COVID-19 (Coronavirus) Temporary Personnel Memorandum

Overview

In December 2019, the World Health Organization learned of unusual respiratory infections occurring in Wuhan, in the Hubei Province of China. On January 7, 2020, health authorities identified the cause as a new coronavirus (COVID-19). The Center for Disease Control (CDC) reports in confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) the severity of the illness has ranged from mild to severe illness, and in many cases has resulted in death. Federal, state and local authorities have and continue to issue guidance and requirements for re-opening the economy while the virus continues to be a public health crisis.

In response to this serious health threat and in compliance with state, federal and local requirements and health directives, Caltech continues to take the measures outlined in this personnel memorandum to reduce the risk of infection on campus and in our off-campus locations. Also reference the Caltech Together website.

Reduced On-Campus Operations

Effective March 20, 2020, in response to the state and similar local orders, Caltech implemented a reduced on-campus operation model that deferred all but essential activities and transitions most work to remote locations (home office, private space within your residence, etc.).

Limited resumption of on-campus work

In June 2020, the Pasadena Health Department (PPHD) approved Caltech’s plan to resume research and laboratory work on campus. A limited number of employees returned to campus to work while the majority of faculty and staff continue to work remotely. On-site work should be carried out in a manner that is consistent with physical distancing practices and the protocols outlined on the Caltech Together website referenced above. Employees should speak with their manager to determine whether they should resume on-campus work. Those whose specific tasks are being done at a remote work location should continue to do so.

Who Should Not Report to Work

Do not come to work if you are sick. If you start to feel sick while you are working, go home immediately. Contact your supervisor when you arrive home to inform them you are ill and have left

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work.

If you have any symptoms of illness (apart from those attributable to seasonal allergies or a diagnosed chronic medical condition), you should contact your health care provider for assistance and self-isolate or quarantine per your health care provider and/or public health department and Caltech guidelines. Employees with any of the symptoms listed below not attributable to a chronic condition diagnosed by a medical provider (e.g., allergies, migraines, chronic fatigue, etc.) or other known conditions, or who have a positive COVID-19 diagnosis are also asked to inform the Disability and Leave Administration Unit (DLAU) in campus human resources.


Some of the symptoms may include:

- Fever (100°F/37.8°C or higher) or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle pain not associated with exercise or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose not associated with seasonal allergies
- New gastrointestinal symptoms (diarrhea, vomiting, nausea)

Volunteers, guests, and visitors are not to come to campus or JPL without appropriate authorization from the cognizant division chair, administrative vice president, provost, or president. Those employees, postdoctoral scholars, vendors, and contractors who are authorized to come to campus under the reduced operations model should not report to work or come to Caltech, or any Caltech run facilities, if they are experiencing any of the above-noted symptoms or other respiratory illness. In addition, anyone who has had recent (i.e., within the last 10 days) exposure to anyone with, or exposed to, the coronavirus (COVID-19) should not report to work and/or Caltech. Additionally, anyone who has tested positive for, or been diagnosed with COVID-19, must be symptom free and meet all required protocols per state and local health department guidelines as well as Caltech policy before returning to campus. (See the section below on “Medical Certification”.) Anyone who has returned from travel outside of the United States must follow CDC and Caltech guidelines for returning to campus, or any Caltech run facility, or JPL. Please visit Caltech Together, the Caltech Coronavirus information website for guidance.

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Affected employees should contact their manager and the Disability and Leave Unit of Human Resources for further information.

**Sick Leave Policy**

Caltech’s standard sick leave policy can be found in Personnel Memorandum 15-2. An individual who is ill or is caring for a qualified family member who is ill, should use their accrued, unused sick leave and/or COVID-19 Supplemental Sick Pay, if applicable. An individual who is unable to work due to childcare issues caused by the COVID-19 pandemic may use their accrued, unused sick leave. If an employee chooses not to use their sick leave, they should charge time to vacation leave. Once sick and vacation leave is exhausted, employees will be moved to Leave Without Pay (LWOP).

In September 2020, California enacted the temporary COVID-19 Supplemental Paid Sick Leave for Large Employers which applied to covered employees who were required to leave their residence to perform work for a covered employer. In response, and retroactive to September 19, 2020, Caltech implemented COVID-19 Supplemental Sick Pay for all employees. COVID-19 Supplemental Sick Pay provides up to 80 hours for full time employees (prorated for part-time employees) and is a separate benefit from Caltech’s existing sick leave and vacation accruals. California’s requirement to provide COVID-19 Supplemental Sick Pay expired on December 31, 2020; however, Caltech is extending the benefit beyond the California requirement and permitting employees to use any remaining balances through March 26, 2021.

COVID-19 Supplemental Sick Pay may be used when an employee is unable to work due to one of the following reasons:

- The employee is subject to a Federal, State, or local quarantine or isolation order related to COVID-19
- The employee is advised by a health care provider to self-quarantine or self-isolate due to concerns related to COVID-19
- The employee is prohibited from working by Caltech due to health concerns related to the potential transmission of COVID-19

Please contact the Disability and Leave Administration Unit (DLAU) in Human Resources for any questions regarding current or retroactive cases (leaveunit@caltech.edu).

