

The Governor has set the following guidelines:

"Recognizing the diversity of agency missions, size of agency, and the needs of individual employees, the transition back into the workforce must be developed at the agency level with the emphasis remaining at all times on safety, flexibility, and productive teleworking. Agencies must find creative ways for employees to maintain their standard levels of productivity during this time, while also maintaining safety and social distancing. Consideration should be given to alternative or flexible work schedules to include teleworking or working outside normally scheduled work hours."

"The paid emergency leave that was provided to state employees on March 16, 2020, expires on April 30, 2020. If an employee remains unable to telework and unable to come into the workplace, accumulated leave may be utilized by the employee in order to remain in full pay status."

What this means to you as an employee of the Alabama Department of Mental Health depends on which of the following categories represents your current work situation:

- If you are an employee who has been able to telework for your full schedule or have worked a full schedule by a combination of telework and reporting to the office as needed, you will continue to do so effective May 1.
- If you are an employee who has to report to work but have been allowed to work on a limited basis and supplement your hours with emergency leave, on May 1, you will need to report to work for your full schedule or supplement your schedule with accrued annual leave in order to remain in full pay status.
- If you are an employee who has been on continuous emergency leave in lieu of performing work, you will have to report to work on May 1 or submit accrued annual leave in order to remain in pay status.
 - Supervisors must:
 - Ensure that these employees are notified of this information as soon as possible upon receipt.
 - Ensure that these employees have the health screening form and understand how to submit it upon their return to work.

The above instructions are effective May 1 and will continue until supervisors and department heads can meet with individual offices and employees to determine a viable transition plan for returning to work. Employees who are teleworking may need to begin a more structured schedule of reporting to work in conjunction with their telework schedule. Employees requesting to use leave rather than working a full schedule may not be able to do so as this transition continues. The diversity of responsibilities and the needs of individual employees must be evaluated on a case-by-case basis as we

balance the need to keep our employees and the people we serve safe and the need to follow the directive to ensure that " the essential services of state government are readily available to the taxpayers of our state."

As the Governor asks, we encourage all of you (while at work and at home) to :

1. Continue to social distance and not attend gatherings of more than 10 people
2. Stay home if you have any symptoms of illness, like fever or cough.
3. Wash your hands with soap and hot water often
4. Avoid touching your nose, mouth, and eyes
5. Be diligent about workplace sanitation and pay close attention to cleaning surfaces
6. Avoid close contact with others (maintain a separation of at least 6 feet)

We encourage you to wear a mask, homemade or otherwise, if possible. Use a paper towel or other means to avoid direct contact with door handles and elevator buttons. Department leadership is developing plans to enhance the safety of our environment by exploring options such as making our hallways one-way traffic only, limiting office entrances to one door, using floor markers to designate a six-foot distance, and securing masks that can be provided to employees. Until we can do more, we encourage you to do all that you can to stay safe.

On a final note, the Governor's directive references employees with childcare needs or COVID-19 related conditions that may qualify for additional leave allowances under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA). As an employee of the Alabama Department of Mental Health, you are exempted from these entitlements due to working for a health care provider. We regret that this exemption is necessary, and we will continue to do all that we can to support our employees under the standard leave policies.