



ERIE COUNTY COVID-19 POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL

**Timothy R. Hogues, Commissioner
Department of Personnel**

**EDWARD A. RATH COUNTY OFFICE BUILDING
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BUFFALO, NEW YORK 14202**

On behalf of Erie County, I want to thank each and every one of our employees for their hard-work and dedication during these unprecedented times. Erie County works because you work, and your efforts are appreciated. The health and safety of Erie County employees is of the utmost importance.

This Policy and Procedures Manual is a collaboration between Erie County Departments to give our employees information on how we are working together to limit exposure to COVID-19. We hope you find this information helpful as more employees return onsite. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Once again, thank you for your efforts. We are all in this together.

- Timothy R. Hogue, Commissioner of Personnel

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Employee Wellness and COVID-19 Self-Screening

All Erie County employees must self-screen before reporting to and while present at any Erie County worksite location. If an employee is ill, even if they are not experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, they should remain at home to prevent the spread of any illness.

Guidance for Erie County employees on how to approach COVID-19 related circumstances, including symptoms and close contacts, can be found in the Appendix of this Policy Manual and on SharePoint.

COVID-19 Self-Screening

If an employee is experiencing any of the following symptoms, they should immediately contact their Supervisor and leave their Erie County worksite, if at work:

- Fever; **or**
- New onset cough; **or**
- New onset shortness of breath.

These may be symptoms of COVID-19. Employees should consult their medical provider and must be tested for COVID-19. To ensure the safety of Erie County employees, test results **must** be provided to Angela Marinucci in the Department of Personnel (Angela.Marinucci@erie.gov).

Employees who are awaiting COVID-19 test results or are COVID-19 test positive and remain well enough and able to work from home must do so.

For information on how to request paid Quarantine Leave, please see page 4 of this Policy Manual.

Close Contacts of Confirmed COVID-19 Cases

A close contact of a confirmed COVID-19 case is any individual who was within six (6) feet of an infected person for at least ten (10) minutes during the contagious period, which begins 48 hours before onset of COVID-19 symptoms or, if the COVID case is asymptomatic, 2 days before test specimen collection. The Erie County Department of Health (ECDOH) will confirm all close contacts and notify them through contact tracing. If an employee is a close contact of a confirmed COVID-19 case, the employee should inform their Supervisor as soon as they are able.

For the purposes of quarantine, the determination of whether an employee is essential or non-essential and whether the employee has the ability to work from home will be made by ECDOH in consultation with the employee's Department on a case-by-case basis.

Non-essential employees or those who are essential and able to work from home while quarantined should remain at home and in quarantine. Asymptomatic, essential employees who are not able to work from home should continue to report to work so long as all the criteria laid out in the ECDOH Guidance for asymptomatic essential employees are met. A copy of that guidance can be found in the Appendix of this Policy Manual.

COVID-19 Prevention and Worksite Sanitization

Erie County is taking steps to ensure the safety and health of all employees at their worksite locations. Please find detailed information below as to new Erie County policies and specific steps being taken to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Facial Covering Policy

On May 15, 2020, the County Executive issued a Local Emergency Order compelling all Erie County employees to cover their mouth and nose with a mask or cloth face-covering when present in a County facility and unable to maintain social distance.

“Social distance” is defined as six (6) or more feet or a wall between the employee and another person. In practice, this means that employees are not required to wear face coverings when alone at their desks, but when in common areas, visiting someone else’s worksite, riding in an elevator, etc. employees must be wearing a mask or face-covering.

Masks or face-coverings will be available to employees upon request to their Supervisors. Masks should be changed and cloth facial-coverings cleaned daily.

If employees are unable to wear a mask or cloth facial-covering for an ADA qualifying disability, a reasonable accommodation of a face-shield in lieu of a face mask or cloth facial-covering may be granted. If an accommodation is needed, employees should contact Frank Cammarata, Executive Director of the Office for People with Disabilities, at Frank.A.Cammarata@erie.gov or (716) 858-6215. Medical documentation of the ADA qualifying disability will be required.