**Excusing Employees from Work**

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If a manager identifies an employee who is ill, they should direct them to stop working, even remotely. The Manager should contact the Disability & Leave Administration Unit or Student Wellness Services as soon as practicable for further instructions. For additional guidance, refer to the guidelines for management of reported illness [here](#). COVID-related illnesses are to be reported through the Caltech COVID-19 Reporting tool on [access.caltech.edu](http://access.caltech.edu).

Employees who are ill should contact their primary-care physician and contact their supervisor and the Disability & Leave Administration Unit. COVID-related illnesses are to be reported through the Caltech COVID-19 Reporting tool on [access.caltech.edu](http://access.caltech.edu).

If an employee has had a known, recent (i.e., within the last 14 days) exposure to anyone with respiratory illness or specifically with the coronavirus (COVID-19), and shares this information with their manager, the manager should consult with the Disability & Leave Administration Unit, even if the individual is not actively exhibiting symptoms.

Managers must follow the Institute’s guidelines regarding nondiscrimination as outlined in the [Nondiscrimination and Equal Employment Opportunity](#) policy. Managers should pay particular attention to employee confidentiality. Any health information an employee provides should not be shared with other employees except as provided above.

Managers should contact the Disability & Leave Administration Unit ([leaveunit@caltech.edu](mailto:leaveunit@caltech.edu)) to inform them of employees who have been instructed to not report to work due to respiratory illness. The Disability & Leave Administration Unit will record the names of employees who have been excused from work and will work with departments regarding appropriate time reporting, leave usage, and duration of time away.

According to the CDC, older adults and people who have severe underlying medical conditions such as heart or lung disease or diabetes seem to be at higher risk for developing more serious complications from COVID-19 illness. The CDC has noted the following conditions may include:

- Older adults (aged 65 years and older)
- People with HIV
- Asthma (moderate-to-severe)
- Chronic lung disease
- Diabetes
- Serious heart conditions
- Chronic kidney disease being treated with dialysis
- Severe obesity
- Being immunocompromised

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Staff members who have been instructed to return to work on-site and have concerns about doing so due to: (1) their age or a medical condition that places them in a higher risk group; (2) those who are pregnant; or (3) those who wish to seek ADA Reasonable Accommodations related to returning to the workplace, should contact the Disability and Leave Administration Unit in Human Resources for assistance at 626-395-3092.

**Time Reporting**

Absences for employees not reporting to work pursuant to this policy are considered to be excused absences.

**Paid Leave Options**

As a result of the COVID-19 health crisis, on March 16, 2020, Caltech authorized the use of other paid leave ("OPLP") to temporarily continue to pay full-time and part-time benefit-based employees, faculty, and postdoctoral scholars whose jobs were impacted by Caltech’s reduced operations. OPLP continued through January 8, 2021. Accrued sick and vacation leave may be available to continue pay for individuals’ who are unable to work due to COVID related issues. For information about paid time off, please refer to [Personnel Memorandum 15-2](#) and the [Caltech Coronavirus (COVID-19) Leave and Telecommuting Guidance for Employees](#).

**Medical Certification**

The Pasadena Public Health Department (PPHD) has required that all individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19 are to obtain a “Return to Work” letter from the PPHD Department before returning to work at a Pasadena location.

Please find the Return-to-Work letter here: [https://healthforms.cityofpasadena.net/v/WorkClearanceForm](https://healthforms.cityofpasadena.net/v/WorkClearanceForm)

**Telecommuting**

Employees who can work remotely, should continue to do so until a supervisor or manager instructs them to return onsite to work. Please reference the Caltech Together website and Caltech’s [telecommuting website](#). Employees should work with their managers to ensure that they have the equipment, supplies, and other resources needed to work remotely.

Telecommuting options may also be available for employees who have been asked not to come to work due to exposure to the illness or are caring for a sick family member. Sick employees are not required to
work from home. Telecommuting is subject to manager approval and the manager should work with Employee & Organizational Development in Human Resources to set up temporary telecommuting guidelines. Faculty should work with their Division Chair.

**Work Rules**

If you are approved for onsite work, the following requirements apply:

1. **COVID-19 Attestation**

   Individuals reporting to campus must affirm at the beginning of their workday that they have not experienced any symptoms of COVID-19 within the past 14 days. Before the end of their workday, these same individuals must also log information on the specific buildings visited on campus. Having such a record allows us to quickly respond in the event of a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 within our community.

   All employees should use the online COVID-19 Reporting Application via access.caltech.edu. Individuals who do not have reliable access to the internet and cannot otherwise access the web application should consult with their manager or supervisor about how to report their locations.

2. **Surveillance Testing**

   All faculty, staff, postdoctoral scholars, and students who are reporting to campus are required to enter the surveillance testing program conducted by Caltech. Tests results obtained through off-site testing facilities are not accepted. Details on the program and how to register for testing is found [here](https://www.hr.caltech.edu/documents/2688/pm_11-3.pdf).

