

Employee Questions

What options do I have if I have concerns about becoming seriously ill from COVID-19 based on my risk factors?

Please refer to the [current guidance](#) provided by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) which provides information regarding people who are at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19.

Faculty, P&S and Merit employees as well as graduate assistants, postdoctoral scholars and student workers who meet one or more of the risk factors, or live with someone that meets one or more of the risk factors, may submit a request for an alternative work arrangement. The request is submitted electronically through the [COVID-19 High Risk Alternative Work Arrangement portal](#) located on [the UHR COVID-19 website](#).

Once a request has been submitted, the individual will receive an email with the additional documentation that may be needed, and the applicable deadlines to submit information, in order to timely review and discuss options. Sensitive documentation regarding an individual's medical conditions will be kept confidential and will not be shared with supervisors. It is critical that individuals adhere to the deadlines and the interactive discussions that need to occur in this review process in order for work units to plan ahead to determine what options are available, particularly for the upcoming semester.

What options do I have related to returning to work if I have concerns about me bringing home COVID-19 to someone that I live with, when I am not specifically at increased risk?

The option to request an alternative work arrangement is also available to employees who may not themselves be at increased risk of serious illness due to COVID-19, but who have a household member who meets one or more of the [risk factors outlined by the CDC](#) which may make them more susceptible to severe illness from contracting COVID-19.

These employees may submit a request electronically through the [COVID-19 High Risk Alternative Work Arrangement portal](#) located on [the UHR COVID-19 website](#). Once a request has been submitted, the individual will receive an email with the additional documentation that may be needed for documentation regarding their household member, and the applicable deadlines to submit information, in order to timely review and discuss options. Sensitive documentation regarding the household member's risk factors will be kept confidential throughout this process and will not be shared with supervisors. It is critical that individuals adhere to the deadlines and the interactive discussions that need to occur in this review process in order for work units to plan ahead to determine what options are available, particularly for the upcoming semester.

What if I have a medical condition that does not meet the increased-risk factors as identified by the CDC but that my medical provider believes puts me at increased risk?

If you or your household member has a medical condition which, in consultation with your medical provider, may put you at increased risk of developing severe illness due to COVID-19, it is recommended that you submit a request for an alternative work arrangement through the [COVID-19 High Risk Alternative Work Arrangement portal](#) located on [the UHR COVID-19 website](#).

Once you have submitted your request, you should e-mail the COVIDHRSupport@iastate.edu inbox to let them know that you have submitted request and that although you do not meet the criteria that is spelled out by the CDC, you have received medical advice that you may be at increased risk of developing severe illness from COVID-19. A UHR representative will reach out to you to discuss what specific documentation is needed from your medical provider in order to be eligible to request an alternative work arrangement through this process.

I do not meet any of the risk factors as identified by the CDC that put me, or a household member, at increased risk but I am still reluctant to return to my regular work location. What options do I have?

If you have been asked by your supervisor to return to your normal work location and you have concerns about exposure to COVID-19, it is recommended that you first talk through your concerns with your supervisor. Your supervisor should be able to discuss with you the planning measures they have taken to help mitigate risk of exposure to COVID-19 in your work location.

During [the initial phase of returning people back to campus](#), supervisors have been asked to develop a [Supervisor Workspace Plan](#) where multiple employees work. Supervisors are to assess the workspace and create plans to incorporate considerations to include physical distancing measures, face masks and other personal protective equipment, clean workspaces, reminding sick employees to stay home, among other factors. While it is not expected that all risk can be eliminated, your supervisor can discuss their plan to support a safe transition back to the workspace and you can also share with them the specific concerns that you have. An open dialogue is important to identify some possible solutions. If you have concerns with discussing this with your supervisor, you may choose to reach out to [HR Delivery](#) to see how they can help support.

Additional ISU resources located on the [ISU COVID-19 website](#) have been made available to help support a safe return to campus:

- [Guide for Returning to the Workplace](#)
- [Cyclones Care: A Community Update](#)
- [Physical Distancing Guidelines for Campus Supervisors](#)
- [Cleaning and Disinfection Procedures for Employees](#)
- [Employee FAQ](#)

Information, resources and guidance continues to be regularly updated on the ISU COVID-19 website. Please check back frequently for updated information and resources.

I am pregnant, or someone in my household is pregnant. Is pregnancy a risk factor that would qualify for the Alternative Work Arrangement process?

The CDC has indicated that pregnant people may be at more of an increased risk than non-pregnant people. If you are pregnant, you may submit a request for an alternative work arrangement through this process. Once you submit your request, a UHR representative will reach out to you to discuss the necessary documentation.

Can I request an alternative work arrangement through this process for child-care related needs, such as school or daycare closures?

This process is specifically designated for alternative work arrangements for individuals who are or may be, or who have household members who are or may be, at increased risk of contracting severe illness for COVID-19.

If you have child-care needs that may interfere with returning to work on campus, please discuss this with your supervisor to determine some potential options. If you have additional questions or concerns that your supervisor is unable to assist with, you may reach out to [HR Delivery](#) to help provide additional assistance.

I am experiencing a health condition that has been triggered or worsened by the COVID-19 pandemic and I am concerned I will be unable to complete my work duties at my normal work location because of it. What options do I have?

