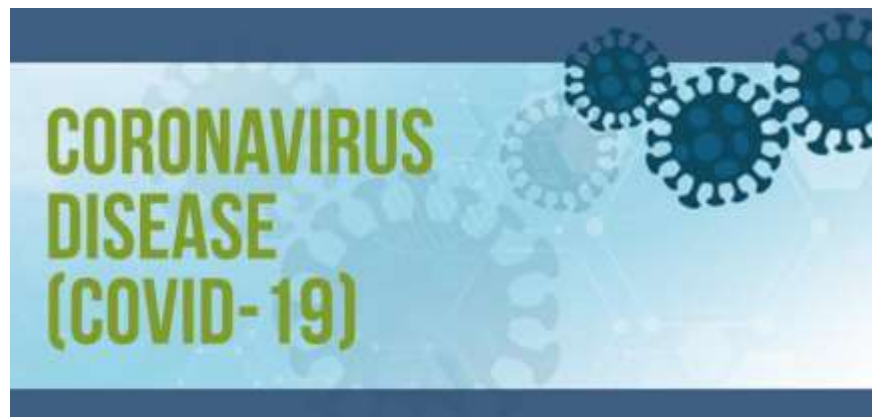


NATURAL RESOURCES CANADA

MANAGER'S GUIDE ON HUMAN RESOURCES ISSUES FOR A PANDEMIC -



Version 4.1
April 29, 2020

Due to the evolving nature of a COVID-19 pandemic, information found within this guide is subject to change. For the latest version, please refer to the [COVID-19 intranet page on The Source](#)

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INTRODUCTION

The advent of COVID-19 has caused a great deal of uncertainty for employees and managers. We realize that navigating the situation is not easy for anyone, as many different challenges are arising. This guide is meant to help you address the most common current and potential challenges, direct you to links that contain up-to-date advice on matters relating to COVID-19, and provide you with departmental contacts should you need further advice.

We sincerely appreciate your collective and individual efforts to support each other and employees during this difficult period. We will continue to update you as soon as new guidance becomes available.

| Key Revisions in this version |
|---|
| <p style="text-align: center;">Please note the numbering of questions may have changed.</p> <p>New information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Q19-Reimbursement for home internet overage charges incurred due to remote working <p>Updated information</p> |

1.0 PURPOSE

NRCan is committed to ensuring that its employees can perform their duties and provide critical government services to Canadians and partners in a safe and healthy environment in the event of an emergency or disaster, including a pandemic outbreak.

The guiding principles in play throughout a pandemic outbreak are to ensure:

1. The health and safety of employees is protected; and
2. The continuous functioning of government services that affect the well-being of Canadians.

This guide offers information regarding various scenarios that may arise related to human resources and occupational health and safety in a safe and transparent manner and aims to assist in maintaining a safe and healthy workplace environment.

The guide includes practical guidelines, questions and answers with the objective of:

- Providing you with information and answers to questions relating to your obligations and responsibilities to employees;
- Minimizing workplace disruption and maintaining critical government service delivery; and,
- Helping you maintain a healthy and safe environment for your employees.

A network of NRCan regional and national staff is working together on a daily basis to ensure a consistent approach is maintained and the best possible direction is provided to managers as the situation evolves.

For more information, visit the [COVID-19 intranet page on The Source](#). You can send questions on all aspects of COVID-19 to the [COVID-19 mailbox](#) and the appropriate subject matter expert will reply to your inquiry.

2.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1. Departmental Level

2.1.1. Business Continuity Planning

NRCan's Business Continuity Planning process is a key element that will enable us to manage proactively emergencies or disruptions while protecting critical assets, continuing critical service delivery at acceptable levels and downtimes, and protecting the health and safety of staff. As a manager, you are responsible for ensuring that your Business Continuity Plans (BCPs) for critical functions are current, up-to-date and shared with those employees identified in critical positions.

2.1.2. Monitoring and Responding

At the departmental level, NRCan is taking steps to prevent COVID-19 infection in the workplace and prepare for the possibility of employees becoming affected by COVID-19. We are:

- Closely monitoring the situation within and outside the department;
- Following all directions issued by the Government of Canada Operations Centre, Public Health Agency, Health Canada and Treasury Board Secretariat;
- Establishing a detailed response plan should COVID-19 begin to impact our workforce or workplace;
- Monitoring for symptoms among our teams;
- Providing guidance to managers on how to minimize health risks to employees;
- Increasing cleaning schedules as appropriate; and,
- Reviewing business continuity plans and coordinating the development of contingency plans for critical functions.

2.2. Managerial Level

Managers are responsible to become and remain aware of departmental/national direction and guidance on managing pandemic situations such as COVID-19, and to keep employees informed of the actions taken to keep them safe in the workplace.

2.2.1. Staying Informed and Informing Others

You should refer daily to the [COVID-19 intranet page on The Source](#) for current information.