Personal Worksite Locations

Employees are responsible for cleaning their personal worksite locations. CDC-approved disinfectants against COVID-19 are available to employees to clean their worksite locations. Please contact your Supervisor if you need additional cleaning and disinfecting supplies.

Employees should de-clutter their worksite areas to facilitate cleaning and limit the use of communal spaces when possible to reduce the risk of potential COVID-19 exposure.

Erie County Building Cleaning Policies

Erie County’s Buildings and Grounds crews have been and will continue to work diligently to clean and disinfect all Erie County owned buildings. They exceed all CDC cleaning and sanitization guidelines.

Erie County is using CDC-approved disinfectants against COVID-19, and, as always, Buildings and Grounds crews routinely disinfect door handles, elevator buttons, and other high-touch surfaces.

Accommodation and Leave Policy

At the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic, in an effort to provide additional flexibility to our employees, Erie County granted work-from-home accommodations to employees who would not otherwise be eligible for an accommodation. In accordance with Erie County Policies and Procedures, the standard accommodation process will be reinstated.

Accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

If seeking a reasonable accommodation due to an ADA qualifying disability, employees should contact Frank Cammarata, Executive Director of the Office for People with Disabilities, at Frank.A.Cammarata@erie.gov or (716) 858-6215.

The standard accommodation process requires medical documentation in support of the request followed by consultation with both the employee and their Department to determine if a reasonable accommodation can be granted.

If the requested accommodation includes working from home, the accommodation will require written approval by the Commissioner of Personnel and the Commissioner of Labor Relations. Please see “Work from Home Requests” below.

FMLA and E-FMLA Requests

FMLA remains an option for employees who meet the eligibility criteria, as does the new expanded E-FMLA under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA).

Childcare leave is available for certain employees for up to twelve (12) weeks, and subject to other statutory requirements. To apply for childcare leave under the FFCRA, employees must submit a signed statement that includes:

- The name of your child;
- The name of the school, place of care, or childcare provider that has closed or become unavailable; and
- A statement that no other suitable person is available to care for your child.

If you have questions or would like to apply for leave, please contact Tim Benten in the Department of Personnel at Timothy.Benten@erie.gov or (716) 858-7880.

Work from Home Requests

Pursuant to Erie County Personnel Policies and Procedures, Chapter VI, Section 13, no County Department may authorize or approve compensation for any type of work performed by Erie County employees at home.

However, in the event of a declared state of emergency or other emergency situation, work from home may be approved with the written approval of the Commissioner of Personnel and the Commissioner of Labor Relations.

Requests for work from home must complete the Work from Home Request Form included in the Appendix of this Policy Manual and on SharePoint. This form requires the signature and approval of the Department Head before submission for review.

Work from home requests will be reviewed by a panel including representatives of the Departments of Health, Personnel, Labor Relations, Mental Health, and the Office for People with Disabilities, where applicable. They will be granted on a case-by-case basis, in compelling circumstances, and where the needs of the Department can still be met with work from home.

Paid Quarantine Leave

Employees are eligible for up to two weeks of paid leave (“Quarantine Leave”) if they are unable to work onsite or from home due to COVID-19 quarantine, isolation, or symptoms while awaiting COVID-19 test results.

Employees placed in at-home quarantine are required to stay home; separate themselves from others, including household members; and monitor their health in accordance with Department of Health Guidelines. They are prohibited from visiting with non-household members and must be tested with a COVID-19 diagnostic test. COVID-19 test results must be provided to Angela Marinucci in the Department of Personnel (Angela.Marinucci@erie.gov).

To apply for Quarantine Leave, employees must submit documentation as further explained below to Angela Marinucci in the Department of Personnel (Angela.Marinucci@erie.gov).

After the initial two-week period, employees are required to use their own accrued time to cover any continuing absence. “Quarantine” is explicitly stated as a reason to use Sick Leave in Erie County Collective Bargaining Agreements. A persistently positive COVID-19 test will not qualify for an extended ECDOH Quarantine Leave for Isolation or continued paid Quarantine Leave benefits.

