

Plan Forward FAQs

As of June 1, 2020



nationalgrid



Plan Forward FAQs

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This information is for National Grid employees only.

Information should not be shared publicly, in accordance with company policy.

Coronavirus Information:

[Click here](#) to access the Infonet site.

[Click here](#) for the FAQs.

Plan Forward:

[Click here](#) to access the Infonet site.

Employee Services: Employees should call Employee Services at 1-888-483-2123 with any questions/concerns related to COVID-19. The number is staffed from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on weekdays, and Saturdays from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Employee Assistance Program: This is a stressful time for all. Please remember that our Employee Assistance Program, administered by CCA, is available for you. This program is free, confidential, and offers a wide-range of support including counseling for personal stress, and services such as referrals for child and adult care. Call 1-800-833-8707 or go to <https://ccainc.com/> and use code National Grid.

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New Questions

[Q: Has there been a decision on whether we can carry over unused vacation time into calendar year 2021?](#)

[Q: What is the company guidance on working from home?](#)

[Q: I need to get into an office to pick up IT equipment and supplies. What are my options for returning to an office to get them?](#)

[Q. Who is my Pandemic Transition Team key point of contact](#)

[Q. I enrolled in the Health Care Flexible Spending Account \(FSA\) this year to set aside money that I wanted to use for my elective surgery. Because of the pandemic, my elective surgery may be postponed, and I might not be able to use all of my account balance. Can I change my FSA amount or stop my contributions now?](#)

[Q. What is our policy to take time off for personal reasons?](#)

[Q: Has there been a decision on whether we can carry over unused vacation time into calendar year 2021?](#)

After much discussion and consideration, we have decided to apply our normal rules in 2020 for vacation. This means there will be no carry-over for unused earned vacation time into 2021 for management employees. If you purchased vacation this year, and many of you did, we will reimburse you in the December payroll for any of those purchased days that go unused. Similarly, we cannot carry over purchased vacation either. Local labor agreements will continue to be applied as normal.

As frustrating as it is for everyone that our vacation experience will need to be different this year, we continue to reinforce the importance of everyone taking a break from work. Many states across the country are now beginning to reopen and therefore the opportunity to take trips and vacations, if only into neighboring states this year, will be an option for many of us. We ask that leaders ensure flexibility in providing opportunities for their team members to take vacation for the remainder of calendar year 2020.

[Q: What is the company guidance on working from home?](#)

We have developed a document on [Interim Pandemic Work from Home Guidance](#). You can view these guidelines [here](#). Please use these as a basis for managing your workload and understanding how to set up a healthy and productive home work environment. This is our short-range solution for the pandemic to get us through the summer. We will continue to assess this guidance as part of our Plan Forward.

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Q: I need to get into an office to pick up IT equipment and supplies. What are my options for returning to an office to get them?

Recognizing that work from home guidance will remain for many employees throughout the summer, the Facilities team is **designating next week (June 8 - 12)** as a limited window in which employees may re-enter *some* facilities for the purposes of retrieving items. Please [click here](#) to learn more. This option will be available for the following locations only. If you request access to a location not listed here, please contact the appropriate facilities manager, this list can be found at: <http://infodocs/News/USNews/SafeworkGuide522.pdf>. Melville and Northboro will remain off limits to unauthorized employees at this time and we will be providing further guidance on access to those locations.

Removal of office chairs, sit-stand desks or other furniture is not allowed. Please [click here to view a video](#) on expected behaviors for any employee entering one of our worksites.

New York

Metro Tech, Brooklyn

SOC, Syracuse

HCB, Liverpool

Hicksville

Massachusetts

Res Woods, Waltham

Wyman St, Waltham

Rhode Island

Melrose St, Providence

Dexter St, Providence

Q. Who is my Pandemic Transition Team key point of contact?

The Pandemic Transition Team is working with a network of key contacts from each team to build and review re-opening plans by function. They should be consulted before any business decision is made concerning return to working on-site.

Name of key contact	Business unit/Function (listed alphabetically)
VanDam, Edward	Business Services
Willey, Duncan	Capital Delivery
Spink, John W.	Control Centers
Masse, Darlene	Corporate Affairs
Carney, Kelly	Customer Operations
Smith, David	Electric Business Unit
DelGrosso, Edward	Finance
Viapiano, Pamela	Gas Business Unit
Ryan III, Thomas J.	Human Resources

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Arnason, Pall	IT
Arroyo, Laurice	Legal
Hearns, Kate	MA Jurisdiction
Mitchko, Peter	NY Jurisdiction
Harnett, Simon	Procurement
Madhusudhan, Srividya	Property Services
Smith, Erica A.	RI Jurisdiction
Bamford, Warren T.	Security
Griffing, Denise	SHE
Malee, William	Strategy & Regulation
Irani-Famili, Reihaneh	Transformation Office
Cross, James A Jr.	Wholesale Networks

Q. I enrolled in the Health Care Flexible Spending Account (FSA) this year to set aside money that I wanted to use for my elective surgery. Because of the pandemic, my elective surgery may be postponed, and I might not be able to use all of my account balance. Can I change my FSA amount or stop my contributions now?

