

County of Alameda
March 17, 2020 Board of Supervisors Action

Employee Guidelines
Frequently Asked Questions
March 19, 2020

- Q.1. Who determines “Essential” vs. “Non-Essential” services?
Department/Agency Heads.
- Q.2. What is the effective date of the COVID-19 Paid Administrative Leave (“COVID-19 PAL”) designation?
Applicable periods between March 17, 2020 through April 7, 2020 (corresponds with the March 16, 2020 Order to Shelter in Place issued by the County Health Officer).
- Q.3. If an employee is in the middle of their quarantine and they have been using their own accrued leave, will their leave be converted to COVID-19 PAL for the duration of the “Shelter In Place” period?
If the employee’s Agency/Department deemed that the employee is able to telecommute, the employee may be able to telecommute during the quarantine period. If the employee is unable to telecommute during the quarantine period, the employee’s leave will be converted to COVID-19 PAL (time reporting code “ERR”) for the duration of such quarantine period, not to exceed April 7, 2020. If the employee’s quarantine period ends prior to April 7, 2020, the Department will redetermine the employee’s work status based on whether they are in a position that is deemed Essential vs. non-Essential.
- Q.4. If an employee was previously (prior to March 17,2020) in quarantine, will their leave balances be restored for the period of time used prior to the “Shelter In Place” period?
No. The Board’s authority for COVID-19 PAL is only for quarantines in effect March 17, 2020 through April 7, 2020.
- Q.5. If an employee is caring for their child whose school closed due to COVID-19 and the employee is unable to telecommute, how will the employee’s absence be coded on the employee’s timesheet?
Timesheets should reflect the time reporting code (TRC) “ERR” for absences due to school closures within the period covering March 17, 2020 through April 7, 2020.
- Q.6. If an employee is ill (related to COVID-19 or not) and regardless of whether they perform Essential or Non-Essential work is unable to report to work, how is the employee’s absence coded on the employee’s timesheet?
Timesheets should reflect the time recording code ERR for illnesses that occur within the period covering March 17, 2020 through April 7, 2020.
- Q.7. Is an employee required to call-in every day while on COVID-19 PAL?
No. However, the employee must remain available during normal work hours given that as County employees, we are all Disaster Service Workers. If an employee is off due to illness, the employee must notify their supervisor when they have recovered and are eligible to return to work, either on site or working remotely.

- Q.8. If an employee is able to telecommute, but becomes ill or needs to care for a family member, will the employee be placed on COVID-19 PAL?
Yes, the employee must report their work status to their supervisor for absences that occur within the period covering March 17, 2020 through April 7, 2020 and the employee's absence will be recorded as ERR.
- Q.9. If an employee is out ill for three (3) days or more, will the agency/department issue FMLA information after the 3rd day absence.
Yes, if the absence is for an FMLA/CFRA covered reason.

Workers Providing Essential Service (Expected to Work):

- Q.10. If an employee providing *Essential* services is unable to work due to COVID-19, will the employee be placed on COVID-19 PAL or use their own leave accruals?
The employee will be placed on COVID-19 PAL and their time will be recorded as ERR for the duration of time they are unable to work through April 7, 2020.
- Q.11. *If an employee provides Essential services and the employee is unable to work because they are considered in a high-risk category or home with their child and does not have childcare, will the employee be placed on COVID-19 PAL?*
Yes, the employee may be placed on COVID-19 PAL and recorded as ERR for the time period they are unable to work during the period of March 17, 2020 through April 7, 2020.
- Q.12. If an employee is providing *Essential* service and the employee's Department/Agency Head determines the employee is able to work from home, can the employee work from home?
Yes, with the Agency/Department Head's approval.
- Q.13. If an employee who is in a position deemed to provide *Essential* services does not fall within an at-risk or school closure category, are they entitled to work from home?
No. However, if the Agency/Department Head determines that the work can be done by telecommuting, then yes. As a County employee and a Disaster Service Worker, the Shelter in Place Health Order permits such employees in positions that provide Essential services to report to work or telecommute.
- Q.14. Is there a possibility to rotate coverage?
Yes, based on the needs of the agency/department and Agency/Department Head determination.
- Q.15. Is there a possibility to telecommute?
Yes, based on the needs of the agency/department and Agency/Department Head determination.
- Q.16. Can an employee's status change from *Non-Essential* to *Essential* and vice-versa based on the Department/Agency Head determination?
Yes. Department/Agency Heads will continue to assess the Non-Essential and/or Essential determination based on operational needs and the evolving COVID-19 conditions.
- Q.17. If an employee is on a scheduled vacation during the period March 17, 2020 through April 7, 2020, will the employee's absence be converted to COVID-19 PAL and recorded as ERR? **Yes.**

Q.18. If an employee has a death in the family and must take bereavement leave during March 17, 2020 through April 7, 2020, will the employee's absence be coded as ERR?
Yes.

Q.19. If an employee is sick during March 17, 2020 through April 7, 2020, will the employee's absence be coded as ERR?
Yes.

Workers Providing Non-Essential Service:

Q.20. If an employee performs work that is deemed *Non-Essential* and instructed to refrain from reporting to work, how will the employee's absence be coded on the employee's timesheet?
ERR for absences within the period covering March 17, 2020 through April 7, 2020.

