

WORKING AT OU UNDER DIRECT THREAT OF COVID-19

As OU returns to in-person operations, employees find themselves in the impossible situation of having to choose between health and livelihood as remote work privileges are reduced and online instruction is not universally available.

If you are compelled by your supervisor to return to work on campus:

Know Your Rights



A SAFE WORKPLACE

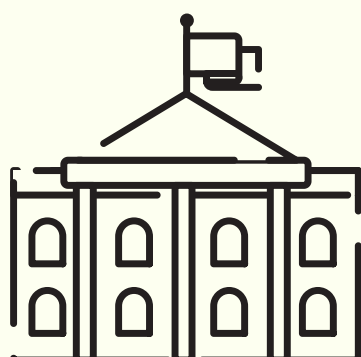
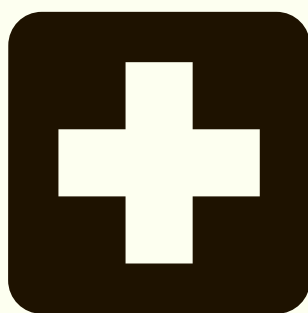
Under federal law, you are entitled to a safe workplace. Your employer must provide a workplace free of known health and safety hazards. If you have concerns, you have the right to speak up about them without fear of retaliation.



FAMILY & MEDICAL LEAVE

If you or a family member becomes ill, the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 allows for up to 12 weeks of job-protected leave in a 12-month period.

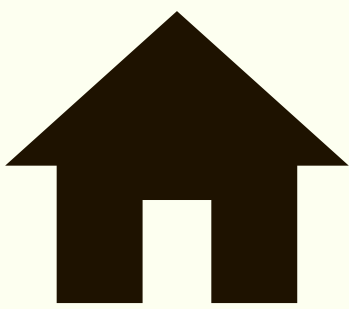
- It is illegal to deny FMLA leave to eligible employees or to discriminate or retaliate against employees for requesting or taking FMLA leave.
- Although FMLA leave may be unpaid, most employers require employees to use all available paid time off during FMLA leave. For example, employees may have to use all remaining vacation and sick leave as part of their FMLA leave.
- Employees are entitled to continue group health insurance coverage during FMLA leave under the same terms and conditions available to them prior to taking FMLA leave.
- With certain exceptions, upon an employee's return from FMLA leave, an employer is obligated to reinstate the employee to the position held before taking leave or to a position with equivalent benefits, pay, and other terms and conditions of employment.



CORONAVIRUS LEAVE

If you or someone you care for has symptoms of COVID-19, must be quarantined due to COVID-19, or if your childcare or children's schools are closed due to COVID-19, the Families First Coronavirus Response Act allows employees to take up to 80 hours of emergency sick leave (pay rates vary).

Take Action



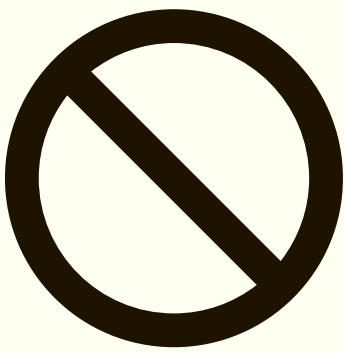
REMOTE WORK

Request flexible working arrangements. If you have a qualifying disability under the Americans with Disabilities Act, request telework as a reasonable accommodation to reduce your chances of infection during the COVID-19 pandemic.



COMPENSATION

Refuse to work for free. If you are asked to substitute for a colleague who cannot work, be sure to ask in writing for extra pay for the extra responsibilities and/or time. Do not take on additional responsibilities without a contract that outlines the duties and compensation.



NO WAIVERS

Don't sign a waiver. If you are asked to sign a liability waiver to protect the University from lawsuits during the COVID-19 pandemic, resist! Why would OU require protection from lawsuits related to reopening if reopening is safe? They can't have it both ways.



REPORT

File a complaint if your employer is not taking reasonable steps to lower the risk of COVID-19 transmission in the workplace.



PROTECT YOURSELF

Consider purchasing professional liability insurance or check whether your professional memberships provide this coverage, in the case that you were to be sued for carrying out your duties virtually.