The IRS has recently released new temporary regulations that allow plans to implement changes to our FSA plan that affords participants some level of relief to address situations where the participant may not be able to use their full elected contribution amount. We are actively reviewing the regulations and will determine a course of action within the next several days. Participants of the 2020 Health Care FSA will be notified directly of the options available them.

Q. What is our policy to take time off for personal reasons?

The Personal Leave Policy for Management employees is available for those circumstances where an employee needs to take time off for personal reasons and seeks an unpaid leave. This policy is being temporarily enhanced through December 31, 2020 and will now allow an employee to maintain benefits while taking an unpaid leave, not to exceed 90 days. To be eligible for the program, you must first use all of your earned vacation. To apply for the program, you'll need to submit the 2020 Temporary Leave Form accessible through the Service Delivery Center [Forms Center](#). You can also contact Employee Services at 888-483-2123 for assistance. Your manager's approval for time off under this policy will be required. Please refer to our [HR policies page](#) on Infonet for further information.

Previously Communicated Questions

Human Resources

Q. Many companies have set specific dates where employees can be confident they do not need to return to work until. That gives employees the certainty they may need for planning and family care. Is National Grid considering anything similar?

We have shared that the vast majority of employees who have been working remotely will continue to do so likely until at least the end of the summer, with every likelihood being that it will extend even further. While we're looking to bring back a small number of employees for critical business needs by the end of May, we won't do so if our scientific criteria are not met. The safety and well-being of our employees come first. We are currently assessing severity levels in each of our service territories and looking at criteria like stay-at-home advisories, social distancing requirements, travel restrictions, news cases, and our own workplace readiness. We will not return any employees to our offices or facilities if the criteria are not met. Given the essential services we provide to our customers, it is important that we remain flexible and adapt our plans as necessary.

Q. Do we see remote working being more acceptable in the future?

We have learned so much through the pandemic, including that a greater number of employees can be productive working from home than we initially thought possible. We also recognize that some essential functions cannot be done remotely. As we learn from our shared experiences, there may be shifts in our ways of working. As we've already seen, there will be a greater acceptance of working from home not only at National Grid, but also in broader society.

Q. I purchase my car insurance through the National Grid Choice Auto & Home program. Am I entitled to a premium credit from my insurance carrier?

Several national auto insurance carriers are issuing a premium credit or a refund due to reduced risk of auto accidents attributed to people staying home and driving less during the COVID-19 outbreak. All carriers participating in the Choice Auto & Home program are offering a partial premium credit (or refund) for the months of April and May to personal auto policyholders. The carriers will be sending a letter to eligible policyholders with the details about this effort, so there is no action needed by participants. While we don't have all the details, we know that all policyholders who participate through the Choice program and have policies with MetLife, Travelers, and Liberty Mutual will automatically receive a premium credit (or refund) of 15%. Policyholders who participate through Progressive will automatically receive a 20% premium credit (or refund) for April and May.

Q. My family has experienced loss due to deaths from COVID-19, and being able to mourn with family and friends has been difficult. What is National Grid's policy for bereavement leave?

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To all of our employees who are experiencing loss during this time, our sincere condolences. So many aspects of our lives have been impacted by COVID-19, including the ability to grieve the loss of loved ones. How we grieve those we've lost, such as honoring family and religious traditions, attending memorials, consoling family and friends, and managing our own grieving process, must be adjusted so we can do our part in keeping our communities safe during the pandemic.

We understand that due to current stay at home and social distancing orders, you may not be able to take your bereavement days consecutively. The current bereavement leave policy for management employees already allows you to take bereavement days on an as needed basis. Additionally, effective May 1, the management bereavement policy has been updated, increasing the allowable bereavement days to five for grandparents and grandchildren. This update does not change bereavement policies covered within collective bargaining agreements.

Q. I recently traveled out of state. Do I need to quarantine?

As the states begin enacting their reopening plans, new guidance has been published, and in response, National Grid has updated our protocols and removed automatic quarantine for travel, effective May 23. The exception to this is international travel, which will continue through June 5. Keep in mind that there may be instances where travel activities result in a high risk of exposure and warrant quarantining. Please contact Employee Services at 1-888-483-2123 to be connected with a Nurse Practitioner if you have symptoms of or have been exposed to COVID-19, have questions related to travel activities, or have traveled internationally.

Q. I received a letter from MetLife advising me that I can defer my supplemental life and/or dependent life insurance premiums. What does this mean?

New York State has issued an executive order that allows those individuals who are experiencing a financial hardship as a result of the current COVID-19 pandemic the opportunity to defer life insurance premiums for up to 90 days. This executive order applies to all National Grid employees who purchase supplemental and/or dependent life insurance regardless of their work location because National Grid Life Insurance plans are governed by the laws of New York State.

Premium deferrals are not automatic. If you are experiencing a financial hardship and would like to defer your life insurance premiums for up to 90 days, you must contact MetLife directly at 1-800-438-6388. Your coverage will remain in effect during the 90-day deferral period. To keep your coverage in effect beyond that period, you must contact MetLife to begin the process of repaying the deferred premiums. If you have any questions, please contact MetLife directly at 1-800-438-6388.

