

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS: COVID -19 LEAVE

1. What is the purpose of COVID-19 Leave?

COVID-19 Leave permits an employee to take paid time off to recover from COVID-19. It is available to employees who are fully vaccinated against COVID-19, or who have a valid medical or religious vaccine exemption who have tested positive for COVID-19 through a PCR or rapid test. A rapid test will be accepted through the end of February 2022; at that time, whether rapid tests will be accepted will be determined by the Secretary of Budget and Management and will depend on the availability of PCR testing.

2. Who may use COVID-19 Leave?

This leave is available to State regular, contractual, and temporary employees of the State Personnel Management System (SPMS) or the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT).

3. When will this leave be available?

This leave will be available to State regular and temporary employees beginning on November 3, 2021. Contractual employees will have access to COVID-19 Leave effective November 10, 2021, aligning with pay periods. COVID-19 Leave is available to be used through December 31, 2022.

4. How much COVID-19 Leave is available to me?

Employees are entitled to up to 10 days, no more than 80 hours of leave (pro-rated for part time employees and certain employees within the Maryland Department of Health who work a 36-hour workweek).

5. How do I know if I'm eligible for COVID-19 Leave?

To be eligible for COVID-19 Leave, the employee must either:

- (a) be fully vaccinated and have vaccination records on file with Human Resources (HR) prior to the date of the first day of leave requested; OR
- (b) have a medical or religious vaccine exemption approved and on file with HR prior to the first day of leave requested.

6. What does “fully vaccinated” mean and what proof must I provide?

Employees must provide HR with proof of full vaccination prior to the first day of COVID-19 Leave requested. Full vaccination means that the employee has received both doses of the Moderna or Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine, or one dose of the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine, and any required boosters (as applicable). Proof is provided in the form of your vaccination record/card.

7. What happens if I test positive between doses?

You will not be eligible for the leave – the employee must meet the definition of fully vaccinated and have documentation on file with HR to receive COVID-19 Leave.

8. Are employees who have exemptions for medical or religious reasons eligible for COVID-19 Leave?

Yes, employees with a valid medical or religious vaccine exemption are eligible for COVID-19 Leave. Exemptions must be approved and on file with HR prior to the first day of COVID-19 Leave requested.

9. How do I request COVID-19 Leave?

Once an employee is determined to be eligible based on vaccination or exemption status, the employee will then need to provide a positive PCR or rapid test result for COVID-19 dated no sooner than three days prior to the first day of leave requested, and no later than the last day of leave requested. Additionally, employees will need to provide a completed *COVID-19 Leave Request Form*, provided by Management. **The positive test result and completed form must be submitted to HR no later than the end of the pay period following the pay period of the requested leave.**

10. How do I code my timesheet?

After all documentation has been verified and accepted, timekeepers will grant the COVID-19 time off hours and the timekeeper will make the corrections to the timesheet as necessary. Timekeepers will not be permitted to make adjustments for employees who do not turn in documents by the end of the pay period following the pay period the leave is requested.

11. What if I do not need to use all the COVID-19 Leave that is available to me?

Generally, COVID-19 Leave must be used for consecutive days to recover from COVID-19; however, the employee is not required to use all the COVID-19 Leave at once if not needed. The timekeeper will only grant the hours needed for the employee's current absence.

12. May I use COVID-19 Leave if a member of my household tests positive for COVID-19?

No, COVID-19 Leave is only available to the employee who has tested positive using the PCR or rapid test and is recovering. COVID-19 Leave is not available to be used for the care of a member of the household or for childcare purposes.

13. When will COVID-19 Leave be available?

COVID-19 Leave will be available for SPMS and MDOT State Regular and Temporary employees beginning on Wednesday, November 3, 2021. Contractual employees will be able to utilize COVID-19 Leave beginning Wednesday, November 10, 2021. COVID-19 Leave will not be available for use after December 31, 2022.

14. What if I need more than 10 days to recover from COVID-19?

A maximum of 80 hours of COVID-19 Leave (prorated as noted in FAQ 4) is available to an employee. If an employee needs more time to recover from COVID-19, other forms of leave are available for this purpose.

15. I am on a compressed workweek schedule where my normal workday is greater than 8 hours, will I be eligible to receive more than 80 hours of COVID-19 Leave to cover 10 full workdays?

No, employees are limited to 80 hours of leave maximum (prorated as noted in FAQ 4), but an employee may use more than 8 hours of COVID-19 Leave in a day if the employee works an approved alternate schedule as identified in Workday as Compressed (e.g., four 10-hour days).

16. I have more than one job with the State, do I get COVID-19 Leave for each job?

No, employees are limited to 80 hours of leave maximum (prorated as noted in FAQ 4).

17. I am fully vaccinated against COVID-19, but I forgot to turn in my card proving I am fully vaccinated. Can I turn it in at the same time I request COVID-19 Leave?

No, employees must have proof of full vaccination or a valid medical/religious exemption on file with HR prior to the first day of leave requested.