

# **KARNES COUNTY COVID OFFICE POLICY AND LEAVE TIME**

For the health and safety of Karnes County, Texas, its employees, and our constituents, it is essential that you follow simple guidelines to ensure the safety of yourself and others.

Please do not report to work if you suspect or have symptoms of COVID-19. If you suspect that you or a family member that resides with you has COVID-19, please seek immediate medical treatment and/or testing and do not report to work. If you are showing any symptoms of COVID-19, you should not report to work until either (1) a healthcare provider examines you and confirms that you do not have COVID-19, or (2) a healthcare provider diagnoses you with COVID-19 and then clears you to return to work. If you have contracted COVID-19, and you believe you became infected with the disease while working for the County, including during work-related travel, please contact the Human Resource's Office so that you can assess your exposure risk.

If you become ill at work with acute respiratory illness symptoms (i.e. cough, shortness of breath), notify your supervisor so that you can be separated from other employees and be sent home immediately. If you are able to notify your supervisor by telephone or email, you should do so.

Symptoms can include:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath
- Fatigue
- Headache
- Sore throat
- Unusual fatigue
- Nausea, vomiting and diarrhea

All employees will be screened upon entering their workplace pursuant to their department's policy. Washing of hands and using of hand sanitizers throughout the day is highly recommended. Please clean your work area often during the day.

## **TESTING OPTION**

Karnes County will offer free testing to current county employees who fit testing guidelines. If the employee is exhibiting or experiencing symptoms consistent with COVID-19 or the employee had close contact with an individual suspected of having or laboratory confirmed positive for COVID-19, they will qualify for free testing by Karnes County EMS. It is recommended to test on day 5 of exposure to positive contact. An employee may be tested immediately if they are experiencing symptoms.

The employee will need to contact Karnes County EMS Station 1 at (830) 583-9237. The employee will inform the EMS staff member of request for testing and their current county

department. The EMS staff member will schedule a day & time for the employee to arrive at the station for testing. All testing will be performed at Station 1 (707 W Main St, Kenedy, TX 78119).

At the scheduled appointment, the employee will remain in vehicle and call (830) 583-9237 to notify staff of the arrival. The EMS staff member will request that you to remain in your vehicle or approach the apparatus bays for testing. It is requested that the employee wear a mask or face covering to minimize potential exposure to medical staff member(s). The employee will be asked to provide a current TX Drivers License or ID Card.

The employee will be asked a series of questions and instructions will then be provided on how to self-administer the nasal swab. Once administered, the swab will be provided to the EMS staff member for testing. Results will be available in fifteen (15) minutes. Once submitted, the tested employee will receive an email and text message with their electronic test results. (Note: The employee must enter in his/her DOB to access the test results).

### **QUARANTINE & LEAVE**

No administrative leave will be given for an employee to take a COVID-19 test unless the individual meets the criteria of risk assessment and has symptoms. If an employee has exceeded these days and has no other available time, it shall be unpaid leave.

If you are fully vaccinated, and do not have any symptoms of COVID-19, you do not need to quarantine at home if you have been exposed. The employee may remain at work. However, it is recommended that you get tested 3–5 days after the exposure, even if you don't have symptoms, and wear a mask indoors in public for 10 days following exposure.

If you are unvaccinated, and you've been within 6 feet of a person who has COVID-19 for a total of 15 minutes or more in a 24-hour period, you should stay at home for 10 days after. Employees who are exposed to a known positive COVID-19 case are permitted to return to work after 10 calendar days, if they are asymptomatic for the entire time.

If you have symptoms, an employee may return to work after testing positive for COVID-19 when; it has been 10 days since symptoms first appeared and the employee has been fever-free for 24 hours without medication AND symptoms are improving. Loss of taste and smell may persist for weeks after recovery and need not delay the end of isolation/quarantine.

If you do not have symptoms, an employee may return to work after testing positive for COVID-19 when; it has been ten (10) days since the employee has had a positive test result.

**There is no need to have a negative test result prior to returning to work if quarantine guidelines are followed.**

**Day one is the day immediately following symptom onset, test date, or exposure to a known positive COVID-19 case.**

If you have a confirmed case of COVID-19, the County will inform fellow employees of their possible exposure to COVID-19 in the workplace but maintain confidentiality as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (“ADA”).

Employees who are well, but who have a sick family member at home with COVID-19 should notify their supervisor and refer to CDC guidance for how to conduct a Risk Assessment of their potential exposure.

If you are asked to telework, and you need equipment or technical support to do so, please contact your supervisor.

If you have tested positive or due to your risk exposure, you should not report to work, the employee will be required to quarantine per healthcare professionals order and take time off. All time taken will be the employees accrued leave time (PTO, comp, vacation, Sheriff Dept. holiday, in that order).

Please contact the Human Resource’s Office to obtain information about Short Term Disability, Long Term Disability, CARES, FMLA and/or any other leave questions.

Departments who are affected may close in order to have office cleaned and sanitize. Cleaning will occur in the employee’s workspace area or any common shared workspace. Administrative time can be used for the necessary days but no more than five (5) days.

Please follow the County and/or your department’s safety policy including County rules related to the use of personal protective equipment, including the use of gloves, eye and face protection, and respiratory protection. If you have any questions about Karnes County’s safety policies or the use of personal protective equipment, please contact the Human Resource’s Office.

### **ADDITIONAL PROVISIONS**

Karnes County will follow House Bill 2073 that directs paid quarantine leave for Fire Fighters, Peace Officers, Detention Officers, and Emergency Medical Employees employed by Karnes County and ordered to quarantine or isolate due to a possible or known exposure to a communicable disease while on duty.

Under this policy an eligible employee is defined as:

**Detention Officer:** Means an individual appointed or employed by a county as a county jailer or other individual responsible for the care and custody of individuals incarcerated in a county jail.

**Emergency Medical Technician:** Means an individual who is certified as an emergency medical technician under Chapter 733, Health and Safety Code; and employed by the county.

**Fire Fighter:** Means a paid employee of a municipal fire department or emergency services district who holds a position that requires substantial knowledge of firefighting: has met

the requirements for certification by the Texas Commission on Fire Protection under Chapter 419, Government Code; and performs a function listed in Section 143.003(4)(A).

Health Authority: Has the meaning assigned by Section 121.021, Health and Safety Code.

Peace Officer: Means an individual described by Article 2.12, Code of Criminal Procedure, who is elected for, employed by, or appointed by the county.

Eligible employees who are on paid quarantine leave shall receive all employment benefits and compensation, including leave accrual, retirement, and health benefits for the duration of the leave; and, if applicable, shall be reimbursed for reasonable cost related to the quarantine, including lodging, medical, and transportation.

Quarantine leave may be ordered by the employee’s supervisor or the county’s health authority.

**EMPLOYEE ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF POLICY**

I acknowledge that I have read Karnes County’s Response to COVID-19 Policy herein and that I understood it and agree to comply with it. I further acknowledge that I have been reminded of Karnes County’s Policy Handbook and understand that it is my responsibility to be familiar with it and abide by its terms. This Response is not promissory and does not set terms or conditions of employment or create an employment contract.

I agree that I will complete the Employee Emergency Paid Leave Request should I be affected by COVID-19 and submit such form to my supervisor.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_