Updated: 3/25/2020:

- Clarifies leave eligibility, starting with curtailed or closed dept/division operations, based on newly enacted federal laws.
- Re-names pandemic-related paid time off "COVID-19 Leave” to align with payroll coding
- Adds information on tracking hours worked and COVID-19 Leave.
- Adds information re: worker’s compensation claims/benefits

TOWN OF HANOVER COVID-19 EMPLOYEE FAQ

1. It feels like I have some minor cold symptoms, but I doubt it’s anything serious. Should I come to work?

   **NO. DO NOT COME TO WORK IF YOU ARE SICK.** Err on the side of caution. If you think you may have symptoms of COVID-19 infection (fever, cough, shortness of breath), call ahead before going to a clinic or hospital. In an emergency, dial 911.

2. My department/division has curtailed or closed on-site operations and my department head has told me not to come in to work. What happens next?

   - Your department head or supervisor will advise whether you are expected to work from home, and if so, what work you are expected to do, how it will be accomplished, and how many hours per day you are expected to work. You will be paid your regular wages for the work you do at home, just as if you were working on site.

   - If your work from home schedule is for fewer hours than you normally work each week, you may be eligible for pandemic-related paid leave (aka “COVID-19 Leave”) to keep you whole for the remainder of your wages.

   - You also may be eligible for COVID-19 leave if it is not feasible for you to work from home.
3. What is COVID-19 Leave?

- COVID-19 Leave is paid leave from work for a COVID-19 pandemic-related reason recognized by the Town of Hanover or required by federal or state laws enacted in response to the pandemic, such as the recently passed federal Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA). COVID-19 leave is available to full and part-time employees, regardless of benefits eligibility, when authorized by the department head and the HR Director, subject to the Town Manager’s final approval.

- If approved for COVID-19 Leave, you will continue to be paid the equivalent of your regular (base) pay, subject to standard payroll deductions and withholdings, for the duration of the authorized leave period. When authorized, COVID-19 leave is not deducted from accrued vacation, sick, personal, or earned time balances of benefits-eligible staff.

- Unless your department head and HR advise that you are relieved from all current and future work obligations for the duration of your COVID-19 leave, the Town expects employees on this leave status to be available by phone during business hours and available either to work from home, or – if required to ensure continuity of essential Town services – on site.

- If you have questions about your eligibility for COVID-19 Leave, please contact HR.

COVID-19 Leave shall at a minimum comply with any pandemic-related statutes and any other applicable federal or state statutes and regulations. Outside of these requirements, COVID-19 leave is a matter of Town discretion, and the Town reserves the right to modify, amend, or cancel this leave benefit at any time and for any reason.

Except where approval of COVID-19 leave is required by law, the approval and duration of leave may depend on a variety of factors such as the nature of your position and job duties, individual circumstances, the extent to which the time off is operationally feasible, public health guidelines, advisories and government orders pertaining to the pandemic, and budget considerations.

4. How do I record work hours vs. COVID-19 Leave on my timesheet?

- If you are in an hourly paid position, record all hours that you work as you do now or as instructed by your department, whether you are working on site or from home.
• Record COVID-19 leave hours in a separate column on your timesheet. This is required for both hourly and salaried employees, for two reasons: (1) wage and hour laws require separating time worked from paid leave time; and (2) the Town may be eligible for reimbursement or tax credits for some of this leave.

5. Schools are closed. I’m responsible for my child(ren)’s care and educational needs and cannot be at work during my normal hours. What do I do?

• Contact HR and your department head for further guidance. You may be eligible for COVID-19 Leave if you are unable to work or work from home because you need to care for a child under 18 years of age if the child’s school or day care provider is closed or unavailable.

• Department heads and employees are encouraged to discuss potential job modifications such as a different work schedule that could help employees to balance work and family obligations.

