Information regarding the coronavirus

Status: 16.03.2020, 11:00 h

The state of information on the Corona virus leads to questions and uncertainties also among the members of Leibniz-HKI. On this website, Leibniz-HKI provides information and lists current measures in relation to the corona virus (SARS-CoV-2).

- [Corona-Information.pdf (236.9 KiB)]
- [Corona-Emergency-Plan.pdf (220.1 KiB)]

General Information

In general, a prudent and level-headed behavior is important in the current situation.

Therefore, please inform yourself regularly about the current status on the websites of the Robert Koch Institute, the Free State of Thuringia, the City of Jena and the Federal Foreign Office.

Hygienic measures

It is strongly recommended to follow the usual hygienic measures which also protect against an influenza infection:

- Refrain from shaking hands.
- Maintain a good hand hygiene, and wash your hands with sufficient soap and water.
- Use commercially available agents for hand disinfection. If these are not available, the WHO recommends that you use one of the following formulations:
Observe the coughing/sneezing etiquette (arm bend instead of the hand).
Use tissues only once, and dispose of them safely.
Keep a distance of 1 to 2 meters from other persons, and in particular, avoid close contact with persons who have a respiratory infection.

Further information on the usual hygienic measures can be found here.

Risk areas

Currently, there are several areas in which there is an accumulation of infections. A list of risk areas which is constantly updated by the Robert Koch Institute (RKI) can be found here.

The current travel and security information from the Federal Foreign Office can be found here.

Measures at Leibniz-HKI

The current special situation requires all those involved to exercise prudence and a sense of proportion in all decisions and actions. The Leibniz-HKI Executive Board endeavours to maintain the Institute’s ability to work while excluding the risk of infection. All measures are adapted to the current, possibly rapidly changing situation. Our employees are required to develop a high degree of personal responsibility, to implement measures that have been taken and to take the interests of the institute into account when organising family procedures.

If a corona infection is suspected, all Leibniz-HKI staff members are requested to contact a physician or the on-call service of „Kassenärztlicher Bereitschaftsdienst“ (phone: 116 117) immediately by telephone,
and discuss on how to proceed further. The same applies if you have or have had contact with a person infected with the corona virus.

The following rules apply to all Leibniz-HKI staff who have returned, within the last 14 days, from areas currently designated as risk areas or have had contact with persons who have either returned from a risk area or have been confirmed to be infected with COVID-19:

- Employees who have had contact with a confirmed COVID-19 patient will be treated as unfit for work (whether or not they exhibit symptoms of the disease) and will not be allowed to report to work for 14 days unless the presence of a coronavirus infection has been ruled out by the health authorities. They must report sick in the usual fashion, and immediately inform their local public health department for further instructions.
- Employees who show symptoms of illness (non-specific or respiratory problems) AND who have been in a risk area in the 14 days before the start of the illness are treated as unfit for work and are not allowed to report to work for 14 days, unless the presence of a coronavirus infection has been ruled out by the health authorities. They must report sick in the usual fashion and contact a physician or the on-call service of „Kassenärztlicher Bereitschaftsdienst“ (phone: 116 117) immediately by telephone.
- For employees who have been in a risk area during the last 14 days and who have no symptoms, the following applies: Work must be performed in home office for 14 days upon return. The respective supervisor will determine suitable activities with the affected persons. If no activities are conceivable to be performed from home, the persons concerned are released from performing their work for 14 days after their return. During the regular working hours, they must be available at all times for (possibly also partial) commencement of work. During this time, cases of sickness must be reported to the university or, in the case of absences, leave or flex time must be requested. If there are compelling official reasons for working at the university itself, the respective supervisor is responsible for this and must order this in writing. For reasons of care towards its employees, Leibniz-HKI follows the recommendation of the Robert Koch Institute with this procedure (FAQ, 06.03.2020: "Persons who have stayed in a risk area designated by the RKI should – regardless of symptoms – avoid unnecessary contact, and stay at home if possible").
- For employees who have had contact with a person who has been in a risk area within the last 14 days, the following applies: If both the employee and the contact person show no symptoms, absence from work is not mandatory. However, it is strongly recommended by Leibniz-HKI to perform work for up to 14 days after contact in home office – if possible and after consultation with the supervisor.

According to the RKI, contact is deemed to exist, for example, if there was cumulative face-to-face contact for at least 15 minutes, e.g. during a conversation, or if there was direct contact with secretions or body fluids (coughing, sneezing, kissing). You can find further examples on the RKI website. Merely indirect contacts (i.e. contact with a person who had contact with a returnee from a risk area, etc.) do not constitute "contact" in the sense of the above provisions. In case of doubt, please contact the LEIBNIZ-HKI's medical service via the personnel office. Furthermore, if you suspect a COVID-19 illness, you must contact a physician or the on-call service of „Kassenärztlicher Bereitschaftsdienst“ (phone: 116 117) immediately by telephone, and discuss the further procedure.

If you have any questions regarding the performance of your work or the continued salary payment, please contact your direct supervisor or the colleagues in the Leibniz-HKI Personnel Office. You can also find further information in the FAQ section below.

Furthermore, Leibniz-HKI employees who may belong to a risk group – e.g. due to a pre-existing condition – should consult their physician, and for precautionary reasons, can also work in home office for a certain period of time after submitting a corresponding medical letter or, if home office is not possible,
they are released from work.

All other persons (including students, guest researchers, etc.) who return from trips to risk areas or who have had contact with persons who have returned from a risk area should, if in any way possible, not enter the buildings and facilities of the Leibniz-HKI within 14 days of their return from the risk area or after the contact.

