

EXECUTIVE'S OFFICE

County Courthouse
311 Grand Ave. Suite #108
Bellingham, WA 98225



Satpal Singh Sidhu
County Executive

TO: Department Heads and Elected Officials

FROM: Tyler Schroeder, Deputy Executive

DATE: April 30, 2020

RE: Stay Home Stay Healthy- Transition to Working On-Site & Fiscal Responses

Thank you for continuing to refine ways to maintain essential County operations during the Governor's Stay Home order. We anticipate some version of an extension starting May 4th.

Although we don't anticipate a full return to work on site with full public access to departments, we do anticipate a gradual transition back. In the coming weeks, please start thinking about the steps your department would take in developing and implementing a Physical Distancing Plan (framework and template attached) to ensure staff and public safety. Prevention ideas can be found with the current [CDC](#) guidelines and [Best Practices](#) as well as the Department of Labor & Industries <https://lni.wa.gov/forms-publications/F414-164-000.pdf>. If physical changes to work spaces are requested, please work with Facilities and IT, as appropriate.

As we begin to quantify the fiscal impacts on the County resulting from our idle economy, my team will be calling or meeting with departments heads and elected officials to discuss the ideas you have identified for mitigating operating costs as outlined in the Executive's COVID-19 Fiscal Response memorandum from April 20th. In addition to the hiring freeze, some fiscal strategies used during the 2008 recession are now being considered. We must remain nimble as we address our shifting resources. For instance, we now recognize the County can no longer afford to pay employees to stay home in paid status without working. While this was an important tool during the inception of this Stay Home Order, this will be the last week we can offer this option.

When work is not available, in-office or remotely, employees may request their time be handled from the following options:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|----------------|
| * COVID Emergency Sick Leave (ESL) | * Vacation |
| * Personal Holiday | * Comp Time |
| * Sick leave, as allowed by policy | * Unpaid Leave |

We will also no longer be able to continue augmenting COVID-19 federal emergency leave (from 2/3rd to full pay) effective May 3. Human Resources will send out a Benefit Alert to staff about options for supplementing this pay with accruals if they wish.

Perhaps a slim silver lining during these challenging days may be in recognizing the remarkable success Departments have had in re-organizing, re-assigning work, and staffing Emergency Operations while serving our citizens using new tools, methods and resources. A huge nod of appreciation to our dedicated employees. These adaptive measures will continue to assist us as we navigate this uncharted territory.

We look forward to discussing these developing strategies at our upcoming Department Head – Elected Official meeting on May 8th. Thank you for your efforts during these uncertain times!