3. Time spent completing your attestation and participating in the Caltech-sponsored surveillance testing will be paid in accordance with state and federal requirements as detailed in PM 11-3 “Employee Timekeeping” found at: [https://www.hr.caltech.edu/documents/2688/pm_11-3.pdf](https://www.hr.caltech.edu/documents/2688/pm_11-3.pdf).

4. All individuals reporting to work on-campus or at Caltech run facilities are required to receive, and verify that they have received, the flu vaccine for the 2020-21 season. Failure to verify immunization will cause loss of campus access. Verification of immunization was required by October 31, 2020. Attestations are to be recorded through the Caltech COVID-19 Reporting application.

5. **Wearing a face covering** is required while on Caltech premises and in Caltech buildings.

6. Maintain physical distance.

7. Practice preventative hygiene.

8. Report any exposure to COVID-19 positive individuals or COVID-19 related symptoms to the Disability and Leave Administration Unit (DLAU) in Human Resources at 626-395-3092.

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9. If an employee reports symptom of illness, a positive test for COVID-19, or direct exposure/close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19, the employee is required to stay home, and the employee should seek guidance from their healthcare provider.

10. If an employee tests positive for COVID-19 or has significant exposure to COVID-19, they are required to inform the Disability and Leave Administration Unit in Human Resources. Student employees should report any illness to the Student Wellness Center. COVID-related illnesses are to be reported through the Caltech COVID-19 Reporting tool on access.Caltech.edu.

11. In accordance with Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (LACDPH), if you have any of the symptoms identified by the CDC, you must stay home until at least 10 days have passed after your symptoms first appeared AND at least 3 days after you have recovered. Recovery means that your fever is gone for 72 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications and your respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath) have improved. Even if your test result is negative, you must remain at home for the duration of the isolation period to prevent spreading your illness to others.
   a. Before returning to work on the Pasadena campus, employees who tested positive for COVID-19 must provide proper medical certification from the Pasadena Public Health Department (PPHD), as detailed earlier in this policy.

12. If a supervisor receives a report that an employee is ill, they must require that the employee stay home. Supervisors should advise the employee to seek medical guidance. The supervisor must notify the Disability and Leave Unit for further guidance.

13. If an employee is diagnosed or suspected to be infected with COVID-19 the supervisor is to contact the Disability and Leave Administration Unit. The supervisor must otherwise keep this information confidential and should not communicate this information to other employees. COVID-related illnesses are to be reported through the Caltech COVID-19 Reporting tool on access.Caltech.edu.

14. Refrain from in-person meetings. In person meetings should not be scheduled unless the objective of the meeting cannot be met remotely. If an in-person meeting must be held, all participants must wear face coverings and physical distancing must be maintained and held outside.

15. Visitors and volunteers not directly related to essential work are prohibited on campus or at other Caltech run facilities.

16. Practice preventative hygiene and comply with physical distancing, face covering and all other applicable requirements at all times per The Guide for Returning to the Workplace.

Travel

Caltech-sponsored travel

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All non-essential Caltech-sponsored travel (domestic and international) is suspended until further notice. Faculty, staff, graduate students, or postdoctoral scholars may be approved to participate in Institute-sponsored travel when it is deemed essential. Essential travel will most often satisfy one or more of these conditions:

- The travel is directly related to research or other functions that support the global response to the pandemic.
- The travel is required for Caltech-related employment, research, teaching, or administrative responsibilities.
- The travel is in support of a critical university research/scholarship function that cannot be deferred or accomplished remotely.

Caltech-sponsored travel must be approved by the cognizant division chair, administrative vice president, provost, or president. No trips should be scheduled prior to receiving approval.

Approval must consider the need for individuals to self-monitor for 10 days after travel, to limit access to campus, and to potentially undergo testing. COVID-19 testing can be arranged via Student Wellness Services (SWS).

**Personal travel**

All members of the community are strongly discouraged from engaging in personal travel and from participating in any activity that may increase risk for transmission of COVID-19.

If you choose to travel, for 10 days after travel, you should monitor yourself closely for symptoms, stay home as much as possible, and access campus only if necessary. Contact the Disability and Leave Administration Unit (DALU), your lab supervisor, or your division administrator to arrange a schedule that keeps you off-campus during that time if possible.

If at any point during your self-monitoring period you become symptomatic or have reason to believe that you were exposed to someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, contact Student Wellness Services by phone (626-395-6393, Monday-Friday, 8am–5pm), so that a medical provider can evaluate your situation and provide you with further instructions and information about COVID-19 testing.

We encourage all members of the community who are regularly reporting to campus or regularly interacting with others who are reporting to campus to please contact covid19@caltech.edu for consultation regarding your specific circumstances or travel arrangements.

*Any exception to this policy for campus staff will require the approval of the Associate Vice President & Chief Human Resources Officer or the Director for Human Resources at JPL, or their designees.*

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