As a manager, you are responsible for:

- providing employees with a healthy and safe work environment;
- staying apprised of functional guidance, direction and communications through the “The Source”;
- keeping employees informed of these directions and guidance;
- ensuring that your staff understand their responsibility to protect themselves and others, including by understanding the early symptoms of COVID-19 and staying home when they exhibit [symptoms](#);
- ensuring ongoing communication with staff (both those at work and at home);
- supporting employees who are experiencing stress in the workplace;
- ensuring that information material about prevention measures is available to employees in your workplace; and,
- ensuring that your team’s Business Continuity Plans for critical functions are maintained and shared with employees who will be required to respond to the situation.

2.2.2. Important Actions Managers Must Take

Managers play a crucial role in keeping the workplace healthy and safe, and aiding in efforts to control the potential spread of COVID-19. You must take the following steps:

- Inform the department **immediately** by emailing Andrew Crain, Labour Relations Manager, at andrew.crain@canada.ca if you become aware that an employee has contracted or been exposed to COVID-19 (including if someone is in self-isolation) and prior to communicating any information with your staff.
- Refer, daily, to updated government information regarding COVID-19 using the following resources:
 - a. [Occupational Health Advisory](#)
 - b. [GCintranet](#)
 - c. Canada.ca/coronavirus
 - d. [Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\): Travel advice](#)
 - e. Local information to understand the situation and risks in the community in which your team works
- Update your employees, as appropriate, about the status of COVID-19 prevention in the department and steps you and the department are taking to prevent and mitigate the spread of COVID-19
- Remind employees of, and encourage them to follow the preventive measures recommended by The Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC):
 - Continually self-monitor for COVID-19 symptoms, and advise their manager and leave the workplace if symptoms develop;
 - Wash hands thoroughly with soap and warm water, or use hand sanitizer (i.e., an alcohol-based hand-rub);
 - Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands;
 - Cough and sneeze in your arm or sleeve, not your hand;
 - Keep common surfaces and items clean;
 - If you get sick, stay home until your symptoms are gone;
 - If your symptoms get worse, call your health care provider; and,
 - Visit Canada.ca/coronavirus for more information.
- Follow departmental instructions to assess your business continuity plans.
- Establish an emergency contact list of your employees and senior management.

2.3. Senior Building Officer

The Senior Building Officer (SBO) is responsible for developing, implementing, and maintaining Building Emergency and Evacuation Plans (BEEP) and for ensuring the health and safety of occupants. The SBO plays an important role in managing incidents and responding to emergencies. The SBO liaises with and can draw on the expertise of Security and Emergency Management, Occupational Health and Safety, Labour Relations, Facilities and Communications.

The SBO should stay abreast of developments and recommended approaches to handle situations related to COVID-19, coordinate the implementation of increased cleaning protocols, and handle building closures per normal procedures, as well as return to work requirements.

2.4. Departmental and Sector/Regional/Branch Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Advisors

Departmental OHS (DOHS) provides technical advice and guidance regarding health and safety requirements to NRCan employees at all levels. They are responsible for collaborating with the central authorities regarding the pandemic outbreak and associated advisories.

For information related to health concerns due to COVID-19, contact [Departmental Occupational Health and Safety](#).

Sector/Regional/Branch OHS Advisors liaise with DOHS and are available to provide support and assistance as required.

3.0 CONCERNS ABOUT EXPOSURE TO COVID-19

You are responsible for the **protection of employees' privacy**, including personal and medical information. If an employee advises you that they have contracted COVID-19, **you must not share this**, or any other personal or medical information about the employee.

3.1. Exposure or possible exposure to COVID-19

Q1. What should I do if an employee advises me they have, or may have been, exposed to COVID-19?

You must protect the employee's personal or medical information and must not share specific information about the employee. Any privacy related questions should be directed to [Labour Relations](#).

You must exercise all reasonable precautionary measures to ensure the health and safety at work of every employee. In a pandemic situation, if an employee is showing flu-like symptoms, you must act to protect other employees from infection.

Instruct the affected employee to go home and contact their doctor to evaluate whether self-isolation or other steps are required. Advise the employee to remain in regular contact with you while they are at home; find out how they are doing and stay apprised of next steps, including their potential return to work.

Employees should remain away from the workplace until they are no longer exhibiting flu-like symptoms and/or until a return date is identified by a medical practitioner (if applicable).

Q2. What do I say to employees if someone on their team has, or may have been, exposed?

Remind staff of the key steps for reducing their chances of infection by following the tips listed above (Important Actions Managers Must Take, Section 2.2.2).

Reassure employees that NRCan is taking many precautionary measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19, including:

- Closely monitoring the situation within and outside the department;
- Following all directions issued by the Government of Canada Operations Centre, Public Health Agency, Health Canada and Treasury Board Secretariat;
- Establishing a detailed response plan should COVID-19 begin to impact our workforce or workplace;
- Instructing people to work remotely until further notice, unless absolutely necessary to be onsite to perform critical functions;
- Monitoring for symptoms among our teams;
- Sending people home if they have any symptoms;
- Increasing cleaning schedules as appropriate; and,
- Reviewing business continuity plans and developing contingency plans for critical functions.

