

Following discussions this week between division directors, we have developed some initial legislative branch responses to the current coronavirus (COVID-19) situation. Our number one priority is protecting the health and safety of our employees in the work place, while maintaining essential legislative branch functions. The division directors have been in communication with legislative leadership and the governor's office to coordinate a legislative branch response.

We want to stress the importance of making a positive contribution to preventative measures that will help slow community transmission over the next few weeks. Subject to changing circumstances, we don't see the need for any drastic measures at this time and we believe we can all adapt work practices in ways that are informed by good public health advice, without sacrificing productivity. Our current focus is on strategies that increase social distancing and reduce the potential for community transmission by encouraging remote work for employees. This is discussed further as follows:

- To maintain continuity of operations, each division will identify those employees determined to be responsible for essential functions who need to be physically present at the work site for at least the majority of the work day/week. These positions will be referred to as “workplace present”.
- Employees at higher risk from COVID-19 will be prioritized for remote working arrangements, even where they are considered essential. This is important in terms of protecting employees with immunosuppressant conditions/treatments or other chronic health conditions, especially respiratory conditions and others at higher risk, including those over the age of 60. Employees with these concerns need to bring them forward, either to their supervisor or to the branch HR Manager.
- Employees who have symptoms of acute respiratory illness should seek medical attention and stay at home and not come to work. Employees having symptoms, should notify their supervisor.
- All employees who are not determined to be “workplace present” will be provided the option of remote work from home for some or all of the work week. Remote working will be encouraged, but will be voluntary and will be dependent on the employee's ability to connect to the branch network or otherwise remain productive. Employees need to assess their own circumstances and work with their supervisor to develop and appropriate plan for remote work. These remote work arrangements will need to be documented and monitored in a different manner from current telework policy and will be referred to as temporary remote work agreements.
- Policies relating to use of leave as outlined in the branch administrative manual will continue in their present form. In its simplest form, our leave policy continues to be use sick leave when you are sick, or you are caring for someone who is sick, and use annual leave or comp time for other portions of the work week when you are not working. As of now, we do not foresee the need to address emergency or administrative leave, although we understand that may become necessary if local schools or state government offices close. If you do not believe you can work remotely and still realistically fulfill your minimum required weekly

working hours, you should discuss the situation with you supervisor and be prepared to spend at least some of the work week at your work site.

- We will likely have to think creatively about how to make this work and how to balance an appropriate response with the need to maintain continuity of operations. The Directors will be reviewing response measures on a daily basis to assess effectiveness and make decisions about any needed changes.
- No new non-essential business travel should be arranged until further notice. We will continue to monitor the appropriate public health guidance when making decisions about travel. In the meantime, employees are encouraged to assess whether video-conference/online meetings can be used to avoid travel outside of Helena.
- Remember all the great advice everybody has received about hand-washing and hygiene. The branch has supplies available (disinfectant wipes, hand sanitizer etc.) that can be used to keep yourself and your workspace nice and clean.

Expanding remote working arrangements on a temporary basis is an important contribution to limiting community transmission and lessening the severity of the localized spread of the virus and protecting our employees. Many legislative branch employees have the ability to work from home with minimal disruption to work productivity. Not all state employees are going to have this option, so where it is feasible, it should be pursued. These changes will be effective Monday, March 16th until further notice. Please take some time to talk with your division director, your supervisor and your co-workers about how we can all make this effort successful. Attached to this email are separate documents from OLIS addressing VPN/network connection issues for remote working.

Be well. Wash your hands. Cover your cough.