



Traverse County Minnesota

Press Release

Pursuant to a decision of the Traverse County Board of Commissioners, all Traverse County offices are closed to the public effective 4:30 p.m. March 17, 2020, until at least March 27, 2020. A decision to extend this closure for an additional period of time will be made by that date.

While the offices will be closed to the public, normal county services and operations will continue to be provided to the community on the same schedule. Any and all county business that can be handled by phone, email/mail or online should be conducted that way. If there is an emergency or an essential service that needs to be completed, they will be handled on a case by case basis. A listing of department contacts can be found on the county webpage at www.co.traverse.mn.us

Please refer to the Minnesota Department of Health and the Centers for Disease Control for updates on COVID-19 progression and prevention guidance.

www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/situation.html

www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html

PLEASE NOTE - This does not apply to the court system, which is under the jurisdiction of the Minnesota Judicial Branch and remains open. To access court administration or the courtroom for a hearing, use the north or south side doors and take the elevator to the second floor.

Thank you,

Lisa Zahl, Traverse County HR Director/County Coordinator

Utilization of Paid Leave During a Public Health Emergency Policy

Conditions may occur where a disease, such as influenza, respiratory illness or other contagious disease, has been declared by the World Health Organization (WHO), Centers for Disease Control (CDC), and/or Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) to be a public health emergency, indicating widespread human infection. When one or more of the above declarations have been enacted, the Traverse County Board of Commissioners (County Board) shall have discretion to declare this policy as active.

If the County Board declares this policy to be active, exceptions to the collectively bargained paid leave benefits and related agency policies would be permitted to the benefit of employees, as follows:

- An employee who has exhausted all paid leave would be allowed to receive an advance of the equivalent of up to 10 days of paid sick leave (up to a maximum of 80 hours, unless a greater amount is approved at the discretion of the Traverse County Personnel Committee) for absence from work due to infection of the public health emergency; and
- An employee may use any available paid leave, in the event where an immediate family member's school or place of care has been closed due to public health emergency and their presence is required to provide care for the immediate family member.

For the purpose of this policy, pursuant to Minnesota State Statute 181.9413, immediate family member is defined as the employee's spouse, child (including adult child, stepchild, biological, adopted and foster), grandchild, sibling, parent, mother-in-law, father-in-law, grandparent or stepparent.

All other provisions of the collective bargaining agreements remain intact, including but not limited to those pertaining to paid leave benefits.

Scope

This policy applies to all regular full-time and regular part-time Traverse County employees eligible to earn and use paid sick and vacation leave and is only in effect upon declaration by the Traverse County Board of Commissioners and will remain in effect until the County Board declares it to be inactive. In making the decisions to invoke and end this policy, the County Board will consult with the County Coordinator.

Responsibilities

Employees will receive a copy of this policy at the time that a declaration is made by the County Board that the policy is being activated. Supervisors will be asked to discuss the policy with their employees. All policy requests must be submitted to Human Recourses.

Background

Amount prevention strategies associated with influenza and respiratory illnesses, some of the best ways to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to the virus that causes it. The Minnesota Department of health strongly encourages people to stay home if they are feeling sick especially if they are experiencing influenza-like or respiratory symptoms associated with widespread transmission.

Unique circumstances may exist during a declared public health emergency that collectively bargained agreements and policies do not provide adequate guidance. An example of this may be an immediate family member's school or care provider being closed due to a declared public health emergency.

Procedures

The equivalent of up to 10 days (maximum of 80 hours) of paid sick leave will be advanced to employees who meet the criteria below. The actual number of sick leave hours advanced will be based on the employee's usual work schedule exclusive of overtime and may not exceed 80 hours, unless a higher level is approved by the Traverse County Personnel Committee.

- Traverse County Board of Commissioners has declared activation of this policy consistent with a public health emergency declaration by the World Health Organization, Centers for Disease Control and/or by the Minnesota Department of Health; and
- Employee has an immediate family member affected as a result when a school or place of care has been closed due to public health emergency and their presence is required to provide care for the family member; or
- Employee is experiencing symptoms consistent with the public health emergency, or is caring for an immediate family member experiencing these symptoms; and
- Employee is within the time period the County has declared this policy to be active; and
- Employee has exhausted all of his/her accumulated sick leave, vacation leave, personal leave and compensatory time; and
- Employee has not already received the maximum accrual advance allowed under this policy; and
- Employee has requested the advance of sick leave hours in writing using the attached form.

The advanced hours will automatically be reduced from the employee's future accruals. Once the advanced hours are paid back, sick leave accruals will again be credited to the employee's balance at their full accrual rate. In the event the employee separates from Traverse County before the advanced hours have been repaid, the agency will deduct the value of the remaining hours (number of hours owed time the employee's hourly rate of pay at separation) from the employee's last pay check.

Request for Sick Leave Advance during a Declared Public health Emergency – Traverse County

Name: _____ Department: _____

Date of Request: _____ Regularly Scheduled Hours Per Week: _____

I am requesting an advance of sick leave hours because:

- I am experiencing symptoms consistent with the declared public health emergency, or am needed to care for an immediate family member experiencing these symptoms; and,
- I am within the period the Traverse County Board of Commissioners has declared this policy to be active; and
- I have exhausted all of my accumulated sick leave, vacation leave, and compensatory time and
- I have not already received the maximum advance hours based on my regular work schedule.

The number of sick leave hours I am requested is a maximum of 40 hours per week

The number of sick leave hours I am requested is a maximum of 32-39 hours per week, based on my regularly scheduled hours per week

The number of sick leave hours I am requested is a maximum of 24-31 hours per week, based on my regularly scheduled hours per week.

I am requesting to use advance sick leave for the following days: (maximum of 10 days)

Date:	Hours:	Date:	Hours:
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

I agree that the actual number of hours within the maximum specified above will be limited to the actual number of hours needed for this purpose and that they may not be accumulated or used for any other purpose.

I agree that if sick leave hours are advanced to me, the equivalent number of hours I used will be deducted from future accruals and that I will not have new accrued hours added to my sick leave balance until the advanced hours have been fully paid back.

I agree that if I separate from Traverse County employment before the advanced hours are fully paid back, the agency will deduct the value of those hours (number of hours owed times my hourly rate of pay at separation) from my last pay check.

Employee's Signature: _____ Date: _____

APPROVAL:

HR Director or Designee: Approved Denied-Reason: _____