Business trips

Until further notice, no business trips to areas will be approved if and as long as the Robert Koch Institute or the Federal Foreign Office, respectively, have declared the destination to be a risk area. In addition, permits for trips to these risk areas which have already been granted but have not yet begun are also withdrawn until further notice.

Business trips to other areas are still possible on your own responsibility, and under consideration of the usual risk assessment. Should there be any health concerns after returning from such a trip, a doctor may also be consulted to determine whether a 14-day waiting period at home is appropriate.

Conferences/events

Events with external participants are forbidden until further notice and are therefore immediately cancelled by the organizers.

Internal meetings, events or sessions are only permitted within the structural units, but not across departments or groups. For internal meetings, events or sessions with more than 10 participants, lists of participants (name, first name, e-mail contact) must be kept as of now. This ensures that potential contact persons can be identified quickly afterwards.

Lectures
Classroom teaching at the Friedrich Schiller University of Jena will be discontinued with immediate effects until further notice. All written examinations (written exams) will be postponed for at least 14 days (30.03.2020) until further notice. Oral examinations will continue to take place as planned as on-site appointments, unless otherwise agreed with your examiner (video conference etc.). Deadlines for final papers and term papers will be extended by the duration of the library's closure (current status: four weeks). All of these are precautionary measures that have no connection with the illness of one of our students or employees.

The start of lectures for the summer semester has been postponed until May 4. However, the universities will continue to monitor the situation and will regularly reassess the situation. The Leibniz-HKI Executive Board is in close contact with the FSU Jena and the EAH Jena and will provide timely information on further developments.

**Frequently asked questions**

What happens if my child cannot attend childcare or school because of the corona virus?

- If the child is confirmed to be ill with COVID-19, the above requirements for persons who have been in contact with a sick person must be observed. In case of any other illness of the child, the usual regulations apply (see more information in the Serviceportal - under work release due to illness of a child).
- Employees who have to stay at home to care for their children because the children are no longer allowed to attend child care facilities or schools due to orders by the health authorities or because the school/child care facility was closed due to the corona virus, can be released from work for up to ten working days with continued payment of the salary within the framework of a goodwill arrangement of the Leibniz-HKI if otherwise care cannot be guaranteed. These ten days are **not** taken into account for the payment of sickness benefit if the child falls ill. As far as it is possible to work in home office in addition to child care, this possibility must be taken advantage of.
- The aforementioned regulations apply to children up to the age of 12. The staff will be informed at short notice of any changes made by the legislator in the context of the current infection situation. The Leibniz-HKI will use its discretionary powers in interpreting the applicable legal regulations and will strive for goodwill solutions in individual cases.
What happens if I am quarantined or cannot travel home?

- Employees under quarantine in Germany (only if ordered by the health authorities) are released from work with continued payment of their salary.
- Employees under quarantine outside Germany (only if ordered by the security authorities in the sense of quarantine measures) are released from work with continued payment of their salary.
- If employees on vacation are affected by quarantine measures, the vacation is terminated from this point in time and "replaced" by a release from work.
- Employees who are unable to return home from abroad due to other safety regulations, are released from work and continue to receive their salary. If the return journey is not possible for other reasons, further steps must be agreed with the Personnel office.
- A closure of the institute initiated by the Executive Board has no influence on the continued payment of remuneration. The payment of salaries is technically guaranteed.

Should I cancel an approved business trip?

This depends on whether the business trip is to a risk area. Approvals for business trips to risk areas will not be issued until further notice, and any existing ones have been revoked. Business trips to other areas are still possible on your own responsibility. Due to the dynamic development, recommendations for the future are currently not possible. If business trips that have already been booked have to be cancelled for reasons for which the business traveler is not responsible, the costs can be reimbursed (only the business part if a private trip is combined with a business trip). Please note that you are obliged to take all possible steps to keep the costs as low as possible (e.g. cancel in good time and not just before the trip is due to start).

Should I take out a travel cancellation insurance for a future business trip?

Unfortunately, we are not allowed to reimburse the costs of a travel cancellation insurance due to the
regulations of the Thüringer Reisekostengesetz (Thuringian Travel Expenses Act). Moreover, such an insurance would normally only pay in the event of your own serious illness. Not insured are concerns about illness or travel to countries for which the Foreign Office has issued travel warnings. Many providers also rule out epidemic or pandemic scenarios. It is recommended – according to current knowledge – to purchase fully flexible or cancelable tickets. The additional costs incurred can be claimed as part of the reimbursement of travel expenses. Please note on the travel expense report that the booking of the more expensive ticket was necessary due to the dynamic development of the spread of the corona virus.

What does an employee have to consider if he or she falls ill with COVID-19?

Sick employees regularly call in sick. The reason for an inability to work is a private matter, but the employer's duty of care may give rise to a claim to know whether someone is ill with COVID-19 in order to protect colleagues from infection. Please help to contain the spread of the virus if possible, and disclose any infection to your employer.

What happens to the workplace of an employee who is confirmed to be ill with COVID-19?

The workplace of the employee (office, laboratory, etc.) must be closed immediately after knowledge of the confirmed illness, and further use is prohibited. This also applies to shared workplaces such as shared offices, etc. Before resuming use, surfaces must be cleaned with disinfectants. Please inform the officer for biological safety (Dr. Sina Gerbach, sina.gerbach@leibniz-hki.de, 03641 532 1335.