



Version Control and Objective ID	Version No: 3.0	Objective ID:
Name of parent Policy / Directive	Ipswich City Council Certified Agreements	
Procedure Owner	The Manager, People & Culture is responsible for authoring and reviewing this procedure.	
Approved by GM on		
Date of Review		

1. Background

On 11 March 2020 the Local Government Association of Queensland issued guidelines on workforce and leave arrangements in response to COVID-19. On 12 March 2020 a Pandemic was declared in relation to novel coronavirus, classified as COVID-19. On 16 March 2020, the Queensland Public Service Commission issued a Directive setting-out arrangements in response to COVID-19 pandemic and providing up to twenty (20) days of special leave with pay in particular circumstances, referred to as Special Pandemic Leave. Other local governments are considering this approach with Brisbane City Council aligning their Special Leave with the Queensland Public Service Commission. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) has used provisions available in Ipswich City Council (ICC) Certified Agreements to approve up to twenty (20) days special leave with pay for employees in certain circumstances.

This special leave with pay, called Special Pandemic Leave, is an additional measure to the existing workforce and leave arrangements that are available to ICC employees.

2. Purpose

This procedure sets out how the workforce and leave arrangements including the up to twenty (20) days of Special Pandemic Leave (SPL) are to be applied and managed.

The procedure has been specifically designed to balance the requirements of ICC to continue to deliver essential services, with the well-being and legitimate personal, family and community responsibilities of their employees during a health pandemic.

3. Scope & definitions

This procedure applies to all ICC employees including permanent, temporary and regular casual employees (as defined in this procedure).

A health pandemic for the purpose of this procedure, means a critical health issue, as identified by a declaration of a public health emergency made under Section 319 of the *Public Health Act 2005* with respect to an actual or potential health pandemic.

Remuneration During Special Pandemic Leave for the purposes of this procedure means ordinary wage rate as prescribed in the applicable Agreement (excluding shift premiums and weekend penalty rates).

A Regular Casual Employee for the purposes of this procedure means an employee who is engaged as a casual employee and is employed by the hour on a regular and systematic basis, for 1 or more periods of employment, during the preceding 6 months.

Special Pandemic Leave is defined as a discretionary leave type which is provided to eligible ICC employees, over and above accrued leave entitlements (e.g. sick leave, annual leave, long service leave) for the express purpose of dealing with exceptional circumstances (such as the COVID-19 pandemic situation).

4. Provisions

The provisions of this procedure are activated when there is a health pandemic as defined.

- 4.1 ICC will make every effort to ensure that the employment conditions of its employees are not adversely affected during a health pandemic. Existing conditions of employment as provided for under our Certified Agreements and other relevant industrial instruments will continue to apply to employment arrangements during a health pandemic, including specific hours of work arrangements.
- 4.2 ICC will need to balance the requirement to continue essential services with the well-being and legitimate personal, family and community responsibilities of their employees.
- 4.3 Health and safety arrangements need to support the key health pandemic response aims of containing the spread of the virus and minimising economic and social disruption. ICC will follow the advice of the lead agency, Queensland Health.
- 4.4 Where workplace arrangements need to be varied to accommodate business continuity planning for a health pandemic, these arrangements will be, wherever possible:

- made in advance and in consultation with employees, employee representatives and/or relevant unions where required;
- within the relevant legislative framework; and
- applied fairly and equitably at the workplace

5. Conditions and entitlements

- 5.1 Upon application, an employee will be entitled to a maximum 20 days paid Special Pandemic Leave for use when the employee is unable to attend work and unable to perform work under flexible working arrangements because they:
- have an actual viral infection and have exhausted their sick leave accruals; and/or
 - are required to care for immediate family or household member/s who have an actual or suspected viral infection and have exhausted their sick leave accruals; and/or
 - are required to care for children as a result of school or childcare centre closures and where working from home in the first instance, is not possible, and where in the second instance, other leave types have been exhausted.
- 5.2 The CEO, at his discretion may grant up to a maximum 20 days paid Special Pandemic Leave to a regular casual employee.
- 5.3 Sick leave means the entitlement to paid sick leave, inclusive of carers' leave, in accordance with the *Industrial Relations Act 2016*.
- 5.4 Once Special Pandemic Leave is exhausted, employees will be expected to access their existing accrued leave entitlements such as annual leave, then long service leave entitlements where applicable. Details of how this will be accessed will be available through the People & Culture Branch.

6. Applying this Procedure

Employees who:

- 6.1 are directed to attend their usual place of work will be required to attend as directed unless ICC has determined (considering advice from the lead agency Queensland Health) that the workplace poses a risk to that employee;
- 6.2 advise they are exhibiting symptoms of a viral infection should be directed to remain away from the workplace for the recommended self-isolation time determined by health authorities or until they are cleared to return to work;
- 6.3 exhibit symptoms of a viral infection while at work should be directed to leave the workplace;
- 6.4 have had the virus or who have been exposed to the virus should be advised not to return to work until after the minimum prescribed time, as determined by health authorities, has elapsed;

- 6.5 are absent from work as a result of the health pandemic may not be required to submit a medical certificate. In the alternative, they may be required to provide a copy of a record to confirm they have undergone a relevant assessment or such other document or advice which satisfies ICC requirements.
- 6.6 Absence due to unavailability of public transport to attend the workplace.
- 6.7 Where employees are unable to attend work because they are reliant on public transport and services are suspended or cancelled special leave will apply.

7. Requirement for supporting documentation

Supporting documentation will be required for all periods of absence on paid Special Pandemic Leave. Where employees access paid Special Pandemic Leave as a result of illness, or need to care for ill family or household members, they may not be required to provide a medical certificate; they may instead provide a copy of a record to confirm they (or their family member) have undergone a relevant assessment or such other documentation or advice which satisfies ICC requirements.

8. Employees not required at work

Where employees are directed by ICC not to attend work while work is still available and are unable to undertake flexible work arrangements or work at a reasonable alternative location, such employees are to be paid regular remuneration without debit to any leave account.

9. Closedown of a workplace

Where ICC closes down a work area due to health and safety issues and/or unavailability of sufficient staff, any employees who normally attend work at that work area shall either be directed to attend work at a reasonable alternative workplace, undertake flexible work arrangements or be directed not to attend any workplace due to not being required.

Where directed by the CEO not to attend work, such employees are required to comply with the lawful direction and remain away from their usual place of work and in accordance with alternative workplace arrangements as outlined above.

10. Related information:

Directives, policies and procedures relating to sick leave; annual leave; long service leave; hours and overtime; and relevant industrial instruments.

11. Regulatory Authority & Legislative Framework

All legislation, codes of practice and Australian Standards that relate to this procedure are contained in the corporate register of legislative requirements which is located on the [WIRE](#).

