

Cherokee County Temporary Emergency Sick Leave and Expanded Family Medical Leave Policy  
Continuation of Insurance Policy

This policy is in effect from April 1, 2020, until December 31, 2020

**Emergency Sick Leave and Family Medical Leave Policy**

In response to, and as required by the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA or the Act), Cherokee County is offering all employees the ability to use the emergency sick leave provision of the act if an employee is unable to work or telework due to any of the reasons below. This leave is paid at the higher of the employee's regular rate or pay or the Federal minimum wage paid at 100% for reasons 1-3 and 6 below, and at 2/3 or the employee's regular rate for reasons 4 and 5 below, but must be at least at the Federal Minimum Wage. Under the FFCRA, employers must provide two weeks of paid sick leave to full- and part-time employees for the following reasons:

1. an employee is subject to a Federal, State, or local quarantine or isolation order related to COVID-19;
2. an employee has been advised by a health care provider to self-quarantine related to COVID-19;
3. an employee is experiencing COVID-19 symptoms and is seeking a medical diagnosis;
4. an employee is caring for an individual subject to an order described in (1) or self-quarantine as described in (2);
5. an employee is caring for his or her child whose school or place of care is closed (or child care provider is unavailable) due to COVID-19 related reasons; or
6. an employee is experiencing any other substantially-similar condition specified by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

In addition to the emergency paid sick leave for COVID-19 related reasons above, the County is also extending to employees the offer of emergency Family Medical Leave of an additional 10 weeks paid at the higher of 2/3 of the employee's regular rate of pay or the Federal Minimum Wage. Unlike regular Family and Medical leave which requires an employee to have been employed for twelve months and have worked a minimum of 1,250 hours, this leave is available to any employee who has been employed for a minimum of 30 days. This does not extend Family Medical Leave beyond 12 weeks of leave if an employee has already used part of their 12-weeks' entitlement in the past twelve months, nor does it give an employee an additional 12 weeks for any other regular qualifying Family Medical Leave during the proceeding rolling look-back period, which would be twelve months from the beginning of the COVID-19 qualifying Family Medical Leave or twelve months from the beginning of any other regular Family Medical Leave used in the past twelve months.

Cherokee County is authorizing the department heads of health care workers and emergency first responders (*which are defined as: law enforcement officers, correctional institution personnel, fire fighters, emergency medical services personnel, physicians, nurses, public health personnel, emergency medical technicians, paramedics, emergency management personnel, 911 operators, child welfare workers and service providers, public works personnel, and persons with skills or training in operating specialized equipment or other skills needed to provide aid in a declared emergency as well*

**as individuals who work for such facilities employing these individuals and whose work is necessary to maintain the operation of the facility)** to determine staffing levels necessary to maintain appropriate continuity of operations within their respective departments and thereby allow their employees use of the emergency Family Medical Leave based on their respective staffing needs. Each department head shall assure that they maintain sufficient staffing for continuity of operations when considering requests for use of emergency Family Medical Leave by employees who are considered health care workers or emergency responders.

#### **Continuation of Insurance Policy**

Should it become necessary to temporarily layoff/furlough employees due to the inability to find sufficient work in particular positions, the County will attempt to do this in rolling one- or two-week periods so that if an employee has insurance premiums that come out of their pay, they will work at least one week in each pay period of the month so that they have sufficient income to cover insurance deductions for that month. If this event should extend for a protracted amount of time, this may not be possible and in those instances, an employee would need to make arrangements to make up their missed insurance premiums. Every effort is going to be made to keep employees at work if there is work available to be done, but depending on the duration of the event, changes may need to be made to this policy. In the event of temporary short-term lay-offs (two weeks or less), the County will continue to provide the employee portion of insurance so that an employee will not experience a lapse in coverage. Should longer term or permanent layoffs become necessary, the County would follow normal guidelines for insurance continuation and would extend the offer of COBRA as per the normal policy.