

University of Houston-Victoria H1N1 Flu Employee Leave Plan

On August 5, 2009, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued new guidelines about the best ways to prevent spreading the H1N1 flu. Based on that information, the University has developed recommendations for when faculty or staff should stay home from work.

- **Employees who are experiencing an acute respiratory illness with a fever greater than 100 degrees F along with cough, nasal congestion or sore throat:** Should not come to work and should stay away from others (self isolate). Those who wish to seek medical care should contact their health-care provider to report illness by telephone or other means before seeking care. If persons with these symptoms must leave their home (for example, to seek medical care or other necessities), they should cover their nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing. A surgical loose-fitting mask can be helpful, but a tissue or other covering is appropriate too. They should stay home from work for 24 hours after their fever resolves. Their fever should be gone without the use of a fever-reducing medicine (antipyretic). Employees should use available leave if they need to stay home from work.
- **University faculty and staff who are well but have a family member at home with H1N1 flu:** Can go to work as usual. These employees should monitor their health every day. If they become ill, they should notify their supervisors and stay home using available leave. Employees who have an underlying medical condition or who are pregnant should call their health-care providers for advice or care.

Sick Leave

When the employee is unable to work because of illness, he or she should contact the supervisor at the earliest practical time in accordance with departmental procedures, and the Leave Request Form must be submitted promptly upon return. A medical absence of more than three working days requires either a written statement from the employee's health care provider indicating the cause or nature of the illness, or some other acceptable written statement of the facts from the employee concerning the illness. (Leaves of Absence Policy, C-1)

Current guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention state employees should stay home until they are free of fever for at least 24 hours.

Emergency Leave - Scenarios for Granting Emergency Leave on an Individual Basis

Any reference to "employee" throughout this section pertains to benefits-eligible employees only, as non-benefits eligible employees are not eligible for emergency leave.

1. **School Closure - An employee has a child/ren that attends a school which has closed due to the H1N1 flu. The employee requests emergency leave.**

*The employee **MAY NOT** bring his/her child to work and will be granted emergency leave upon receipt of documentation from the school official that the child/ren attend the school and the school has closed. The documentation should be attached to the Leave Request Form.*

2. **Day Care Facility Closure** - An employee has a child in a daycare facility that closes due to H1N1 flu. The employee requests emergency leave to stay at home to take care of the child.

The employee will be granted emergency leave under the same rules that apply to school closure.

3. **Employee Request – No School/Daycare closure** - An employee has a child/ren at a school/daycare that does not close but the employee is concerned with possible H1N1 flu cases and keeps the child/ren home. The employee requests emergency leave to stay home and care for his/her child/ren.

*The employee **will not** be granted emergency leave. The employee will be required to use vacation or unpaid leave.*

4. **Employee Request Emergency Leave for Testing** - An employee requests emergency leave to see a doctor and be tested for H1N1 flu as a precaution.

*The employee **will not** be granted emergency leave and will be required to use sick leave as with any other doctor's visit.*

5. **Employee Request Emergency Leave Until Work Area Cleared** - The University does not close; an employee does not want to come to work until their work area is cleared and requests emergency leave.

The employee will not be granted emergency leave. If the employee chooses not to report to work, the employee may use vacation, with supervisor approval. If the employee has not accrued vacation, the leave will be unpaid.

We understand that as a result of ongoing developments, individual experiences may vary and the above guidelines may not address each employee's circumstances. Managers and supervisors are encouraged to contact Human Resources at (361) 570-4801 to identify solutions to unique situations that are not covered in the above information. Human Resources Director and Cabinet Level Supervisor will make final determination based upon department input and policy.

References:

Leaves of Absence Policy C-1 <http://www.uhv.edu/fin/policy/C/c-1.htm>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention <http://www.cdc.gov>