6. I am in a higher risk category for complications from COVID-19 infection. My department/division is continuing on-site operations. I have no symptoms of illness and until now have been coming to work. Neither my health care provider nor state authorities have directed me to stay home. Nevertheless, I’m concerned about whether I should be at work because of my higher risk status. What should I do?

• Contact HR to confidentially discuss your health-related concerns and speak with your department head about whether it is feasible for you to work from home. If there are no work from home options available you may be eligible for COVID-19 Leave.

7. What if my health care provider or federal, state, or local authorities direct me to stay home for reasons related to the COVID-19 pandemic?

• If this is due to your own health, first contact HR for advice on how to proceed. If this is due to a general “stay at home” or similar directive by authorities, first contact your department head to discuss work requirements, including (1) whether you are in a position designated as “essential” by both the Town and government officials and therefore are still expected to report to work; or (2) if you are not in an “essential” position, whether it is feasible for you to work from home.

• If you are not in an essential position and are unable to work from home you are likely eligible for COVID-19 Leave.
8. I and/or others in my household have tested positive for COVID-19. I’ve been directed to either quarantine or self-isolate by public health authorities.

- Contact HR to advise of your status and then your department head to discuss work from home options. If it is not feasible for you to work from home, you are likely eligible for COVID-19 Leave.

9. I and/or others in my household have tested positive and are showing symptoms of illness due to COVID-19 infection. What now?

- First and foremost, follow all instructions by your health care provider(s) to ensure you receive the medical attention you need, and abide by any instructions from public health authorities.

- Contact HR as soon as you are able to do so. You are likely eligible for COVID-19 leave due to your own COVID-19 illness, that of an immediate family member or to care for an individual who is ordered to quarantine or self-isolate by federal, state or local authorities.

- Benefits-eligible employees requiring extended leave from work due to their own illness are eligible for short-term disability and if necessary long-term disability benefits.

10. As a Town employee, am I still allowed to travel wherever I want? Will the Town require me to stay home when I return from my travels?

- Travel-related restrictions or quarantines are as specified by federal or state authorities. The Town does not have any travel-related rules of its own, but we strongly encourage employees to avoid unnecessary domestic or international air travel during this time.

- We expect employees to comply with all government ordered restrictions on travel.

11. What if public health/government authorities place me in quarantine after I return from travel?

- Contact HR and inform your department head of your quarantine status. If it is not feasible for you to work remotely while under quarantine you are likely eligible for COVID-19 Leave.
12. I just heard that one of my co-workers tested positive for COVID-19. What do I do?

- Stay calm. Rumor mills abound, so don’t immediately assume this is true.

- **Contact your department head**, who will consult with the Town’s public health officer regarding appropriate next steps based on the latest federal, state, and regional guidelines and follow up with employees. Currently, the fact that someone with whom you work has tested positive does not automatically mean that you or others must leave (or be removed) from the workplace, unless you begin experiencing symptoms of illness.

- Regardless of the source, DO NOT share this information with your co-workers. This could potentially violate your co-worker’s medical privacy rights. Legalities aside, put yourself in your co-worker’s shoes and keep in mind how you would feel if people were gossiping about your health in the workplace, for any reason.

- If guidelines change in this area, we will follow them. It’s important that you avoid all “off the cuff” decisions regarding your own or others’ exposure-related risks. We will respond to these methodically in accordance with public health guidelines and directives.

13. I heard that a co-worker was exposed to someone outside of work who was exposed to someone else who tested positive for COVID-19. What do I do?

- See #12, above. **Contact your department head for further guidance.** Currently, being “exposed to someone who was exposed to someone” does not automatically mean that you or others must leave (or be removed) from your workplace.

14. Are worker’s comp benefits available if I contract COVID-19 illness on the job?

- Yes.

- First and foremost, if you have been directly exposed to or contracted COVID-19 illness, follow all instructions from your health care provider(s) to ensure you receive the medical attention that you need.

- **Contact HR as soon as possible.** HR will work with you to ensure timely filing of a worker’s compensation claim.