Employees that have voluntarily traveled on or after Thursday, June 25, 2020 to a designated state with a significant rate of COVID-19 transmission, as defined by the Governor in NYS Executive Order No. 205, are not eligible for paid Quarantine Leave.

Summary of Process

1. Employee is seeking Quarantine Leave for one of the following reasons:
 - Employee is COVID-19 positive and subject to an Isolation Order;
 - Employee is experiencing COVID-19 symptoms and awaiting COVID-19 test results; or
 - Employee is non-essential and a confirmed close contact of a COVID-19 case and subject to a Federal, State, or local Quarantine Order.
2. Employee provides Angela Marinucci in the Department of Personnel (Angela.Marinucci@erie.gov) a copy of medical documentation of their COVID-19 diagnosis, symptoms, or their Federal, State, or local Isolation or Quarantine Order.
 - This documentation must be dated and include specific reference to COVID-19, reason for leave (close contact, diagnosis, symptoms, etc.), and the dates of leave.
3. The Department of Personnel consults with the employee’s Department and / or Supervisor to determine employee’s ability to work from home.
 - ***IF EMPLOYEE IS ABLE TO WORK FROM HOME, THEY MUST DO SO.***
4. A determination on Quarantine Leave is made and communicated to the employee via email.

Employees should communicate with Angela Marinucci in the Department of Personnel as soon as possible to ensure accurate and complete entering of time. Only the Department of Personnel can enter Quarantine Leave; it cannot be entered by the employee.

Returning to Work

Paid Quarantine Leave benefits cease as soon as a quarantined employee meets the applicable criteria to return to work. These criteria are outlined below, dependent upon reason for quarantine.

1. ***COVID-19 positive employees*** may return to work as soon as the below criteria are met:
 - Ten (10) or more days have elapsed since the onset of COVID-19 symptoms or ten (10) or more days have elapsed since a positive test result, if asymptomatic; **and**
 - Employee has been fever free for at least three (3) days without the use of fever-reducing medication; **and**
 - Employee's COVID-19 symptoms are improving, if symptomatic.

Employee must complete and return Erie County's "Return to Work Authorization" to Angela Marinucci in the Department of Personnel (Angela.Marinucci@erie.gov) before returning to work, available at www.erie.gov/covid19 under Isolation and Quarantine. Any delay in returning this form may result in employee using their own accrued time from the date the above criteria are met until the form is returned. A persistently positive COVID-19 test will not qualify for extended paid Quarantine Leave benefits.

2. ***COVID-19 negative employees who had symptoms and are not a confirmed close contact of a COVID-19 case*** may return to work the day after receiving their negative COVID-19 test results.
 - Results **must** be provided to Angela Marinucci in the Department of Personnel (Angela.Marinucci@erie.gov).

Employee must complete and return Erie County's "Affirmation of Self-Quarantine or Self-Isolation" to Angela Marinucci in the Department of Personnel (Angela.Marinucci@erie.gov) before returning to work, available at www.erie.gov/covid19 under Isolation and Quarantine. Any delay in returning this form may result in employee using their own accrued time from date above criteria are met until the form is returned.

3. ***Non-essential employees who are confirmed close contacts of a COVID-19 case or those who are essential and able to work from home while quarantined*** should remain at home and in quarantine may return to work after fourteen (14) days have elapsed from their last close contact with the COVID-19 case.
 - The Department of Personnel will confirm, in conjunction with ECDOH, that employee was a documented close contact of a confirmed COVID-19 case. If not determined to be a confirmed close contact, employee will **not** be eligible for paid Quarantine Leave and any paid leave will be rescinded.
 - Employee must get a diagnostic COVID-19 test 5 – 7 days after their last known exposure to the COVID-19 case. Test results **must** be provided to Angela Marinucci in the Department of Personnel (Angela.Marinucci@erie.gov).
 - Non-essential employees or those who are essential and able to work from home should remain out of work until fourteen (14) days since last known exposure have elapsed, *even if* their test results are negative.