Although you may not be eligible for an alternative work arrangement through this process due to not meeting the CDC high risk factors, you may potentially be eligible for other processes such as a [workplace accommodation](#) or a leave of absence under the [Family Medical Leave Act](#). Please contact Leslie Ginder, the UHR Employee Leave and Accommodation Coordinator at lginder@iastate.edu, who can further assist.

I am regularly around individuals who are at an increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19, although I do not live with them. Am I eligible to request an alternative work arrangement through this process?

No, this process is reserved specifically for employee or their household members who are or may be at increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19. However, if you have concerns of your risk of exposure to COVID-19 by returning to your regular work location, please contact your supervisor to discuss further to see what potential solutions are available outside of this

process. As addressed above, they can further discuss with you their plan to mitigate risk in the workplace.

I meet the CDC increased risk criteria but I do not want to submit a request for an alternative work arrangement through this process at this time. Do I have to submit one now?

No, unless you are faculty scheduled to provide course instruction this fall semester, you are not required to submit a request. If you change your mind, you may submit a request at a later date. If you are faculty scheduled to provide course instruction this fall, you were to have submitted your request by July 1. This deadline was set in order to help plan appropriately for this fall semester. If any employee (or their household member) is not currently at increased risk but later meets the criteria, they may submit their request for an alternative work arrangement at that time.

Based on earlier CDC guidance, I was not considered at high risk of contracting severe illness from COVID-19 and so I did not submit a request. With the updated guidance from the CDC, it does appear I may be at increased risk. Can I still submit a request?

Yes, if you believe that you or your household member meets the updated [CDC criteria](#), you may submit a request for an AWA through this process. Once your request is submitted, you'll receive additional information about the documentation that is needed.

How long will the alternative work arrangement remain in place once it has been approved?

Currently, any alternative work arrangement granted as a result of COVID-19 will remain in effect until December 31, 2020, or until such time as it is no longer determined to be reasonable or necessary, whichever is earlier. Prior to the AWA expiration of December 31, 2020, a reassessment based on current CDC guidance will take place to take into account planning for spring semester and current local, state and federal guidance regarding risk factors, mitigation and exposure to COVID-19. More information will be communicated to campus and specifically to individuals who have an AWA in place.

The CDC has updated its guidance regarding risk factors for serious illness due to COVID-19, but I already have an alternative work arrangement in place. Do I need to resubmit my request?

No, you do not need to resubmit or get re-approval for your AWA request based on updated guidance from the CDC, as this alternative work arrangement has already been granted and will remain in effect until December 31, 2020, or until such time as it is no longer determined to be reasonable or necessary, whichever is earlier.

Supervisor Questions

An employee I supervise is eligible for an alternative work arrangement through the COVID-19 High-Risk AWA process but I have concerns with their ability to complete their job duties with the arrangement they have proposed. Do I have to agree?

ISU is committed to keeping our ISU employees safe during the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly our most vulnerable. Although we can't mitigate all risk, it is critical that we work to identify potential innovative and creative solutions to allow high risk employees to continue to perform their ISU responsibilities while keeping them safe. We encourage you to fully engage with UHR through this process to identify potential options. Please note that not all arrangements proposed may be able to be fully provided and part of this process is to work through other options. If it appears that the employee is not completing their job duties in a satisfactory manner while on their AWA, you should reach out to UHR to discuss how to address with the employee. There may be other options, such as modifying the AWA, in order to address the concerns.

Who confirms that the employee meets the increased risk criteria? Is it ok for me to ask an employee if they are eligible if I think they might be?

UHR will review necessary documentation in order to confirm the employee is eligible. Once the request is submitted through the online form on the [UHR COVID-19 website](#), both the employee and supervisor will receive an automatically generated e-mail from notifications@origamirisk.com. These e-mails will contain further instructions for next steps. The employee will be expected to provide the necessary documentation to UHR in order for them to review and confirm eligibility.

It is critical that supervisors do not discuss an employee's or household member's potential increased risk factor(s) or their eligibility for this process, such as medical condition or age, with their employees. UHR will handle and securely manage all applicable documentation and these details will not be shared with their supervisors or others outside of UHR.

Additionally, some employees may meet the increased risk criteria but choose to not request an AWA through this process. They may be comfortable with the mitigation measures that have been put in place on campus and at their work location or they may decide to submit one later, for example if local infection rates increase or other factors which may make them feel at greater risk from their perspective.

My employee has told me they meet the increased risk factors and want to discuss an alternative work arrangement outside of this process. Is that ok?

No, if an employee has indicated that they are or may be at increased risk because of their (or a household member's) age or medical condition, they should be directed to complete this process. This process is designed to best ensure that the requests are being handled consistently, fairly and appropriately.

An employee has indicated they are at high risk and has requested to wear a specialized face mask as an alternative work arrangement and as a substitute for a cloth face covering. How should I handle this?

It is recommended that you or your employee reach out to UHR for additional consultation. UHR works closely with other campus subject matter experts, such as ISU Environmental Health and Safety (EH&S). It is important that the correct processes are followed and that any alternative face covering meets all ISU health and safety standards and guidance.