Q.21. If an employee performs work that is deemed *Non-Essential* and is not able to work due to COVID-19 (own illness, care for family member, no work available) and not able to telecommute as determined by the Agency/Department Head, will employee be placed on COVID-19 PAL and the absence coded as ERR?
Yes, during the period March 17, 2020 through April 7, 2020.

Q.22. If an employee performs work that is deemed *Non-Essential*, is able to telecommute, but unable to due to COVID-19 (own illness, care for family member) will the employee be placed on COVID-19 PAL and the absence coded as ERR?
Yes, during the period March 17, 2020 through April 7, 2020.

Q.23. If an employee performs work that is deemed *Non-Essential* exhibits any symptoms of illness, not necessarily flu-like, will employee be placed on COVID-19 PAL and the absence coded as ERR?
Yes, during the period March 17, 2020 through April 7, 2020.

Q.24. If a Temporary Assignment Program ("TAP") employee performs work that is expected to continue beyond April 7, but the employee is unable to telecommute, will the TAP employee be eligible to receive COVID-19 PAL and the absence coded as ERR?
Yes, during the period March 17, 2020 through April 7, 2020, the TAP employee will receive COVID-19 PAL and the absence coded as ERR based on the average hours they work, if their work was scheduled to continue and the department requires the work to be completed. However, if the assignment ends or the work was completed during that March 17, 2020 through April 7, 2020 period, the TAP employee would not be eligible for COVID-19 PAL beyond the completion of work or scheduled end date.

Q.25. Are TAP employees considered Disaster Service Workers?
Yes, but only on an as needed basis recognizing their temporary employment status.

Q.26. If a TAP employee performs work that is deemed *Non-Essential* can the employee be called back to work at any time during March 17, 2020 through April 7, 2020?
Yes. The temporary assignment pool exists to provide staffing for needed services. Agency/Department Heads have defined Essential services. If additional staff are needed to perform Essential services, any TAP staff who are qualified may be called

back to service to allow the County to perform Essential services, notwithstanding the fact that a particular employee may have performed non-Essential services prior to the shelter in place.

Q.27. Are Retired Annuitants eligible for the COVID-19 PAL?
No.

Q.28. Are employees who are Services-As-Needed (SAN) eligible for COVID-19 PAL?
Yes, during the period March 17, 2020 through April 7, 2020, the SAN employee will receive COVID-19 PAL and the absence coded as ERR based on the average hours they work, if their work was scheduled to continue and the department requires the work to be completed. However, if the assignment ends or the work was completed during that March 17, 2020 through April 7, 2020 period, the SAN employee would not be eligible for COVID-19 PAL beyond the completion of work or scheduled end date.

COVID Leave (“COVAL”):

Q.29. If an employee telecommutes for two (2) weeks between March 17, 2020 and April 7, 2020, will the employee be awarded two (2) weeks of COVAL?
Yes.

Q.30. For employees who work during the period of March 17, 2020 through April 7, 2020 and are awarded COVAL, how long will they have to exhaust their COVAL?
A cap of two (2) years to exhaust their COVAL. A longer cap may apply for a limited number of classifications due to operational needs.

Q.31. Does the awarding of COVAL expire at the end of the cap period for the classification?
Yes. Accrued COVAL must be used within the allowed period and if not used, the unused balance will expire (is not paid out to employee at the end of the cap period or upon separation of employment).

Q.32. If an employee, whose normal work schedule is 75 hours each pay period, and works their normal work schedule during the period of March 17, 2020 through April 7, 2020, how much COVAL will the employee be awarded?
A full-time employee (75 hours a pay period), would receive 120 hours of COVAL.

Q.33. If an employee, whose normal work schedule is 80 hours each pay period, and works their normal work schedule during the period of March 17, 2020 through April 7, 2020, how much COVAL will the employee be awarded?
A full-time employee (80 hours a pay period), would receive 128 hours of COVAL.

Q.34. What if an employee works less hours than their normal 75-hour or 80-hour pay period?
The employee will be awarded COVAL, one (1) hour for every hour worked, up to the cap of 120 (for 75-hour per pay period employee) or 128 (for an 80-hour per pay period employee).

Q.35. When will the COVAL be available for use by the employee?
On a date to be determined by the County.

Q.36. When the COVAL does become available, does the employee need prior approval?

Yes. COVAL is subject to management approval.

Q.37. Are Retired Annuitants eligible for the COVAL?

No. Retired Annuitants do not receive leave, i.e., vacation, floating holidays, etc.

Q.38. Are employees who are Services-As-Needed (SAN) eligible for COVAL?

The SAN employee will receive COVAL based on the hours they were scheduled to work up to the cap, during the period March 17, 2020 through April 7, 2020.

General Questions:

Q.39. Will the COVID-19 PAL time keeping code ERR allow for normal leave accruals, count towards next step increase, seniority and County service time?

Yes.

Q.40. Will the COVID-19 PAL count towards the employee's probationary period?

No. Civil Service Rule 18.20 requires the extension of the probationary period by the total time of such absence for employees who are absent on paid leave for two (2) weeks or more.

Q.42. If an employee is on State Disability Insurance (SDI), Paid Family Leave (PFL) or Temporary Total Disability (TTD) benefits during the timeframe of March 17, 2020 through April 7, 2020, will they remain on SDI, PFL, or TTD respectively?

The employee will remain on SDI, PFL or TTD benefits during the timeframe of March 17, 2020 through April 7, 2020 and their remaining time will be supplemented with COVID-19 PAL.