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**From:** City Manager  
**Sent:** Monday, August 10, 2020 4:51 PM  
**To:** Broadcast  
**Subject:** Updated COVID-19 Travel Policy  
**Attachments:** COVID-19 Travel Policy\_City of Lowell\_8.10.20.pdf

Good Afternoon City of Lowell Employees,

As the circumstances surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic evolve, the health and safety of all members of our workforce remains of the utmost importance. Given the increased transmission of COVID-19 being seen in other parts of country, particular caution is required when considering personal travel. With this in mind, and given the recently enacted Travel Order issued by Governor Baker, the attached updated COVID-19 Travel Policy is now in effect for all City of Lowell employees. This Policy is intended to protect City employees and the public they serve from contracting COVID-19 from City employees who have recently returned from travel to a location that posed a high-risk of infection.

Please review this document at your earliest convenience and contact Human Relations should you have any questions related to this.

Sincerely,



Eileen Donoghue  
City Manager

# City of Lowell Updated COVID-19 Travel Policy

## **EFFECTIVE DATE**

August 10, 2020

## **BACKGROUND**

Governor Baker issued a new Travel Order on July 24, 2020 that takes effect on August 1, 2020, and the City is therefore revising its COVID-19 Travel Policy in accordance with the new statewide Travel Order, and in consideration of the critical public safety and administrative functions of the City. Pursuant to Governor Baker's Travel Order, leisure travel outside of Massachusetts, except to lower risk areas, is strongly discouraged as it poses a threat to employees and the public. This Policy is intended to protect City employees and the public they serve from contracting COVID-19 from City employees who have recently returned from travel to a location that posed a high-risk of infection.

## **POLICY STATEMENT**

Employees are required to notify their Department Heads in writing if traveling to anywhere outside of Massachusetts except for a state that has been designated by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health ("DPH") as a lower risk COVID-19 state. Currently, the list of lower risk COVID-19 states includes:

- New York;
- New Jersey;
- Connecticut
- Maine;
- Vermont;
- New Hampshire;
- Hawaii.

Additionally, employees who have traveled through airports or utilized ferry/cruise ship services are also required to notify their department heads of such travel, even if they traveled to a lower-risk state. Employees should be aware that travel restrictions on a Federal and State level are always subject to sudden change. If an employee's travel request is approved, such approval is provisional and may be rescinded if the travel destination's classification as a lower-risk state changes. Additionally, if you decide to travel outside of Massachusetts and the risk level changes at any time during your travels, you should be prepared to abide by the restrictions for non lower risk areas, as set forth below. For example, Rhode Island was initially included on DPH's list of lower risk states, but was removed from that list within one week because of rising rates of infection.

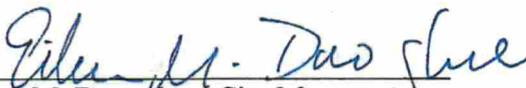
If travel to a non lower risk state is approved, then upon returning from such travel, **you will be required to stay home to monitor for symptoms during a 14-day period.** You may also be asked to provide a letter or certification indicating that you have been cleared to return to work. Employees prohibited from entering the workplace due to quarantine and whose Department Head determines that the essential function of such employees' position cannot be performed remotely may be entitled to up to 80 hours of Emergency Paid Sick Leave ("EPSL") under the FFCRA if they have not already used said leave. As an alternative to a 14-day quarantine, employees may submit evidence of negative test results from two FDA EUA-approved molecular (PCR) SARS-CoV2 tests, the first taken upon re-entry into Massachusetts and the second taken at least 72 hours after the first test. Employees may utilize available EPSL leave while awaiting the results of these two tests. Employees should note that once their paid EPSL allotment has been used, any future COVID-related absences related to illness or quarantine requirements will require the use of the employee's own sick leave or vacation time as applicable.

**The City reserves the right to deny an employee's request to use vacation leave for travel to a location other than a designated lower risk state based upon the operational impact of such employee's protracted absence resulting from the required stay-at-home period.** In the case of an employee who is traveling to be a caregiver for, or in connection with the care of, an ill family member, such travel will not be denied but the employee will still have to comply with quarantine and/or negative testing requirements before returning to work.

Employees who fail to comply with this policy are subject to disciplinary measures, up to and including termination. Additionally, employees should be aware that the Commonwealth of Massachusetts requires travelers entering the Commonwealth from any state that has not been designated as a lower risk COVID-19 state to complete a "Massachusetts Travel Form" and either produce a negative COVID-19 test result administered no more than 72 hours prior to arriving in Massachusetts or quarantine for 14 days, and failure to comply may result in a \$500 fine per day.

**AUTHORIZATION:**

Signed and approved:

  
Eileen M. Donoghue, City Manager