Employee must complete and return Erie County's "Affirmation of Self-Quarantine or Self-Isolation" to Angela Marinucci in the Department of Personnel (Angela.Marinucci@erie.gov)

before returning to work, available at www.erie.gov/covid19 under Isolation and Quarantine. Any delay in returning this form may result in the employee using their own accrued time from date above criteria are met until the form is returned.

Important Things to Note

1. **IF AN EMPLOYEE RECEIVES A COVID-19 TEST, THE RESULTS MUST BE TIMELY PROVIDED TO ANGELA MARINUCCI IN THE DEPARTMENT OF PERSONNEL AT Angela.Marinucci@erie.gov.**
2. If an employee is under quarantine, they are required to remain at home; separate themselves from others, including household members; and monitor their health in accordance with ECDOH Guidelines, until their quarantine is lifted. **If an employee is determined to have failed to maintain quarantine, they may be subject to rescission of paid Quarantine Leave and disciplinary action.**
3. Asymptomatic essential employees who were advised to quarantine because they are a close contact of a confirmed COVID-19 case and who are unable to work from home must continue to report to work. These employees are required to follow the ECDOH's guidance for self-monitoring and quarantine, found on page 1 and in the Appendix of this Policy Manual.
 - The determination of whether an employee is essential or non-essential will be made by ECDOH in consultation with the employee's Department on a case-by-case basis.
4. As stated above, employees who have voluntarily traveled on or after Thursday, June 25, 2020 to a designated state with a significant rate of COVID-19 transmission, as defined by the NYS Governor, are **not eligible** for paid Quarantine Leave. They must use their own accrued time while quarantined at home. Any unauthorized leave without pay may be subject to discipline under the terms of the governing Collective Bargaining Agreement.
5. Paid Quarantine Leave benefits cease as soon as a quarantined employee meets the applicable criteria to return to work. Delays in providing Return to Work Authorization or Affirmation of Self-Quarantine or Self-Isolation (available at www.erie.gov/covid19 under Isolation and Quarantine) will result employee needing to use their own accrued time until they return to work.
6. Paid Quarantine Leave benefits are capped at a **one-time maximum** of 80 hours over a two-week period for a full-time employee and the number of hours equal to the average number of hours they work over a typical two-week period for an RPT or PT employee over a two week period.
7. **After the initial two-week paid Quarantine Leave benefit period ends, employees are required to use their own accrued time to cover any continuing absence.** "Quarantine" is explicitly stated as a reason to use Sick Leave in Erie County Collective Bargaining Agreements.

Time Coding

As of Monday, June 29, 2020, any work performed at home with the written authorization of the Commissioner of Personnel and the Commissioner of Labor Relations should be entered using the Work from Home code (absence code: 0041 for employees on timesheets).

For more information on authorization to work from home, see page 3 of this Policy Manual.

The Unutilized Pay time code may no longer be used as of Monday, June 29, 2020.

For employees with worksite locations or job functions that remain closed may continue to use the Emergency Closure time code. Department Heads must receive approval from the Personnel Commissioner for their employees to continue using Emergency Closure after June 29, 2020.

Selected Time Codes and Usage Explanations

Emergency Closure – only available to employees directed to use this code due to the continued closure of their worksite location or job function, or in the ordering of an Emergency Closure by the County Executive

Offsite – work completed in the field, not at an Erie County worksite, including site visits, home visits, offsite appointments, Court appearances, etc.

- **This code is no longer permitted for use when work is completed at home.**

Unutilized Pay – intended for employees directed to remain home *without work* due to the guidance of the NYS Governor. As of June 29, 2020, this code is no longer in use.

Work from Home – new time code to be used for work completed while at home. Use of this code requires written approval by the Commissioner of Personnel and the Commissioner of Labor Relations.

- This time code requires detailed notes of work completed during the hours in which an employee was permitted to work from home.

