

SunLine Transit Agency
Manager/Supervisor COVID-19 FAQ's
March 16, 2020

The COVID-19 issue presents an unusual situation for our workplace. Our number one priority is to respond proactively and appropriately to this changing issue. We are making temporary changes to our current policies because those who are ill, or potentially ill may no longer need a doctor's note to substantiate their absence from work. This is based on the elevated level of risk to public health.

The FAQ's below is designed to help our Managers/Supervisors address what might be common questions in this current environment. If you have additional questions, or would like to discuss any content, please see your Department Chief or their designee.

Temporary SunLine Policy/MOU Modifications notated below will remain in force and effect at least during the emergency declaration period set forth by the State of California:

- 1) Employees do not need a doctor's note before or during an illness, however employees may need one to return to work depending on their circumstances.**
- 2) Employees will be allowed to use their ETO/VTO accrual after exhaustion of sick accrual.**
- 3) Employees will be qualified to take accrued leave before the end of their probationary period.**
- 4) The Agency will provide sufficient unpaid leave of absence benefits.**
- 5) Employees who are absent from work due to illness or any other COVID-19 related absence, must call in daily to update manager/supervisor of their status.**

What do I do if an employee calls in sick to work because they are concerned they may be exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19?

Employees should be advised that they should stay home from work, as with any other illness, and follow the sick-time procedures found in the employee handbook, except for the provision requiring a doctor's note for an absence more than three days. The employee may use sick or other accrued leave available during the duration of the absence. Any absence in excess of the employees available sick or other accrued time off will be unpaid. Employees may be required return to work depending on your diagnosis.

What if an employee says they have tested positive for COVID-19?

Any employee that has tested positive for COVID-19, self-declares that they have it, or that they may have been exposed, **CANNOT RETURN TO WORK WITHOUT A MEDICAL CLEARANCE FROM HIS/HER DOCTOR.** Complete the call intake form and immediately contact SunLine's Human Resources Department. After hours, please email the form and information to hrteam@sunline.org.

The medical return to work notice will satisfy SunLine's requirement for medical documentation before/during use of sick or other accrued paid leave.

Due to the difficulty in meeting with a medical professional during this time, SunLine is not requiring any documentation before/during any leave due to the contraction or quarantine of COVID-19. This will allow those that are ill or have been exposed to take time needed to protect themselves and others. Their required medical return to work notice serves as documentation.

Absences under these conditions may trigger FMLA if the individual has a qualifying serious FMLA health condition. Any absence in excess of any sick or other paid time off available to the employee will be unpaid. SunLine will provide a sufficient unpaid leave of absence for any COVID-19 illness or necessary quarantine period.

What do I do if an employee who has called and advised they are not coming to work because they have been exposed to someone whom they believe has COVID-19 (or actually has the virus), has traveled to a high-risk area, or may be exposed to an individual who is quarantined due to concern over potential exposure?

The employee should be advised that they should stay home from work, if after review of CDC guidelines, self-quarantine measures are appropriate. The employee may use sick or other available paid time off for the duration of the absence. Any absence in excess of any sick or other paid time off available to the employee will be unpaid. SunLine will provide sufficient unpaid leave of absence for any necessary quarantine period.

What do I do if an employee has contacted me and advised that they were exposed, or believe they were exposed, to COVID-19 while working?

The employee should be advised that they should stay home from work if, after review of CDC guidelines, self-quarantine measures are appropriate. If you, as a manager/supervisor, believe this is a good faith claim of potential injury at work, just as with any other workers compensation issue, the manager/supervisor should call HR Department during normal business hours and after hours should call Desert Urgent Care 760-341-8800, who have requested to be contacted in advance of the employee's visit. Desert Urgent Care's scheduled hours are weekdays from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. and on weekends from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Employees may use sick or other available paid time off time for the duration of the absence. Absences under these conditions may trigger FMLA if the individual has a qualifying serious FMLA health condition. Any absence in excess of any sick or other available paid time off available to the employee will be unpaid. SunLine will provide a sufficient unpaid leave of absence for any necessary quarantine period.

**Any other injuries or illnesses should follow standard workers compensation protocol.*

What if employees themselves are requesting to stay home because they are high risk?

