

JO DAVIESS COUNTY, ILLINOIS
EMPLOYEE ABSENCE DURING A CATASTROPHIC PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY POLICY

POLICY STATEMENT

This policy is applicable when the Jo Daviess County Chairperson makes a disaster declaration due to a catastrophic public health emergency. Provisions of this policy will be implemented in accordance with all applicable directives regarding the event.

REASON FOR POLICY

During a Catastrophic Public Health Emergency, the County could experience increased absences due to illness, caring for ill family members, fear, public school and business closings, and quarantines. Circumstances could warrant a reduced number of employees working at one time and this policy outlines the procedures to address those events.

PROCEDURES

1. The Jo Daviess County Board recognizes that voluntary social isolation and voluntary quarantine by county employees is in the best interest of the public's health. Because of this, no employee will be sanctioned for missing work during a catastrophic public health event. The employee may use any available sick time or unpaid time during the period of voluntary social isolation or voluntary quarantine.

2. All Department Heads are expected to do what they can to stop the spread of communicable disease. If a county employee shows signs of the current pandemic illness during work hours, their Department Head has the authority to send the employee home. In this situation, the employee will be paid their regular wage without deduction of paid leave for that day and any subsequent day, until such time as the Department Head feels it is safe for the employee to return.

3. If the County Board determines, in the best interest of the employees and the public, to limit hours and staffing during a catastrophic public health emergency, employees may be required to work on a rotating or reduced schedule. If this happens, the employee will continue to be paid their regular wage without deduction of paid leave for the days they are not present. If an employee is asked to work reduced hours, but chooses to voluntarily isolate/quarantine themselves, deduction of paid leave will only be for the scheduled days of work they choose to miss. When employees are working reduced hours, the County expects employees to stay home when not working. This continues the effort to minimize exposure to possible illness and ensures the employee is available on an on-call basis, should they be needed to return to work.

4. The County Board, in cooperation with elected officials and department heads will determine what business and which employees will be considered essential. Directives from the federal and state government will be taken into consideration, as well as directives from local elected officials.

5. Telecommunication options during a catastrophic public health emergency may be employed, such as working from home, attending public meetings, or requiring the public to utilize these measures.

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6. If an employee is utilizing FMLA immediately prior to a disaster declaration for a catastrophic public health emergency, any County closure period will not be counted against the employee's twelve (12) week annual limit of FMLA leave.

HISTORY

November 13, 2007

The County Board adopted the Employee Absences during a Pandemic Situation policy as recommended by the Executive Committee.

March 19, 2020

In response to the COVID19 outbreak, the County Board adopted an amended Employee Absence during a Catastrophic Public Health Emergency Policy. Amendments address department heads authority to send employees home when visibly ill with symptoms that match the current health emergency, paid leave for employees when a disaster declaration has been made regarding a health emergency, and reduced hours for any and all County buildings.