



## *COVID-19 Update for DCF Members*

**Click to see the latest policy updates from DCF as of 3/20/20:**

- [Interim Guidance on Prioritizing Child Safety and Conducting Visits During COVID-19 Outbreak](#)
  - [Cleaning DCF Offices With Regard to COVID-19 Concerns](#)
- Read more below for statewide updates and DCF-specific updates, including teleworking, volunteering, sick time, and more.**

Greetings!

I'd like to share with you the latest information I have from DCF Commissioner Spears regarding the COVID-19 virus and the new reality our DCF members are facing as we try to protect our health and safety while continuing to provide the vital work we do in our communities.

As DCF workers, we perform a critical service for the communities and we know that DCF can't close its doors. We will do our best to protect ourselves while also protecting children and families. Right now is the time for us to come together and support each other so that this important work can continue. This may be a frustrating and confusing time as we adjust to working under these conditions; please prioritize your own health and safety as you continue the important work that we do across this agency.

**If you're having any issues with teleworking, your work assignment, or other rights on the job, please contact your area Vice President, union steward, or [union representative](#) for help. You can always find the latest updates for members and any DCF-specific update on our [COVID-19 response page on the Local 509 website](#).**

In Solidarity,

**Adriana Zwick**

DCF Chapter President, SEIU Local 509

### **Statewide Update (All Agencies)**

As you know, on Sunday night, Governor Baker issued an order for all non-emergency workers not to report to work on Monday 3/16 or Tuesday 3/17, then lifted that order as of Wednesday 3/18. Agencies are responsible for creating their own plans to move forward, but those results have varied across our membership.

***Please notify your steward or your regional vice president if you were directed to telework on Monday 3/16 and/or Tuesday 3/17. These days were supposed to follow the snow day protocol and you should not have been required to work unless you volunteered.***

Your union has taken a clear position on how the state should handle changes to work for our members during this time. We continue to negotiate an agreement regarding these issues, but Local 509's position remains:

- **If a member needs to be out due to quarantine or school closure, but otherwise could work**, that they should be allowed to telework and not lose pay or benefits

- **If a member needs to be out due to quarantine or school closure, and is not able to work in this situation**, they should be put on paid administrative leave and not lose pay or benefits
- **If a member or a person a member cares for develops an illness (whether COVID-19 or not) and needs to use sick time, but runs out of their accrued time before they can safely return to work**, they should be advanced sick time so they will not lose pay or benefits.

We will share information with all of our state members as soon as we have a concrete plan from the Commonwealth regarding our members during this crisis. Contract and policy negotiations are temporarily suspended, and we will share any updates on the status of those negotiations as soon as we have them.

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### **DCF Specific Updates**

Since last week, in my role as DCF Chapter President, I have remained in daily contact with the Commissioner and her senior team. My primary requests continue to be ensuring the safety of all members and arranging for telework for all members. **This is where we stand as of today, Friday, March 20:**

#### **Teleworking:**

- Beginning Wednesday 3/18, **all members** are afforded the opportunity to telework. The expectation right now is that most staff are teleworking (whether they are from an area, regional, or central office).
- All medically compromised or immune-deficient members, or any member who cares for someone in those categories, should be allowed to telework for the duration of the pandemic. Members should self-identify to your supervisor if this is the case.
- No written justification is needed for any member to telework.

#### **Interim Guidance for In-Person Contact With Clients:**

- All routine visits and meetings are canceled for the foreseeable future.
- Work with your supervisor **and** manager to determine what kind of alternative contact you can have with families moving forward. This could be by phone, FaceTime, etc. Every member will need to make an individual plan to handle contact with families.
- If you think in-person contact is necessary because of the nature of a case, you need to flag that with your supervisor, manager, **and** area director so that as a team you can make a plan for what to do that also prioritizes your safety.
- Any in-person contact with clients should not occur unless basic health questions have been asked (are you sick, have you traveled out of the country, etc). This is the new protocol for all DCF workers. If any of the client's answers identify them as potentially sick, you should discuss how to proceed with your supervisor **and** manager.
- [See the full updated DCF policy for conducting child visits](#) (same as at the top of this email)

#### **Office Procedures:**

- No in-person meetings are happening right now at any office. No walk-in visits will be allowed at any office. Any office meetings must be by appointment.
- Door signs will direct anyone who shows up at area offices to call the Judge Baker hotline.
- Unless you are a designated volunteer for the day, do not show up at the office without notifying a manager first (even to pick something up). They will make a plan for what you need to do. There should be no more than 10 people in any office per CDC, and state encourages everyone to practice social distancing guidelines.

#### **Volunteers:**

- DCF is asking for volunteers to go into offices to conduct screenings, etc. **The Commissioner has confirmed that there is no set number of volunteers required at each office.** If an office is short on volunteers, it is management's

responsibility to resolve this. No one will be forced to volunteer.

- I am continuing to address with DCF administration that offices should utilize only the minimum volunteers necessary at a time in accordance with public health recommendations for social distancing.
- Please prioritize your health and safety in deciding whether or not to volunteer.
- If you have any issues regarding being asked to volunteer, or receiving different information about expectations to volunteer, please contact your steward as soon as possible.

#### **Timesheets, Sick Time, and Other PTO:**

- Please be vigilant about entering your SSTA time sheets every week to make sure that you don't experience any issues with your pay.
- If you are sick, please don't go to the office or conduct any community work. I encourage you to contact your primary care physician and let your manager know if you are ill. No one will be disciplined for self-identifying as sick during this time. As mentioned above (under "Statewide Update"), we will continue to negotiate with the state about how our members' time will be counted in different situations during this crisis.

#### **Materials:**

- DCF has placed a large order for supplies like gloves and hand sanitizer. These supplies will go out to all offices when they become available. DCF is a prioritized entity along with hospitals and EMTs for receiving these supplies from the state. I will update you as soon as I hear that those supplies are on their way to offices.
- DCF is working on obtaining iPads and cell phones for anyone who needs them to telework, including social worker techs and screeners. They are trying to prepare for the possibility that 100% telework may be in our future. Please communicate with your manager if you need an iPad or a DCF phone.

#### **Cleaning Protocols at Offices:**

- DCF has shared the cleaning protocol for area offices with all staff and sign up sheets will be available in offices so employees can see when the office has been cleaned.
- DPH protocols require a deep cleaning only if an employee in that office is diagnosed with the virus. Although not every office can be deep cleaned at this time, building landlords are now required to clean offices more frequently, focused on "high touch points" (e.g. doorknobs, light switches, etc). If you have any concerns about this in your building, please raise this with the AAM so that they can follow up with the landlord.
- [Click here to view DCF's Guidance on Cleaning DCF Offices With Regard to COVID-19 Concerns](#) (same as at the top of this email)

**Still have questions or concerns? Please contact your area Vice President, union steward, or [union representative](#) for help. You can always find the latest updates for members and any DCF-specific update on our [COVID-19 response page on the Local 509 website](#).**

### **LOCAL 509 COVID-19 RESPONSE**

**To get the latest updates for SEIU Local 509 members on the COVID-19 outbreak, [follow us on Facebook](#) and [check our COVID-19 Response page](#) on our website.**

**If you have any questions or concerns about changes at your worksite, contact your steward, [a union representative](#), or call the Member Action Resource Center at 1-800-632-8079.**

**SEIU Local 509**

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