SunLine will permit an employee who is in a high-risk category to stay home to avoid additional community contact. The employee may use sick or other available paid time off time for the duration of the absence. Any absence in excess of any sick or other paid time off available to the

employee will be unpaid. SunLine will provide a sufficient unpaid leave of absence for any necessary quarantine period.

What do I do if an employee reports they have someone in the home that is high risk (elderly or whose immune system is compromised) and they say they need to stay home to care for them?

The employee should be permitted to stay home to care for the individual. Absences under these conditions may trigger FMLA if the individual has a qualifying serious FMLA health condition. Any absence in excess of any sick or other paid time off available to the employee will be unpaid. SunLine will provide a sufficient unpaid leave of absence for any caregiving or necessary quarantine period.

What do I do when an employee is unable to report to work because his/her child's school or daycare has shut down?

The employee's absence is counted as excused absence if they can provide documentation from the school or established daycare provider that there was a shutdown due to COVID-19. Under these specific circumstances, the employee may use sick or other available paid time off time for the duration of the absence. Any absence in excess of any sick or other paid time off available to the employee will be unpaid. SunLine will provide a sufficient unpaid leave of absence for these circumstances.

What will we do in a situation where an employee refuses to transport passengers?

Our employees are expected to interact with passengers and others as a core part of their job duties. We will not be granting reassignments to avoid the riding public and transporting our passengers.

How will we handle employees who don't want to report to work out of just general fear of contracting the virus?

While we understand that there is a significant amount of concern regarding the COVID-19, we expect employees who are not ill or have not been exposed to anyone potentially exposed to COVID-19 to come to work. At SunLine, we are following all CDC guidelines with regard to workplace and vehicle cleanliness.

What will we allow/disallow as far as Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) that employees may wish to wear?

We have evaluated the CDC recommendations and they do not indicate that any specific PPE should be worn related to COVID-19 exposure. At SunLine, we are following CDC guidelines which indicate that facemasks ineffectively filter small particles from the air and do not prevent leakage around the edge of the mask when the user of the mask inhales. The CDC recommends everyday preventive actions to prevent the spread of respiratory viruses, such as avoiding touching your eyes or nose, and covering your cough or sneeze with a tissue. We have distributed cleaning and sanitizing materials. Please contact your Department Chief or their

designee, if you have not received or seen these materials in your work space or have any questions about their implementation.

How will we react if someone reports that they think a fellow worker is ill and they fear the person may be contagious?

An employee who is concerned that a fellow employee or coworker is ill or exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 should immediately talk to their manager/supervisor, who will work with HR on evaluating and handling each circumstance on a case-by-case basis. Care should be taken to evaluate the situation factually and not to make any judgments based on perceived characteristics or demographics.

What do I do if an employee reports that they had a passenger in their vehicle that was displaying symptoms of illness and they feel their vehicle is now unsanitary?

Employees should immediately follow the proper maintenance/bio-hazard protocol which includes contacting dispatch who may arrange to return the vehicle to base.

Are there any positions for which we will allow telecommuting?

As we continue to learn more about this virus and manage the safety of our employees, we will be exploring options regarding telecommuting where possible.

What do I do if an employee is requesting to use short-term disability insurance after their paid time off has expired?

An employee who would like to file a claim for short-term disability due to a COVID-19 related absence should follow the normal process for filing such claim with the applicable state or insurance company. Please be aware there are typically waiting periods before benefits under these programs or policies are available to employees. We also cannot make any representation at this time whether such a claim would be successful and/or benefits paid.

Other Key Points:

Confirming Cases:

When a verified case has been confirmed at your location – either a passenger or an employee, please notify your Chief or designee immediately.

How We Will Keep Managers/Supervisors Informed:

We plan to communicate to our teams via email. As needed, we will provide flyers that our managers can print and post around their offices for all employees to read.

How We Will Keep Employees Informed:

We plan to use the Intranet, printed materials, Avail and other media as appropriate.

Our Media Policy:

Per our Board approved policy (No. B-130118), if you are contacted by the media, please let Brittney Sowell, Pete Gregor, or Vanessa Mora know right away. Please pass on the journalist's name, contact information and what they are calling about. Do not speak to the media yourself.