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Q. I have been working from home and it has been a struggle to manage caring for my dependents (child/elderly parent) who no longer have the option to go to school, day care, or elder care programs. The current leave policies at National Grid don't allow me to take time off to take care of my dependents due to the loss of these services. How can National Grid help me balance my family needs at this time?

During the work from home order, we have been encouraging employees to speak with their managers to find a work arrangement that allows the flexibility needed to balance both work and life responsibilities. It continues to be important that we work together to find common ground around this flexibility, so we can do our jobs and be as productive as possible. Recognizing the pressures on employees where flexibility may not be enough, going forward, we are expanding the current Sick and Family Leave program for management to include time off for caregiving needs. Currently, employees can use up to 40 hours* to care for their dependents if they are sick or need to attend doctor appointments. We are expanding this program to include taking time off for caregiving needs. The number of total hours available will remain the same whether you need it to care for a sick family member or you need it to care for your child or elderly parent. (*40 hours applies to NY, RI, MA and differ for CA and DC – see full policy on the InfoNet).

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Q. Rhode Island recently issued new requirements for employers as part of its Phase 1 Reopening Plan. Do we expect other states to do the same?

Yes, other states, in addition to Rhode Island, have issued new requirements for employers as part of their Reopening Plans. We are continuously monitoring state guidelines for the regions we operate in, and we will comply with any new requirements. We'll continue to keep employees updated on how any new guidelines may impact our operations.

Q. Do we get advanced information on what is included in these new state guidelines?

In most cases, we're finding out what the new guidelines are as they're announced to the public. The window to implement the new guidelines is often very short. We recognize this requires us to be fast and flexible in our response. Thank you to everyone who has been helping to adjust our business plans, as necessary, to accommodate these new guidelines.

Q. What sort of new requirements are states mandating?

Many of the new state requirements include measures that National Grid is taking already, like social distancing, wearing face coverings, limiting in-person interactions, requiring sick employees to stay home, isolating sick employees and quarantining employees who potentially have been exposed based on their contacts, and performing regular cleaning.

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Q. I saw the new Severity Level assessment. How are we assessing whether a region is “high,” “medium,” or “low” severity?

We have identified key criteria based on state, regional, and company data to assess the severity level for each of our major operating regions. As you can see on the enclosed graphic, some of these criteria include stay-at-home advisories and new COVID-19 cases.

Dashboard from May 26:

Criteria	Severity Level Weekly Summary			High	Medium	Low	Normal
	UNY West	UNY Central	UNY East	DNY NYC	DNY LI	MA	RI
State Stay Home Advisory	Medium	Medium	Medium	High	High	Medium	Medium
Regional New Cases Indicator	Low	High	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low
Regional Positive Test Indicator	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low
NG Covid Absence Rate	Low	Low	High	Medium	Medium	Low	Low
NG Workplace Readiness	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium
NG Covid PPE & Supplies to Plan	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium
Overall Status	Medium	High	High	High	High	Medium	Medium

Highest threat level within a region determines overall status, threat levels can go up or down

Q. Why don't we just use state guidance to decide when employees should return to the office?

We are factoring in state guidance as part of our decision making. However, the easing of state restrictions will not automatically change a region's severity level. Along with state guidance, we're evaluating a number of other factors, such as: current and projected COVID-19 infection rates and our own company readiness, including availability of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

Q. Why are we using a Severity Level assessment and how often is it updated?

The Severity Level assessment, which is updated on Tuesdays of each week, helps us effectively manage our business to ensure that we can still provide essential services to our customers, while keeping our employees safe.

It enables:

- Informed decision making based on current severity level data.
- An agile and flexible approach to business operations during an uncertain time.
- A consistent approach in keeping employees informed of the severity level for each region.

Q. Can you give me an example of how the Severity Level assessment will be used?

We're developing Business Continuity Plans for each severity level. This will help us to be responsive to changing conditions and be flexible with our approach. The dashboard will also help inform when we're ready to return employees to an office or yard.

Q. Are there any changes to time entry for Plan Forward and COVID-19 accounting?

Incremental costs and time entry will continue to be tracked using the established COVID-19 accounting policy. Please continue to use the COVID response codes you are familiar with for incremental costs and the time entry "COVID" note for all hours worked to directly support our "Plan Forward." Please find

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the latest accounting memo and details [here](#). You can also contact the Time Governance team at TimeGovernance@nationalgrid.com or reach out to your Finance Business Partner if you have further questions.

Q. What is National Grid's new Safe Work Guide and how can I access it?

This comprehensive playbook describes our cleaning, health and wellness protocols and procedures designed to keep all of us safe. This effort builds on the safety procedures we've had in place all along and positions us well to meet new government requirements. Many additional protocols will be put into place over the coming days and weeks, with interim steps along the way. We'll continue to update the Safe Work Guide as necessary based on federal and state guidance. You access the Safe Work Guide and Summary on our Plan Forward Infonet site at: <http://infonet2/Pages/PlanFoward.aspx>