

## COVID-19 leave options

Public Health Emergency Leave (PHEL) (<https://www.hr.vt.edu/benefits/leave/public-health-emergency-leave.html>) is available to employees for many COVID-19 related leave incidents including:

- To attend to an employee's own illness due to a confirmed positive test for COVID-19. The employee's return to the workplace must comport with the CDC's recommendations.
- To attend to an immediate family member who has contracted COVID-19 through a confirmed positive test.
- To quarantine due to exposure to COVID-19 if unable to continue your job duties remotely.
- Up to 8 hours of PHEL may be used to obtain a COVID-19 vaccine/booster and/or recover from side effects resulting from obtaining the vaccine.

For 2022, PHEL was reset effective Jan. 10. Employees can receive up to 40 hours (prorated based on FTE), depending on their job classification, to use during the 2022 leave year, which runs from Jan. 10, 2022 to Jan. 9, 2023. Any PHEL balances remaining from the 2021 leave year will not be added to the 2022 balance.

Once the allotment of PHEL is used, employees may use appropriate and available leave balances (Traditional or VSDP Sick Leave, Family-Personal Leave, Annual Leave, Compensatory Leave, Overtime Leave, Recognition Leave) or Leave without Pay for COVID-related leave needs.

Please note PHEL could be subject to expiration as the year progresses. Any additional information will be communicated as it becomes available. For questions regarding leave, please contact the Human Resources Leave Team at [hrleave@vt.edu](mailto:hrleave@vt.edu).

## Virginia Tech employees donate more than \$437,000 to charity

Virginia Tech employees joined together to raise a record-breaking \$437,086 for charities through the Commonwealth of Virginia Campaign, surpassing the university goal of \$390,000.

The 2021 Commonwealth of Virginia Campaign (CVC) ended Dec. 10, 2021. In a mostly virtual environment, senior management areas used creative strategies to raise money. Approaches included online contests, classes, and other virtual fundraisers.

Many senior management areas not only met, but exceeded their goal in 2021, including College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, College of Architecture and Urban Studies, Pamplin College of Business, College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences, College

of Science, Virginia-Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine, College of Natural Resources and Environment, Dean of University Libraries, Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine, Office of the Senior Vice President and Chief Business Officer, Office of the President, the vice president for Health Sciences and Technology, the vice president for Advancement, the vice president for Finance, and the vice president for Human Resources.

"I am grateful to Virginia Tech employees for their generous contributions to the Commonwealth of Virginia Campaign," said Lee Learman, dean of the Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine and this year's honorary campaign chair. "It is heartening to see the university community come together to help others during this challenging time."

The annual campaign gives state employees the opportunity to raise and donate money to more than 900 participating charities in their communities and across the commonwealth, ranging from health and human services to animal welfare, from environmental conservation to medical research, and everything in between.

Edward Lener, CVC steering team chair, was encouraged by the support shown by Virginia Tech employees. "This year's record high giving will help ensure that these charities have the resources they need to continue the great work they do in our communities," he said.

Since 2010, Virginia Tech employees have donated more than \$3.9 million to local charities in Blacksburg, the New River Valley, and across the commonwealth.

The CVC is administered by the Division of Human Resources and led by a steering team made up of university department representatives.

"This is a wonderful accomplishment for Virginia Tech and a testament to the generosity of the Hokie Nation," Vice President for Human Resources Bryan Garey said.

## New online form COVID-19 positive case, close contact reporting for employees, supervisors

Update - Jan. 20, 2022

New employee positive case and close contact reporting form: Please engage the Environmental Health & Safety Case Management Team using the new Employee COVID-19 Disclosure Form at <https://veoci.com/v/p/form/2bbt7kkyzfggh>. While this form replaces the [reportacase@vt.edu](mailto:reportacase@vt.edu) email as the primary means for case reporting, the email address is

still available for specific questions.