Outside Information Requests:

If employees receive a request for information from an outside Agency on SunLine's response to COVID-19, please contact the Clerk of the Board, Brittney Sowell, so that the request can be handled under the Agency's public records request procedure.

The above guidance is intended to provide general advice and to help answer employee questions. We will continue to monitor this situation and communicate with you as we see this pandemic through.

Please convey to your people that we are concerned about them and grateful to them for continuing to serve our passengers and keep our promises to our clients. For employees covered by the MOU, it will be imperative for our Managers and their teams to refer back to the MOU and if you have further questions, immediately contact your Chief or their designee.



COVID-19 SELF DECLARATION CALL – INTAKE FORM

Name of employee: _____ Employee ID # _____

Date: _____ Time of call: _____ am/pm

Contact number for employee: _____

Email: _____ Call taken by: _____

Department:

- Transportation- Fixed Route Paratransit
- Maintenance- Mechanics Stops & Zones Utilities Facilities
- Admin. Employee - Finance HR Marketing & Outreach Performance
- Transportation Maintenance Safety, IT & Training

Reason for call:

- Ill
- Self- quarantine
- High risk
- School/Daycare closed
- Workers Compensation (make sure WC procedure is followed)

Accept call off and record the absence.

Follow the instructions from the FAQ sheet.

Please turn this form into HR via email at HRteam@sunline.org

MEDIA POLICY

PURPOSE

SunLine Transit Agency recognizes the need to create uniformity among all departments in reference to media guidelines. This policy establishes guidelines to ensure all communication between the media and SunLine Transit Agency are handled in a professional manner, effectively and accurately.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all SunLine Transit Agency employees, contractors and the media.

POLICY

SunLine Transit Agency, acting in a proprietary capacity, operates public bus service in the Coachella Valley. SunLine Transit Agency recognizes that one of the most effective ways to communicate SunLine policies and activities to its stakeholders is by working in conjunction with the media. Inquiries from the news media should be responded to as quickly and accurately as possible.

PROCEDURES

1. All requests from the media should be referred to the Public Outreach Specialist or designee with a copy sent to the Chief Administration Officer. SunLine Transit Agency will request the inquiry be provided via e-mail and determine the most appropriate person to comment or address the information being sought by the media.
2. On some occasions, employees may be asked to speak to the media to impart their expertise on certain subjects but will do so at the direction of their department chief.
3. The primary objective for routing reporter inquiries to the Public Outreach Specialist or designee is to ensure an accurate, effective, timely and coordinated response, and to prevent conflicting or mixed messages from being disseminated to the public.

4. Depending on the specific circumstances, the CEO/General Manager may designate a staff member to serve as spokesperson on a particular issue.

A. Statements To The Media:

Statements on behalf of or attributed to SunLine Transit Agency must be factually accurate, free of personal opinions, directly reflective of adopted policies and procedures, and as clear and concise as possible.

B. Reporter Deadlines:

Recognizing that the media is often operating under tight deadlines, the Agency will strive to ensure that they are effectively served within the requested deadlines.

C. Meetings/Events:

All meetings/events that are open to the public are, by definition, open to the media.

- a. Members of the media must have approval from SunLine Transit Agency before interviewing, filming or photographing staff on SunLine property unless they are covering a public event.

5. Litigation, Criminal Action and Personnel:

A. Personal Points of View:

- a. It is recognized that all employees have the right to their personal opinions regarding any issue. However, employees who write letters to the editor of any newspaper or publication may not use official SunLine Transit Agency stationary. If an employee chooses to identify themselves as a SunLine employee in any personal letter or email to the editor, they must include language which states the views set forth in the letter do not represent the views of the Agency, but rather personally held opinions. Similar disclaimers must be given if an employee addresses a public meeting, participates in a radio talk show, or is interviewed for a radio or television program unless the employee has approval from SunLine Transit Agency to be officially representing the Agency.
- b. In general, SunLine Transit Agency does not comment on matters that involve pending litigation, matters involving a significant exposure to litigation, criminal action and certain personnel-related information. However, all efforts will be made to provide as much background information as can be disclosed.

Crisis or Emergency Issues

During a major crisis or emergency (natural or manmade disaster), staff shall follow media communication procedures as stated in the Agency's Emergency Response Plan.