

Joint Guidance on Employee Travel and Return to Work Issues for Local Government Employees

June 9, 2020

Under the original Executive Order 2020-04, and as continued to the present, only non-essential out-of-state travel by municipal employees for official business purposes was suspended. At the current time, there is no prohibition on personal interstate or international travel by municipal employees.

Nevertheless, certain interstate, or international travel, by municipal employees increases the risk of contracting COVID-19. Because at-risk travel increases the chances of getting infected and spreading COVID-19, municipal employees should be informed that avoiding it is most likely the best way to protect themselves and fellow employees from getting sick. Employees should be informed that while at-risk travel is not prohibited it will be the subject of employer workplace health screening in accordance with public health guidelines.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/travel-in-the-us.html>

Under the [Universal Guidelines](#) for all New Hampshire Employers and Employees, municipal employers should develop a process for screening employees reporting for work about the existence of COVID-19 symptoms, and other risk factors. The NH Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Public Health Services has also issued a guidance document related to employee travel entitled [COVID-19 Employee Travel, Screening, and Exclusion Guidance](#).

Based on this guidance, when screening for COVID-19 symptoms, municipal employers should include in the daily screening process a question that asks whether the employee has returned from interstate travel outside of NH, ME and VT, and while doing so used public conveyances (e.g., bus, train, plane), or, has returned from international travel. If an employee responds that s/he has just returned from concerning interstate travel, or international travel, the municipal employer should consider one of the following actions:

1. Employees reporting any of the travel-related risk factors should self-quarantine for 14 days after returning from such travel. If remote work is available, that could be an alternative to returning to the employee's regular work location.
2. As an alternative to self-quarantine for 14 days, or working remotely, the employee could obtain a written release from a medical provider that permits him/her to return to work after appropriate screening or testing in light of the just completed interstate or international travel.
3. As necessary, municipal employers should consult with appropriate labor counsel to ensure compliance with any applicable collective bargaining agreement.

Whether interstate or international travel will continue to be a return to work risk factor is subject to rapid change and appropriate consultation with the most current CDC and NH DHHS guidance is necessary.