



ERIE COUNTY WATER AUTHORITY
INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM
October 13, 2022

To: Jerome D. Schad, Chair
Peggy A. LaGree, Vice Chair
Michele M. Iannello, Treasurer

From: Jennifer Hibit, Director of Human Resources

Subject: Covid-9 Policy and Use of Permissive Time

Since my arrival here at the Authority, I have received many questions about the COVID policy and use of permissive time.

To clear up any confusion, I worked with management and staff here to produce a comprehensive plan to answer the questions surrounding what to do when exposed or diagnosed with COVID and how permissive time will be managed.

Understanding that we do not anticipate permissive time being permanent, this is a stand-alone policy, not included in the full policy and procedure handbook.

I humbly ask for your approval of this policy and am happy to answer any questions you might have.

Thank you for your consideration.



Erie County Water Authority
COVID-19 Policies and Procedures

This version of the Erie County Water Authority COVID-19 Policies and Procedures and replaces all previously issued COVID-19 policies and procedures.

The policies and procedures are subject to change. Changes will be shared with all staff and management. The Erie County Water Authority (“ECWA”) will continue to evaluate and update guidance, which shall inform these policies and procedures.

The ECWA follows the guidance of the New York State Department of Health, The Erie County Department of Health and the United States Center for Disease Control and Prevention.

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Quick Isolation Fact Sheet

1. If you are experiencing one or more COVID-19 symptoms:
 - a. [Symptoms of COVID-19 | CDC](#) or at the website <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>
 - b. Isolate until you have COVID-19 Test results.
 - c. Get tested. Many testing options are available in our community – check the link for options: [COVID-19 Testing | Covid \(erie.gov\) or website: https://www3.erie.gov/covid/covid-19-testing](#)
 - d. ECWA will NOT reimburse any employee for the cost of COVID testing, there are many free options available in the community. The link above should be used as a resource.
2. If you receive a positive COVID-19 test result, regardless of your vaccination status, you must isolate for five (5) days from symptom onset.
3. If you have been exposed to COVID-19 (a family member tests positive, someone you were at a party with tests positive, etc.) **You DO NOT have to isolate.** You must monitor yourself and if you develop any symptoms of COVID-19, you must then isolate and test.

Employee Self-Screening for Wellness & Use of Permissive Time

It is incumbent upon ECWA employees to protect the health and safety of their colleagues as well as the public at large.

Employees must self-screen for COVID-19 symptoms. You must test within 24 hours of symptom on-set. If you develop symptoms, you must remain at home and get tested (Doctors office, local health clinic, or urgent care or any approved testing facility)

Permissive time – will be approved when:

- Tested positive for COVID-19, test results **MUST** be provided to the HR department (doctor's note, a note from the local health department, a pharmacy, approved testing facility or other healthcare provider are valid proof of a positive test)
- Home tests or pictures of home tests are NOT approved documentation.
- Permissive time will not be granted for longer than 5 days. If you test positive on Thursday morning, and your scheduled work time is Monday – Friday, your permissive time will cover Thursday, Friday and Monday, it will cover your time in isolation, not 5 days away from work. Tuesday you would end isolation and if at that point you are still sick or unable to work, accrued benefit time will need to be used.
- Permissive time will not count against the Absentee Control Program, (as defined in each collective bargaining agreement) **ONLY** if proof is provided from a medical professional.
- **You cannot be approved for permissive time more than once in a 90-day window and a maximum of twice in a 365-day period. Once the permissive time benefit is exhausted, you will need to use your own accrued benefit time.**
- All medical documents shall be sent to the Human Resources Director, without proper documentation, permissive time shall not be approved.

Returning to work

- Returning after a positive test
 - a. 5 days from symptom onset where Day 0 is first date of symptoms or date of test if asymptomatic, so long as
 - i. You experienced mild illness
 - ii. You have been fever free for 24 hours without fever reducing medications
 - iii. Your symptoms are improving and have minimal to no cough
 - b. You do not need a negative covid test to return to work
- If your symptoms continue or severe illness makes it impossible to return, you will be required to use your accrued benefit time and provide a doctor's note.
- **Employees must complete and return an Affirmation of Isolation (aka, Return to Work Authorization) to the Director of Human Resources on or before returning to work. This form can be found at the end of this document, in the Human Resources Department or in the forms folder in the I drive. Any delay in returning this form may result in employee needing to use their own accrued time from date above criteria is met until form is returned.**
- Results must be provided to the Director of Human Resources.
- If the employee remains symptomatic for an infectious illness, they should remain out of work using their accrued benefit time until they are no longer symptomatic.

