- 0843, or email uiclaimshelp@iwd.iowa.gov .  You may experience longer wait times when calling but they are returning emails within 24 hours.

<https://www.iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov/sites/search.iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov/files/content-files/COVID19%20UI%20for%20employers%20-%20Q%26A%20Apr%209%202020.pdf>

<https://www.iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov/COVID-19>

**What is the FFCRA?**

President Trump signed into law the [Families First Coronavirus Response Act](https://www.fmlainsights.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/813/2020/03/COVID-19-FINAL-bill-signed-into-law.pdf) on March 18, 2020.  This act is effective April 1, 2020 and sunsets on December 31, 2020.  The Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) provides emergency paid leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) and emergency paid leave.  FFCRA addresses six specific situations:

1.     The employee is subject to a federal, state, or local quarantine or isolation order related to COVID-19;

2.     The employee has been advised by a health care provider to self-quarantine because of COVID-19;

3.     The employee is experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 and is seeking a medical diagnosis;

4.     The employee is caring for an individual subject or advised to quarantine or isolation;

5.     The employee is caring for a son or daughter whose school or place of care is closed, or childcare provider is unavailable, due to COVID-19 precautions; or

6.     The employee is experiencing substantially similar conditions as specified by the Secretary of Health and Human Services, in consultation with the Secretaries of Labor and Treasury.

FFCRA does exclude health care providers and emergency responders.  For definitions of a health care provider or emergency provider, please see the [Department of Labor FAQs 56 and 57](https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/pandemic/ffcra-questions).

Emergency Family and Medical Leave Expansion Act

The FFCRA entitles eligible employees to take *up to 12 weeks* of FMLA leave for a qualifying need related to a public health emergency.  This qualifying need is limited to circumstances where an employee is unable to work or telework to care for a minor child if the child’s school or place of childcare has been closed or is unavailable due to a public health emergency.  Employees must be on the payroll for 30 days and be in a full-time or part-time status to be eligible.

The first 10 days (2 weeks) are unpaid, but an employee can substitute accrued paid leave, including emergency paid sick leave, during this time.  The remaining 10 weeks are paid at 2/3 of the employee’s regular rate with a maximum of $200 per day and $10,000 total.

Employees can take *no more than 12 weeks* of FMLA, which includes any leave already taken in the current plan year (July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020).  Leave taken through FFCRA shall be administered by Reed Group.

Emergency Paid Sick Leave

The FFCRA entitles employees up to 80 hours (pro-rated for part-time employees) of paid sick leave for any of the six reasons listed above.  Employees will receive their regular rate of pay for their own personal care up to $511 per day and $5,110 total.  However, when caring for a family member, sick leave is paid at two-thirds of the employee’s regular rate up to $200 per day and $2,000 total.

Employees are immediately eligible.  Hours cannot be carried over after December 31, 2020.  The hours may be used on an intermittent basis; however the combined total shall not exceed 80 hours.  It is important to note that employees shall not be required to use accrued leave first.  Employees are also not required to find coverage for their missed shifts.

All agencies must post the [Employee Rights:  Paid Sick Leave and Expanded Family and Medical Leave under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFRCRA)](https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/WHD/posters/FFCRA_Poster_WH1422_Non-Federal.pdf) poster.

<https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/ffcra>

Don’t forget to unplug every once and a while from the news and find ways to disconnect. Taking a few moments can be good for mental health.  Limit your news intake by scheduling breaks rather than consuming all day.  It can be hard not to do everything at once, but for your sanity, dial back on multitasking and choose one thing at a time.  Take a senseless break and enjoy something random to help lighten the mood. Do things that allow you to be mindful of the habitat around you by taking a quick walk in nature.

Thank you for your continued partnership!

Crystal

