

Frequently Asked Questions

Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

What happens if a homecare or personal support worker thinks they may have been exposed to Novel Coronavirus or is diagnosed with the illness?

The worker should contact their doctor or health care provider immediately and follow the health care provider's instructions. They should self-quarantine and not go to the consumer-employer's home, unless they also reside with the consumer. If the worker lives with the consumer, they should follow [CDC guidelines](https://www.cdc.gov/) found at <https://www.cdc.gov/>.

The worker should immediately notify the consumer-employer, employer of record, and case manager by phone or email to let them know they are unable to work until released to do so by their health care provider.

What if a homecare or personal support worker believes they were exposed to, or has been diagnosed with, the Novel Coronavirus while on the job?

The worker can file a workers' compensation claim. The exposure claim would need to be confirmed by a medical opinion and approved by the insurance carrier. Exposure in the community versus the workplace would need to be determined.

If the claim is approved and the worker is quarantined, the worker may be eligible for wage loss benefits. Typically, wage loss benefits are approved when the medical provider authorizes time off work or modified work, which means the worker will lose wages.

Steps to filing a workers' compensation claim are available on the Oregon Home Care Commission, Health and Safety web page:

<https://www.oregon.gov/DHS/SENIORS-DISABILITIES/HCC/PSW-HCW/Pages/Health-Safety.aspx>

For questions: 1-888-365-0001

What support can a homecare or personal support worker provide for a consumer-employer who may be experiencing symptoms?

- Help with contacting the individuals' medical provider.
- Help with describing any symptoms, if needed.
- If directed by the medical professional, help with accessing necessary medical care.
- Contact the case manager, personal agent or services coordinator to keep the Case Management Entity or APD/AAA office up to date.
- Always have a conversation with the consumer-employer or employer of record before taking any action.

What if a homecare or personal support worker is quarantined and cannot leave their home to get a voucher or timesheet signed?

If a consumer-employer or the worker is self-isolating or in quarantine because of COVID-19, the worker can submit a voucher or timesheet without the consumer-employer's or employer of record's signature. This is allowable one time. Workers can submit the voucher by mail or through secured email to the case management entity.

What help can homecare and personal support workers provide when the consumer-employer is quarantined or at significant risk for infection?

Homecare and personal support workers can help with:

- Picking-up medications
- Grocery shopping
- Community errands listed on a task list or service agreement

In this situation, the consumer-employer does not need to be present.

When can overtime be prior-authorized for homecare and personal support workers?

Overtime may be allowed on a short-term basis if a consumer-employer's needs are not met because their regular homecare or personal support worker is not able to work, or because of a workforce shortage, as a result of COVID-19.

What if a consumer or their family will not allow a homecare or personal support worker to report to work?

Workers should contact the case manager right away to let them know. The worker may want to consider applying for paid time off (PTO) or unemployment benefits.

What if a homecare or personal support worker needs to work more hours for a consumer-employer than authorized on their current timesheet, Plan of Care in eXPRS, or voucher because of COVID-19?

The worker must contact the consumer-employer's case manager to request more hours. If approved, the case manager will send the authorization by email. The worker does not need to wait for a new voucher or timesheet to arrive in the mail before working the extra hours.

To avoid potential exposure to COVID-19, how can homecare and personal support workers turn in their timesheets or vouchers for payment?

Workers can use mail or send their vouchers or timesheets to the local case management entity via secure email or fax. Pictures of vouchers or timesheets, or those scanned and sent through a cellphone application, may be allowed, on a case by case basis, and only while social-distancing measures are in effect. Pictures must be legible, or they will not be accepted. Personal support workers should use Electronic Visit Verification (EVV) unless they have an approved exception for not using EVV.

SEIU has created an easy way for homecare and personal support workers to send vouchers securely through SEIU's website:

<https://seiu503.org/how-to-email-your-voucher-to-dhs/>

Personal support workers are encouraged to contact the case management entity where they submit their timesheets to request a secure email or submit through SEIU's website.

Note: If you are having technical difficulties, contact SEIU's Member Assistance Center (MAC) at 1-844-503-7348. The Department of Human Services is unable to provide any technical support.

Can a homecare or personal support worker be terminated as a Medicaid-enrolled provider if they miss work because they have coronavirus or because they have been exposed to it?

No. The worker must notify the case management entity if they are unable to continue working because they have coronavirus or have been exposed to it.

Can homecare or personal support workers help with back-up planning?

Homecare and personal support workers cannot choose back-up plans for the individuals they support. A back-up plan should be in each person/consumer's plan. Workers can help by contacting the individual's case manager if a back-up plan is needed. In addition, the Employer Resource Connection (ERC) Program is available to assist with back-up or emergency planning. The consumer-employer or employer of record can make the request. The case manager and ERC Program have helpful resources and tools that that can be sent to individuals electronically or by mail:

- How to Develop a Back-Up Plan
- Emergency Planning Checklist

Always have a conversation with the consumer-employer or the employer of record before taking any action. To find an ERC consultant click on the link or enter into your web browser:

<https://www.oregon.gov/DHS/SENIORS-DISABILITIES/HCC/Pages/Steps.aspx>

Email questions to: OHCC.ERC@state.or.us

How will homecare and personal support workers know if they are at risk of being exposed to COVID-19 while working for a consumer-employer?

Workers should always follow standard precautions when working with consumers. If known, the case management entity will make a referral to the OHCC Workers' Compensation Coordinator. The OHCC Workers' Compensation Coordinator will let the worker know if they are at risk and provide the worker with workers' compensation information, if applicable. The worker will not be given any Personal Health Information.

Email questions to: workerscomp.ohcc@dhsosha.state.or.us

What happens if a homecare or personal support worker is due to renew their training certifications through OHCC, but is unable to because trainings have been cancelled?

All current certifications awarded by OHCC will be extended 150 days. OHCC will continue to extend the dates based on social-distancing requirements. This includes:

- Professional Development Certification
- Enhanced Certification
- Exceptional certification

Those with certifications will continue to receive pay differentials even with an expired CPR/First Aid certification.

What if a homecare or personal support worker is unable to update and renew their provider enrollment agreement in time because of COVID-19?

Homecare and personal support workers whose credential renewals are due in March, April, or May of this year, and whose credential are still active, will be given an additional 90 days to complete their provider enrollment agreement. They may continue working during this time.

Will homecare and personal support workers receive compensation when they are unable to work because of COVID-19?

Homecare and personal support workers may be eligible to receive up to 40 hours of paid time off through the Oregon Homecare Workers Benefit Trust. For more information, workers should visit:

orhomecaretrust.org/hardship-PTO

Homecare and personal support workers may also apply for unemployment benefits by visiting Oregon.gov/employ/unemployment. Eligibility is determined by the Oregon Employment Department. Information about COVID-19 unemployment benefit claims can be found here: https://govstatus.egov.com/ORUnemployment_COVID19

Resources

Oregon Home Care Commission Health & Safety website:

<https://www.oregon.gov/DHS/SENIORS-DISABILITIES/HCC/PSW-HCW/Pages/Health-Safety.aspx>

ODDS COVID-19 Information:

<https://www.oregon.gov/DHS/SENIORS-DISABILITIES/DD/Pages/ODDS-COVID-19-Information.aspx>

Oregon Health Authority: <https://www.oregon.gov/DHS/SENIORS-DISABILITIES/HCC/PSW-HCW/Documents/COVID-19-Interim-Infection-Control-Guidance-Home-Care-Workers.pdf>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/prevention-treatment.html>