



## **From the Desk of the Director: State Employee COVID-19 Policy**

Dear colleagues,

With the impact of novel coronavirus (COVID-19) expanding across the globe, I want to share a new Division of Human Resources policy designed to protect you and help you navigate the spread of this disease.

First, it is important to emphasize that to this point, no significant risks to the state employee population have been identified and state government continues to operate as normal. While the risk of COVID-19 in our area remains low, it is important to take steps to prevent the spread of illness, including:

- Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available, use hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol;
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands;
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick. Please stay away from work when you are sick;
- Cough or sneeze into your elbow or use a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash;
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces; and
- If you have not already done so, get a flu shot.

In addition to these measures, we have updated our guidance to help protect the health of our state employees. The attached policy speaks to use of paid leave, teleworking, and state-sponsored and non-state-sponsored travel.

### **Policy Highlights**

**Travel:** Effective immediately, State-sponsored international travel is suspended and approved domestic travel must go through an additional layer of approval to ensure it is necessary and critical to operations.

**Discharge of Paid Leave:** Employees out of work due to a Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH)-directed mandatory quarantine period may discharge paid leave. In the case of a confirmed diagnosis, work supervisors must be notified and the Division of Human Resources will work with the employee to ensure they are supported during recovery.

**Teleworking:** Where telework is a viable work option and approval is granted in accordance with the Teleworking Policy, an employee may temporarily work from home.

I will reiterate that these precautionary measures are in effect temporarily to best mitigate the potential spread of COVID-19. Please see attached for additional Q&A around the State's coronavirus policy. The Department of Administration will continue to work closely with RIDOH to provide state employees with timely updates. Additional information is available and updated regularly on the [Rhode Island Department of Health website \[r20.rs6.net\]](http://r20.rs6.net).

People with general questions about COVID-19 can also call the **RIDOH COVID-19 hotline at 401-222-8022**.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "B Smiley".

Brett Smiley  
Director  
R.I. Department of Administration