

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF STARKE COUNTY

TEMPORARY OPERATIONAL POLICIES RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Version 2.1

The health, safety and wellbeing of the citizens of Starke County, and of our county employees, staff and officials are our highest priorities. It is the policy of Starke County to take all necessary and proper measures to achieve this priority while simultaneously insuring the continuity of essential functions entrusted in County government.

The Board of Commissioners of Starke County (the “Commissioners”) after consultation with the County Health Officer, the County Health Nurse, department heads, the County Attorney, review of published information from the Indiana Dept. of Health and guidance from the State Board of Accounts (“SBOA”) hereby issue the following **TEMPORARY OPERATIONAL POLICIES** effective immediately.

- I. **Resources:** The COVID-19 Pandemic is a serious and rapidly developing situation. It is the policy of Starke County that our response be fluid, responsive and based on reliable information. Starke County hereby adopts the following resources as reliable sources for appropriate actions and policies:
 - a. The Centers for Disease Control (“CDC”) COVID-19 (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>)
 - b. The Indiana State Board of Health COVID-19 resources: (<https://www.in.gov/coronavirus/>)

- II. **Use of Resources:** Starke County governmental officials, staff and employees are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the listed resources and to conduct themselves in accordance with the most current information provided there, so long as such conduct is consistent with the policies set forth herein.

- III. **Applicability:** These policies apply to non-judicial employees, staff and officials of Starke County, Indiana. Applicability to the Sheriff’s Dept. is subject to the lawful authority of the Sheriff, and applicability to EMS is subject to the supervision of the EMS Executive Director.

- IV. **Symptomatic Persons.** Persons with a fever in excess of 100.4°F (oral thermometer) and/or with a persistent cough or difficulty breathing or other symptoms of a respiratory ailment (or who have presented these symptoms within the past 24 hours) are considered symptomatic. Persons not presenting these symptoms are considered asymptomatic. **Symptomatic employees, staff and officials must stay home and not come to work until they have free of symptoms for at least 24 hours, without the use of fever-reducing or other symptom-altering medication (e.g. cough suppressants).** Those with concerns or questions about symptoms or seeking advice about whether to report to work are invited to email human resources (the Auditor's Office) or the County Health Dept./Nurse.
- V. **Asymptomatic Persons.** Generally, asymptomatic personnel are expected to report to work unless they have (a) had direct contact with a person diagnosed with Covid-19, or unless they are (b) caring for a person with a confirmed case of COVID-19 (in which they are required to self-isolate), (c) in a CDC Level 3 area of concern; (d) a person who has been instructed to refrain from attending work by the Starke County Health Department/Nurse.
- VI. **Sick Time/Vacation Time and FMLA.**
- A. Employees may use paid sick time/Vacation Time even if they are not sick, as required or recommended by public health authorities/guidelines or recognized professional health care providers.
- B. Employees may use sick time/ Vacation Time to care for immediate family and household members who are not ill but need care due to any COVID-19 related closures of schools or day care centers, or for other interruptions of care arrangements. Employees may not bring affected children or elders to work with them, even if the children or elders are well. In summary:
- If not working in order to actively care for dependents or household members – use sick time/VACATION TIME
 - If working remotely with relatively self-sufficient dependents or household members at home due to COVID-19 disruptions – no need to report the use of paid time off.
- C. Employees with insufficient accrued sick leave/ Vacation Time may use up to 14 unearned Vacation Time days for illness, to meet self-isolation or quarantine requirements, or for the active care of others because of disruptions relating to COVID-19. Starke County will review this threshold periodically as conditions

change. (note: Starke County reserves the right to recoup this time from the final paycheck of employees who terminate before they accrue their Vacation Time time.)

D. Employees who have exhausted their Sick Time/Vacation Time and who qualify for Family Medical Leave Act (“FMLA”) unpaid leave may apply for FMLA. Employees who do not qualify for FMLA may nevertheless make a request in writing for unpaid leave, and such requests will be decided on a case-by-case basis.

- VII. **High Risk Personnel.** Employees who are at increased risk for complications from COVID-19 due to being over age 60 or subject to underlying health conditions are urged to consult their physician about steps they can take to protect their health. These may include requesting a temporary change in job location, hours, assignment or duties, or implementation of additional protective measures to reduce their exposure to others or chances of being infected. If an employee at risk for complications from COVID-19 and their physician agree that increased social distancing in the workplace is prudent, the employee should contact their local HR office to formally request a temporary change. Human Resources will confidentially evaluate the request, explore alternatives, and attempt to appropriately address the employee’s health concerns while maintaining Starke County’s operations. A doctor’s note may be required. Except for employees who formally request a change in job circumstances due to underlying health conditions, employees will generally not be reassigned to new duties, locations, or roles or be provided with paid sick/release time solely to address concerns about the potential for COVID-19 infection.
- VIII. **Public Closure.** An Order closing most non-judicial county offices to the public is being issued by the Commissioners simultaneously with this Policy; under that Public Closure offices will continue to function but with interactions with the Public to be by electronic or documentary means, and with no person-to-person contact. This Public Closure will not alter the duty of staff, employees and officials to continue working, though remote working is acceptable if feasible.
- IX. **Additional Closures.** If departments, offices or operations are completely closed (i.e. closed to both the Public and to staff) by Starke County, the Governor of Indiana or public health authorities due to COVID-19, Starke County will provide affected non-remote employees with alternate work assignments or an emergency-related paid excused absence. If this occurs, Starke County will review the situation and determine whether continuation of compensation is feasible and warranted. If Federal or State emergency funds or compensation become available for workers affected by a closure, such funding shall be the primary source for any affected county employee.

All of which is approved as the official policy of Starke County by the Board of Commissioners of Starke County this ___ day of March, 2020 by the following vote:

COMMISSIONERS OF STARKE COUNTY

VOTE

yes


Charles Chesak, President

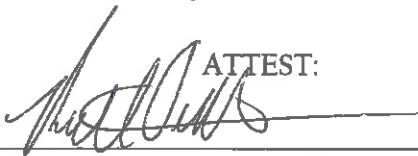
yes


Kathryn Norem, Vice President

YES


Bryan Cavender, Commissioner

ATTEST:


Rachel Oesterreich, Auditor
Of Starke County Indiana