Swipe Policy Relaxation

Erie County Policy requiring employees to swipe in only on the floor of their worksite locations is temporarily relaxed, given the COVID-19 policies which may require extra time for an employee to arrive to their worksite floor.

Employees may swipe in at the Swipe location nearest to where they enter their Erie County worksite location for the time being. Updates to this policy will be communicated by Erie County General Announcement email and by Supervisors.

Employees should plan for extra time in their commute to account for worksite changes, including limited elevator space and occupancy, and the continued closing of the Third Floor Main Place Mall Bridge. Elevator capacity in the Rath Building is limited to four individuals at any one time.

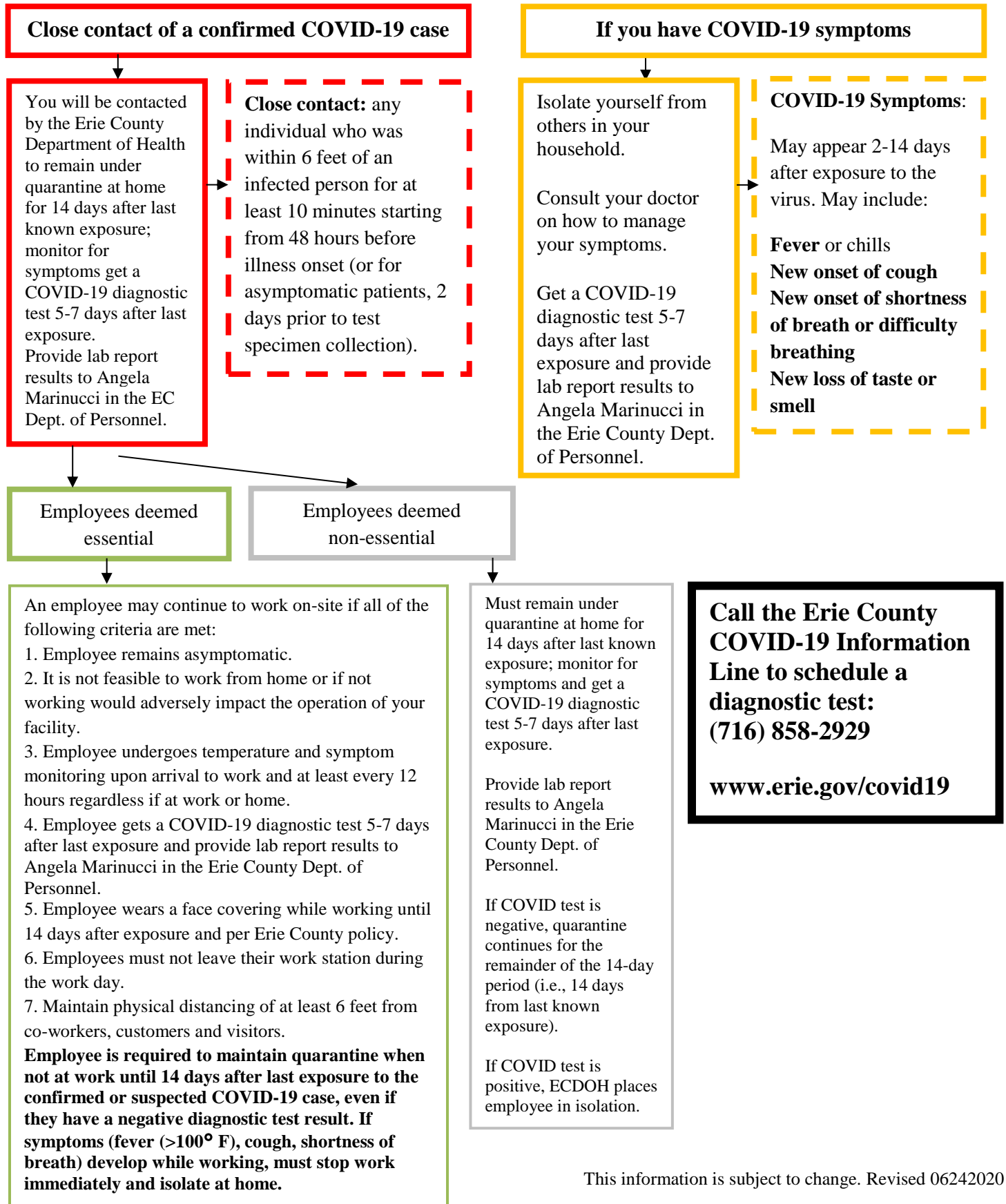
Helpful Information

- For the purposes of quarantine, the determination of whether a specific employee is essential or non-essential will be made by ECDOH in consultation with the employee's Department on a case-by-case basis.
- In accordance with the County Executive's Local Emergency Order, all employees and visitors are required to wear a mask or face covering in Erie County worksites when social distance is not possible. *For more information on masks or cloth face-coverings, see page 2 of this Policy Manual.*
- Employees should budget extra time in their commute to account for worksite changes, including limited elevator space and occupancy and the continued closing of the Main Place Mall Bridge on the Third Floor of the Rath Building.
- Employees are permitted to swipe in at the at the Swipe location nearest to where they enter their Erie County worksite location for the time being.
- **Elevator capacity in the Rath Building is limited to four individuals at any one time.**
- The Main Place Mall remains closed for the time being. We do not anticipate that the Main Place Mall Bridge on the Third Floor of the Rath Building will open until the Mall opens.
- Social distancing markers have been placed on the floor of many highly trafficked and public areas. Please abide by these markers to ensure adequate social distancing.
- The Erie County Rath Building water fountains are closed. Spigots to fill water bottles or cups remain in working condition.
- Erie County encourages virtual meetings whenever possible. WebEx services are available for use by employees.