COVID-19 Prevention and Worksite Sanitization

ECWA has taken steps to ensure the safety and health of all employees and will continue to do so.

Facial Covering Policy:

- Employees may choose to wear a mask without penalty.
- Employees returning from their 5-day post COVID-19 isolation are strongly recommended to wear a mask until they reach day 10, when in CLOSE proximity to others, meaning if driving in a vehicle, sitting inside at close proximity, working inside the same office. You do not have to wear a mask when working outdoors.

Workspace Cleanliness:

- ECWA has provided wipes and other CDC-approved disinfectants for your use. Please use to keep your workspace clean.
- If you need more of these supplies, please contact your supervisor.

Simple guidelines and reminders:

- Handwashing is a simple way to stop of the spread of many diseases. Please wash hands often or use hand sanitizer and consider wearing a mask if you are feeling unwell, even if not COVID-19 related. A healthy workforce is better for everyone.
- COVID-19 boosters are now recommended for everyone over the age of 12, consider getting your COVID-19 booster in the coming months. There are free COVID booster clinics available right now.
 - From the CDC “The updated COVID-19 boosters are formulated to better protect against the most recently circulating COVID-19 variant. They can help restore protection that has waned since previous vaccination and were designed to provide broader protection against newer variants. This recommendation followed a comprehensive scientific evaluation and robust scientific discussion. If you are eligible, there is no bad time to get your COVID-19 booster.”
- ECWA along with our healthcare provider LMHF provides FREE flu shot clinics every year. Please take advantage of this free resource.
- If you have questions about boosters or vaccines, please contact your healthcare provider.

Important Things to Note

- 1. If an ECWA employee is under isolation, they are REQUIRED to remain at home without contact with non-household members until they are no longer in isolation. The reason for isolation is to prevent the spread of COVID-19. If it is determined an employee has not maintained isolation, they may be subject to rescission of permissive time and disciplinary action.**
2. Asymptomatic, screening COVID-19 tests DO NOT require an employee to isolate, e.g., COVID-19 tests given before a medical procedure for an asymptomatic person, a COVID-19 test taken after travel, for peace of mind, etc.
3. Permissive time benefits cease as soon as an employee meets the criteria to return to work. Delays in providing documentation or differing guidance from an employee's medical provider will result in the employee needing to use their own accrued benefit time until they return to work.
4. If you are unclear or have questions about this policy, please contact the Director of Human Resources.
5. This document will be reviewed periodically and will be updated when changes in policy are made at the Federal, Local or State level. Senior management will review and decide when policy can be terminated.

Erie County Water Authority

Affirmation of Isolation and Permissive Time Request – Return to Work Form

I, (Print Name) _____, do hereby affirm that I isolated from
(date) _____ through (date) _____ consistent with the guidance issued
by the NYS Department of Health (NYDOH). As per the NYDOH guidance if you test positive for COVID-19, you
must isolate for the appropriate amount of time, at least 5 days from the onset of COVID-19 symptoms OR
from the date of the positive COVID -19 test if asymptomatic.

Sworn and subscribed (signed) by me _____

Date _____

NOTE: Your signature DOES NOT have to be acknowledged by a notary public; you are swearing under penalty of law to the veracity of the information you have provided on this form.

.....
I am requesting COVID-19 permissive time for the following dates:

**** Please note ALL permissive time requests MUST be submitted with proper documentation of a COVID-19 positive diagnosis. Permissive time will NOT be granted to any employee without the proper documentation.**

**** Documentation can include a doctor’s note, proof from a local health department, pharmacy or healthcare clinic or another approved testing facility. Home tests are not approved proper documentation of a positive COVID-19 diagnosis.**

Print Name

Employee #

Signature: _____