SUPERVISOR FLU SEASON FAQ’s

The following frequently asked questions (FAQ) will provide you with basic information regarding absences due to the seasonal flu or H1N1. If you have any other questions or need further assistance, please contact the Human Resources Department.

What pre-planning should I do to ensure that my office continues operations if there is a flu outbreak?
Identify those functions which are essential for your office to continue providing service, designate and train backups, allow backup to perform duties periodically to ensure competency, and consider alternate work locations that may be available.

Establish communication plans to ensure you are notified of employee absences in a timely manner to allow you to implement your contingency plans.

Post flu prevention flyers throughout your work areas and encourage your employees to follow healthy practices in order to prevent getting sick and to limit the spread of the flu if they do get sick. Posters may be obtained from the Vice President of Administrative Services or you may download from the following site: http://www.kingcounty.gov/healthservices/health/communicable/stopgerms/posters.aspx

Can I send my employee home if they are exhibiting flu-like symptoms?
It is not appropriate for a supervisor to diagnose an employee's illness. However, if your employee is unable to perform his or her job duties, you may direct the employee to go home. If you are contemplating this action or if you are concerned with apparent flu-like symptoms displayed in the workplace, contact your HR representative.

If my employee is not working due to illness, are they paid?
If the employee has accrued paid time, it should be submitted or you may allow the employee to make up the lost work hours in the same workweek. If the employee does not have sufficient paid leave or are unable to make up the work within the workweek, leave without pay must be submitted.

Do I need to have employees’ present medical documentation if they are absent due to the flu?
The Centers for Disease Control is asking employers not to require medical documentation for the employee to return to work. Special circumstances may occur, however, that will require discussion with the Human Resources Department to determine if medical documentation is required.

When can my employee return to work after having the flu?
The employee should stay home for 24 hours after being free of fever or signs of a fever without the use of fever-reducing medications.
During a flu outbreak, can I cancel vacation leave requests that have already been approved?
Yes. You have the right to cancel or adjust approved vacation as program needs dictate. Discuss this action with your supervisory chain and the Executive Director of Human Resources before taking this action and notify the employee as soon as possible.

If my employee can't come to work, can I approve telecommuting arrangements?
Ad hoc telecommuting arrangements may be approved. Such decisions will be based on the specifics of each situation including if the job duties are suited for telecommuting, nature of the employee's absence (are they sick? are they taking care of a sick child?), and the technology needed by and available to the employee. Please refer to Highline's Telecommuting Policy.

Additional Links:
- Vacation and Sick Leave Information
- HCEA Bargaining Agreement
- WPEA Bargaining Agreement
- Suspended Operations Policy