- Erie County recognizes that this is a difficult time for everyone in our community, and we wanted to remind our employees of the availability of EAP Services through our EAP provider, eviCore. These services are county-funded, and available to our employees and their household family members.
 - **EviCore can be reached anytime at: 716-712-2777 or 888-276-6632.**
 - EviCore is currently providing scheduled telephonic counseling sessions, as well as in the moment support.
 - Additionally, employees can log into the eviCore website at: www.eviCore.com\eap using the login of: EAP, where there are frequently updated articles and courses on many topics, including stress management, grief, depression, substance abuse, mindfulness, etc.

Appendix



Erie County Employees



Submit to your Supervisor or Unit Head for Initial Review	ERIE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PERSONNEL WORK FROM HOME REQUEST	<small>(06/2020)</small> ALL Requests (including those not recommended for approval) must be reviewed by the Dept. of Personnel.
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First Name	Initial	Last Name	Personnel Number
Title of Position		Department	

THIS FORM MUST BE ACCOMPANIED WITH SUPPLEMENTAL DOCUMENTATION OF THE REASON FOR THE WORK FROM HOME REQUEST. *Medical documentation may also be included, if applicable.*

To be effective from:
 _____, 20____ to _____, 20____, inclusive.

 Date Employee Signature

After signature, submit Form to your Supervisor or Unit Head for review.

TO BE COMPLETED BY SUPERVISOR OR UNIT HEAD:

Employee is able **not** able to complete their job functions while working from home.

Approval of Request is recommended **not** recommended.

 Date Supervisor Signature Supervisor Name (Print)

After signature, this Form must be submitted to Department Head, even if not recommended for approval.

TO BE COMPLETED BY DEPARTMENT HEAD:

Approval of Request is recommended **not** recommended.

 Date Department Head Signature Department Head Name (Print)

After signature, this Form must be submitted to Personnel Department, even if not recommended for approval.

ACTION BY COMMISSIONERS OF LABOR RELATIONS AND PERSONNEL:

Approved from _____, 20____ to _____, 20____ inclusive. Denied

 Date COMMISSIONER OF LABOR RELATIONS COMMISSIONER OF PERSONNEL