



News Release

Tualatin Hills Park & Recreation District

Communications Director: Holly Thompson
E: hthompson@thprd.org · T: 971-297-8178

THPRD Announces a Reduction in Workforce Due to COVID-19 Pandemic

March 23, 2020: Due to the unprecedented global pandemic and the accompanying closure of programs and facilities, THPRD initially placed 762 part-time and seasonal workers in unscheduled status. Based on the information that the closure would extend beyond the initial two-week period and to reduce barriers in accessing expanded unemployment insurance, the district made a difficult decision to formally separate these unscheduled employees.

“This was an incredibly difficult decision and not one we wanted to make,” said Doug Menke, General Manager. “The professionalism and the talents of our many part-time personnel are vital to our ability to serve the public. This staff represents our lifeguards, our class instructors, our afterschool workers, and so much more. We value them greatly however, given the reality we now face, this is our only course of action.”

Many of the affected employees serve in positions that are funded by revenues from program fees and classes. As the district has had to close facilities for the foreseeable future, these funds are not being collected and refunds have been issued for the cancelled activities, meaning there is not funding available to cover staff wages for classes and programs that are not happening.

How will the district support impacted employees?

- **Unemployment Eligibility:** By formally separating affected part-time and seasonal employees, we hope to reduce barriers and confusion in accessing the expanded unemployment insurance that the state of Oregon and the federal government are providing during this time of crisis.
- **Cashing Out of Accrued Sick Leave:** The district is choosing to provide a one-time cash out of staff’s unused sick leave in their final paychecks, with the understanding that this supplemental payment will not be counted against the employee’s unemployment eligibility. This is being done to allow employees to file as quickly as possible and provides them the full value of their sick leave immediately.
- **Employee Support Group:** THPRD has established an Employee Support Group and will provide staff to respond to inquiries.
- **Expedited Rehiring Process:** Under the temporary policy in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Human Resources will work with hiring managers to expedite the district’s typical pre-employment process for these separated employees, as appropriate. Our goal will be to make it as easy as possible for these employees to return to service when we are able to hire staff again.