Public Health Emergency Leave (PHEL)

On March 12, 2020, the Commonwealth of Virginia announced the availability of the Public Health Emergency Leave (PHEL), which provides employees with up to eighty (80) hours* of leave when the State Health Commission and Governor declare communicable disease of public health threat conditions, such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

Under what circumstances can I use PHEL?

Employees may use PHEL to attend to their own medical needs or the medical needs of an immediate family member being tested or treated for COVID-19.

Who is eligible for PHEL?

Employees required by public health officials to be monitored during the incubation period may use PHEL to continue pay for that period of time. Eligibility includes wage and adjunct faculty for the COVID-19 event.

PHEL will be pro-rated based on number of hours you normally work, not to exceed the maximum number of hours available.

- Full-time, salaried employees: up to 80 hours.
- Part-time, salaried employees: pro-rated based on F.T.E. status.
  o 50% salaried employee would be granted up to 40 hours
- Wage employees: up to the maximum normal work hours during a two-week period.

Affordable Care Act (ACA) considerations and the 1,500-hour threshold still must be taken into consideration.

Can I use PHEL if my job is not conducive to teleworking?

Speak with your supervisor to confirm your teleworking options. Supervisors are encouraged to identify ways that asymptomatic employees can continue working while self-monitoring away from the workplace to mitigate potential risk of exposure to other employees. If other arrangements cannot be made, you may use PHEL.

My child’s day care center/school is closed due to COVID-19. Can I use PHEL to make alternative child care arrangements?

Parents may use a reasonable amount of PHEL to make alternative child care arrangements during school closures. Additionally, teleworking is available when a child is at home on a temporary basis.

How do I use PHEL?

1. Notify your supervisor of your leave.
2. Follow your normal leave recording procedures.
   a. For those who do not record time/leave in Patriot Web, please complete a paper timesheet (labeled “Public Health Emergency Leave Timesheet”) and
submit it to payroll@gmu.edu. Enter the dates and hours used into the “Other: PHEL” leave category.

3. Provide medical documentation to benefits@gmu.edu.

4. If you are eligible for the Virginia Sickness and Disability Program (VSDP), you must file a short-term disability claim.
   a. Please contact the Benefits team at benefits@gmu.edu.
   b. Please call the Reed Group at 1-877-928-7021.

5. If you are in the Traditional Sick Leave program, and eligible for Family and Medical Leave (FMLA), you should file an FMLA claim.
   a. Contact the Benefits team at benefits@gmu.edu.

What happens if I or my family member does not recover from COVID-19 after I exhaust the 80 hours of PHEL?

You should contact benefits@gmu.edu to discuss your personal situation.

More Information

Use the resources below to find current information on the evolving coronavirus outbreak:

- Mason coronavirus information page
- FAQs on how to respond if you are an employee, supervisor, or a high-risk worker

*The hours of PHEL are pro-rated for part-time employees. Example: 0.5 FTE will be granted 40 hours of PHEL for a two week leave period.