



# All Staff Update

## Message from General Manager

3/12/2020

Dear GreenStar Staff,

New information continues to emerge about COVID-19. As your employer, GreenStar wants to make sure you have the most up-to-date information about how we, as a retail business, plan to deal with the different types of situations and challenges that are coming our way.

Our last two messages to you have mostly been about actions relative to hygiene and cleaning. Since our last message, we've amped up these efforts even more, and we'll share that information with you in a subsequent email. Right now, we want to address another issue that we know is on everyone's minds - how GreenStar plans to handle staff absences and staff pay if/when the Coronavirus affects our community.

### **What if I'm supposed to work but I'm sick?**

If you are sick, stay home and contact your physician. If you have a child or a family member who is sick and needs your care, stay home. The CDC issued guidelines to say that if you have a fever of 100.4 or above; if you have a dry cough; or if you have difficulty breathing, you should stay home (provided that these are not typical for you due to some other condition like allergies or asthma). We agree with and support these guidelines. We also strongly feel that if you are needed to stay home with a quarantined child or if you need to care for a family member who is unwell, you should be able to do so. Staying home helps stop the spread of the virus! Please still communicate with your manager per your department guidelines about your continued need to stay home, so we know how you're doing and when to expect you back.

### **What if I come to work and I develop these symptoms while at work?**

Let your manager or supervisor on duty know. You will be asked to go home and GreenStar will pay you for the remainder of your shift.

### **When can I return to work?**

Provided that your household is not under quarantine by the Public Health Department (and so far, 39 people who are healthy and asymptomatic are being monitored by the Tompkins County Health Department), you may return to work when your symptoms subside and when you have gone 24 hours with no fever, without the use of fever-reducing medications.

### **What could this mean in terms of my attendance record?**

Your attendance record will not be impacted by absences related to COVID-19. GreenStar is taking the stance that because this is a matter of public health, we will not hold absences related to the virus against employees. Essentially, we're suspending our Attendance Expectations policy relative to these types of symptoms/illness. We are confident that our workforce will band together to help cover for each other's absences and that no one will take advantage of the suspension of our Attendance Expectations.

### **How do I get paid if I have to miss work due to COVID-19?**

GreenStar's goal is to help staff protect their ability to receive paychecks to as great an extent as possible during any absences that have to do with the Coronavirus. We have a generous sick and vacation policy, and we will work with employees on a case-by-case basis to ensure you have the support you need. Here's what we can tell you so far:

1. If you are absent, you should first use the sick and vacation time in your benefit time bank to cover your absence.
2. If you are absent and do not have enough sick/vacation time to cover your absence, you can draw on future sick and vacation benefits. Staff will be permitted to be paid for up to one week of additional sick time and one week of additional vacation time, with the understanding that this time will be "borrowed against" future accruals.



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3. If you have already exhausted options #1 and #2 OR if you are someone who is not eligible to earn sick or vacation time, GreenStar wants to continue to provide avenues for relief. This is where we have the opportunity to be really cooperative. We are implementing an operational rule regarding donation of sick and vacation time and the use of donated time. This operational rule will allow staff with large sick and vacation time balances to donate a certain amount of time to a communal bank. Donations are anonymous and completely voluntary.

Staff who are out of work due to COVID-19 will be eligible to draw up to two weeks of time out of that bank, on a first-come, first-served basis. Substitute employees may access this bank based on any hours for which you are already scheduled.

4. Also, if you are out of work due to your own illness, you might be eligible for NYS short term disability. If you are out of work to care for a sick family member, you might be eligible for NYS paid family leave.
5. We are closely monitoring information from Albany about possible government-mandated absence programs and will update you if there are any developments about this.

Expect that there might be additional creative solutions that surface as more information unfolds, but right now, this is where things stand. HR wants to help you navigate situations on a case-by-case basis as they occur, so please reach out to Deb, Diane, Erin, or Michael, if you have questions or need assistance. We might not know the answer right away, but we'll find out for you!

Stay well,

Brandon Kane  
General Manager