For the latest guidance around employee COVID-19 case reporting, isolation, and quarantine, please refer to this Quick Reference Guide: [https://ready.vt.edu/content/dam/ready\\_vt\\_edu/Quick%20COVID-19%20Reference%20Guide%20for%20Supervisors%20082421.pdf](https://ready.vt.edu/content/dam/ready_vt_edu/Quick%20COVID-19%20Reference%20Guide%20for%20Supervisors%20082421.pdf).

Original notice - Jan. 13, 2022

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The guide covers the following topics:

- What to do when an employee tests positive for COVID-19.
- What to do when an employee has been in contact with an individual who has tested positive for COVID-19.
- When to engage the Case Management Team.
- What to do when an employee shows COVID-19 symptoms, but is not aware of any close contact with an individual who has tested positive for COVID-19.
- What to do when an employee worked in a building, shared areas, or used shared equipment with an individual who has tested positive for COVID-19, but there was no close contact.
- What to do when an employee has been around a person who is a close contact with an individual who tested positive for COVID-19 (i.e., contact to-a-contact, but no direct interaction with the person who tested positive).

For specific questions, please contact [reportacase@vt.edu](mailto:reportacase@vt.edu). For more COVID-19 related resources, visit [ready.vt.edu](https://ready.vt.edu).

## Omicron variant, mental health, masks discussed during public health panel

The Virginia Tech community heads into the spring semester with a full tool belt and a determination to work toward an in-person experience.

"We really need a combination of multiple tools. We know what those are now. It's vaccines; it's masks; it's good ventilation; it's avoiding indoor crowds if you are at risk or if you have symptoms yourself," said Linsey Marr, the Charles P. Lunsford Professor of Civil and Environmental Engineering, during a public health panel on Thursday.

"We have those moving forward, and I think it's prepared us well to tackle whatever comes our way," Marr added.

An expert in the airborne transmission of infectious disease, Marr was joined on the panel by university leaders and health experts, including Frank Shushok Jr., vice president for student affairs; Bryan Garey, vice president for human resources; Mike Mulhare, assistant vice president for emergency management; and Molly O'Dell, adjunct professor in the Department of Population Health Sciences, who served as the lead of the pandemic response for the Roanoke City and Alleghany

Health Districts.

The group discussed the challenges of starting the new semester amid the regional surge of COVID-19 cases, largely due to the omicron variant, actions the university is taking to address those challenges, and measures individuals can take to help ensure their well-being.

Here are a few key takeaways from the discussion: While COVID-19 transmissions have risen, Virginia Tech starts 2022 in good shape.

"Because we have a very high vaccinated community, we're in the best possible position to start the semester with omicron right in our faces," said O'Dell.

Along with the vaccine, O'Dell said it's important for Hokies to continue to look out for the more vulnerable members of the population by helping reduce the spread of the virus through mitigation efforts such as masking.

Shushok said the high vaccination rate is one reason he is very optimistic about the university being able to continue in-person experience this spring. Vaccines and boosters, as well as reporting them, will continue to be required for students who do not receive an exemption.

"That has made a huge difference in our ability to operate, and I expect that will be the case this semester as well," Shushok said. "And that's why we do have a booster requirement for our students that remains in place. ... That is because we're so committed to this in-person experience."

The university's COVID-19 dashboard will evolve to likely include some new metrics such as severity of illness, Mulhare said.

Vaccines and boosters are still encouraged for employees, though no longer required. Earlier this week, Virginia Tech announced that employees will no longer be required to be vaccinated, report their vaccination status to the university, or participate in mandatory testing in order to be in alignment with executive orders from Virginia Gov. Glenn Youngkin.

"The requirement is no longer in place, but our commitment is the same. We believe in vaccines and boosters and we want to collect that information so we can tell the community how highly vaccinated we are," Garey said.

Vaccination and reporting are still strongly encouraged for employees, as is voluntary testing, which is available on campus.

"We urge those that have been part of our testing program to continue to be tested, and we urge those who have some concern about their health to take advantage of the testing on campus," Mulhare said. "It's very convenient. I did it yesterday. It's a very simple procedure. Results are usually back within 48 hours."

Read full article: <https://vtx.vt.edu/articles/2022/01/unirel-online-discussion.html>

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