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 (2019-nCoV). Common human coronaviruses usually cause mild to moderate upper-respiratory-tract illnesses, such as the common cold, with symptoms that last only a short time. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) reports in confirmed cases of coronavirus (2019-nCoV) the severity of the illness has ranged from mild to severe illness.

The CDC has identified the coronavirus as a serious health threat. In response, Caltech is taking the measures outlined in this personnel memorandum to reduce the risk of infection on campus and in our remote locations. Due to the fact that this virus is passed through human contact and exposure, the Institute is asking employees who are demonstrating flu-like symptoms or have been exposed to the flu or coronavirus (2019-nCoV) to not report to work until identified symptoms are no longer present or a doctor has released the employee to return to work.

Who should not Report to Work

According to the CDC, symptoms of the coronavirus (2019-nCoV) include:

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath

Employees, visitors, vendors, volunteers and contractors should not report to work or come to Caltech if they are experiencing any of the above-noted or other flu-like symptoms (e.g. sore throat, body aches, congestion). In addition, anyone who has had recent or direct exposure to anyone with the flu or coronavirus (2019-nCoV) should be encouraged not to report to work and/or Caltech. Affected employees should contact their manager or the Disability and Leave Unit of Human Resources for further information.

Effective Date: January 31, 2020
Excusing Employees from Work

If a manager identifies an employee who appears to be ill with flu-like symptoms, the manager should encourage the employee to go home and contact his or her primary-care physician.

If an employee has had a known, recent or direct exposure to anyone with the flu or specifically with the coronavirus (2019-nCoV) virus, but is not actively exhibiting symptoms, the manager should consult with the Disability & Leave Administration Unit to determine whether the employee should be requested to stay home. The manager should consider whether arrangements can be made for the employee to work from home (i.e. telecommuting).

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.

Before a manager authorizes or encourages an employee not to report to work due to exposure, they should contact the Disability & Leave Administration Unit (x8382). The Disability & Leave Administration Unit will record the names of employees who have been excused from work and work with departments regarding appropriate time reporting and duration of time away.

Time Reporting

Absences for employees not reporting to work pursuant to this policy are considered to be excused absences. Employees will be required to use available sick accrual for the duration of their absence.

Employees who are off work to care for a spouse, dependent child, domestic partner or parent with flu-like symptoms should use available sick family accrual for the duration of their absence.

If the employee exhausts his/her available sick accruals, the employee will be placed on other paid leave status up to a maximum of 15 days. A manager or a Payroll Activity Monitor (PAM) should work with Human Resources to activate the other paid leave status.

Effective Date: January 31, 2020
Employees whose childcare provider/facility or school is unavailable because of Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) should work with their supervisor to arrange time off such as vacation or make arrangements to telecommute if possible.

**Medical Certification**

If an employee’s absence is 10 work days or longer due to illness, a medical certification will be required, as consistent with the Institute’s Sick Leave Policy (PM 15-3). Medical certifications should be mailed to the Disability & Leave Administration Unit, MC 168-84 or faxed to 626-795-1607.

**Telecommuting**

Telecommuting options may be available for employees who have been encouraged not to come to work due to exposure or are caring for a sick family member. Sick employees should not be required to work from home. Telecommuting is subject to manager approval and the manager should work with Employee & Organizational Development to setup temporary telecommuting guidelines.

**Travel**

The State Department has issued a level 4 warning for travel to China at the request of the CDC. The “Level 4: Do Not Travel” advisory is the highest level of warning the State Department gives for travel. The CDC has issued its own level 3 warning, recommending travelers avoid all non-essential travel to China.

*Any exception to this policy for campus staff will require the approval of the Associate Vice President of Human Resources or his/her designee.*