



# Emergency Sick Leave and COVID Quarantine Leave

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## 1.0 Purpose

To temporarily extend any unused Emergency Paid Sick leave hours for eligible employees who did not use this benefit prior to December 31, 2020 and to provide designated Buncombe County employee’s salary continuation, if quarantined, due to a suspected workplace COVID-19 exposure.

This policy is separate from and independent of FFCRA and eFMLA and is independent of any existing sick leave policies that the County grants employees in the normal course of business.

## 2.0 Applicability

All employees will be eligible to utilize their unused Emergency Paid Sick Leave hours as described below. Only identified positions will be eligible for COVID Emergency Paid Quarantine Leave.

## 3.0 Policy

### Emergency Paid Sick Leave (EPSL)

Emergency paid sick leave at Full Pay will continue to be available for an employee who is unable to work or work remotely because:

1. The employee is subject to federal, state, or local quarantine/isolation order related to COVID-19.
2. The employee has been advised by a health care provider to self-quarantine because they are infected with, or have been exposed to, or are at high risk of complications from COVID-19.
3. The employee is experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 and is seeking a medical diagnosis.
4. The employee is experiencing side effects from the COVID-19 vaccine.

**Eligibility for EPSL**

All employees, who were granted 80-hours of EPSL prior to December 31, 2020 may extend the use of these unused hours during the COVID-19 Crisis. No additional hours will be granted. Under this policy, Emergency paid sick leave is strictly for the quarantine and/or recovery from COVID-19 of the employee.

**Emergency Paid COVID Quarantine Leave (EPQL)**

Emergency Paid Quarantine Leave will be available for certain positions where they cannot reasonably social distance and are unable to perform work functions from home and are subject to a federal, state, or local quarantine or isolation order related to COVID-19.

1. This benefit is to provide salary continuation while the employee waits on the results of their COVID-19 test results.
  - a. The maximum benefit per incident is five (5) shifts or until the employee receives their test results, whichever is sooner.
  - b. The employee is not eligible for overtime hours for the week they are using Quarantine Leave.
2. This benefit is not for the recovery of COVID-19. Should the employee test positive for COVID-19 they would be expected contact Human Resources at [FMLA@buncombecounyt.org](mailto:FMLA@buncombecounyt.org) and to use their own FMLA leave.

**Eligibility for EPQL**

Only employees who hold the following positions will be eligible for Quarantine Leave: Detention Officers, Patrol Deputies, EMT, Scale House Attendant, staff administering COVID-19 Vaccines, and COVID-19 test and vaccine site personnel. The Human Resources Director has the discretion to grant Quarantine Leave for positions not listed based on the criteria listed above.

**Paid Benefits for the Use of Remaining EPSL**

Eligible employees who received paid sick leave prior to December 31, 2020, may use their remaining leave for their own personal COVID related incident. If the employee previously exhausted their allocated leave, the employee would be expected to use their own unused accrued leave. Prior to December 31, 2020, employees were granted:

- Full-time employees: 2 full weeks of work up to 80 hours at their regular rate of pay.
- Part-time employees: the number of hours that the employee works, on average, over a two-week period.

**Return to Work Following EPSL or COVID-19 Quarantine Leave**

Employees are required to follow guidelines established by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and have a return to work notice from Buncombe County's Employee & Family Health.

**Notification of Leave Request**

Employees should request their need for emergency paid leave or COVID Quarantine leave as soon as they have been placed on quarantine, by notifying their immediate supervisor AND the HR department contact. Employee and Family Health will provide a stay at home

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notice to the employee. That notice must be forwarded to Beth Ray at:

FMLA@buncombecounty.org

If an employee is incapacitated, the employee's representative should contact the employees supervisor as soon as possible.

### **Policy Non-Compliance**

Employees who meet the qualifications must apply for the expanded benefits by emailing [FMLA@buncombecounty.org](mailto:FMLA@buncombecounty.org). Failure to submit the required documents will delay or deny the ability to participate in this benefit.

### **4.0 Audit**

All policies for Buncombe County may be subject to audit or review as outlined in the [Internal Auditor's Statement](#). The Internal Auditor's Statement is incorporated into all County policies through this reference.

### **Definitions**

- a. **Effective date:** This policy shall be in effect from January 1, 2021 and shall remain in effect during the COVID-19 crisis.