If employees believe they may have been exposed, including through contact with an employee who has COVID-19, send those employees home, using flexible work arrangements, as deemed appropriate after consulting with your supervisor, ADM and/or Labour Relations. If they exhibit symptoms, instruct them to call Public Health by dialing 811.

On an ongoing basis, invite employees to raise issues or concerns with you, while signaling that you will protect their own personal information, as well as that of their co-workers.

Talk to your supervisor, your Assistant Deputy Minister, and/or [Labour Relations](#) if you have questions or require advice.

Q 3. What should I do if an employee develops flu-like symptoms while at work?

Differentiating COVID-19 symptoms from symptoms of other types of flu or cold illnesses may be difficult. Advise employees to stay home if they are experiencing any symptoms of illness. You should follow up with the employee to ask about their recovery and confirm their scheduled return to work date. Upon their return to work they will be required to submit a request for leave for their absence.

Q4. What should I do if an employee who exhibits flu-like symptoms refuses to leave the office?

Employees are obligated, as are managers, to act in a way that does not jeopardize the health and safety of others. Explain your obligation, and that of the employee, to protect other employees from infection. Leaving the workplace is necessary, given the likely risk of spreading the virus. Ask about underlying concerns of the employee; they may be worried about their leave eligibility, for example. Try to address any concerns.

Talk to your supervisor, your Assistant Deputy Minister, and/or [Labour Relations](#) for assistance if the employee continues to refuse to leave the workplace.

Q5. What should I do if an employee, who is at work and is not exhibiting signs of illness, expresses concern for their health and safety?

If specific direction has not been provided by government or departmental officials regarding reporting to work, employees who are not exhibiting signs of the flu must report to work.

Reassure the employee that NRCan is taking measures to ensure that the workplace is healthy and safe and that employees can help prevent the spread of a pandemic influenza by following up to date information and direction from the Government of Canada available at: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection.html>

Remind employees that the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is available 24/7 at 1-800-268-7708 or TDD at 1-800-567-5803 and information about EAP can be found on [The Source](#).

Q6. Will employees have to complete an injury compensation form if they become ill with COVID-19?

No, employees are not required to complete an injury compensation form.

3.2. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

The Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) and Health Canada (HC) continue to be the authorities for advice on issues such as the issuance of personal protective equipment (e.g., masks, gloves).

If NRCan, acting on the advice of PHAC and Health Canada, determines that employees should be provided with masks, gloves and/or goggles, you will be advised accordingly and will be responsible for the distribution of the personal protective equipment to your employees and providing the applicable training.

Q7. What is PHAC's position on masks to avoid catching COVID-19, and will NRCan be providing masks to employees?

Though wearing a non-medical mask or face covering in the community has not been proven to protect the person wearing it, PHAC does recognize that wearing a non-medical mask or face covering is an additional measure you can take to protect others around you, even if you have no symptoms. It can be useful for short periods of time, when physical distancing is not possible in public settings such as when grocery shopping or using public transit.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) such as masks, including surgical, medical procedure face masks and respirators (like N95 masks), must be kept for health care workers and others providing direct care to COVID-19 patients.

NRCan will not be providing masks to employees at this time.

For more information, visit the [Public Health Agency of Canada's](#) Web site.

3.3. Vaccinations

PHAC is the authority at the federal level for pandemic planning and response and collaborates with provincial, territorial and local public health authorities on surveillance, vaccination programs, the use of antivirals, and other public health measures and communications.

Health Canada will advise TBS on public health-related matters, including those involving vaccinations and antivirals as appropriate. NRCan will promptly communicate any direction to management.

At this time, there is no vaccination for COVID-19. Employees can direct their enquiries regarding vaccinations to their local public health authority by calling 811.

3.4. Transportation of an Employee Who Becomes Sick

Should an employee experience symptoms of COVID-19 they should contact their public health authority, by calling 811, to seek further direction. Transportation from work to a medical facility will be arranged if necessary, and any associated costs will be borne by the employer.

3.5. Higher Risk Employees

Q8. If an employee tells me they are at a higher risk than normal during a pandemic outbreak due to an existing medical condition, an immune deficiency or other condition, such as pregnancy, what should I do?

Advise the employee to contact their family physician to seek medical attention and advice.

Talk to your supervisor, your Assistant Deputy Minister, and/or [Labour Relations](#) to ask questions or obtain advice on accommodating specific situations.

4.0 ASSISTANCE TO EMPLOYEES

4.1. Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

The effects of a pandemic may place employees under increased stress. This stress may manifest itself immediately or be delayed. Physical and/or psychological symptoms may appear, and affect normal coping capabilities until the problem is recognized and resolved.

Q9. How should I address the high level of anxiety that some employees may be experiencing?

In a pandemic situation, it is natural to experience anxiety, and your employees may wish to

Speak with you about their concerns. As a manager, you should explain the steps NRCan is taking to keep the workplace free of infection and ensure employees are aware of the EAP counselling services available at 1-800-268-7708 or TDD at 1-800-567-5803 or on [The Source](#).

The Government of Canada's Centre of Expertise on Mental Health in the Workplace also has [Resources for managers for mental health in the workplace](#).

5.0 REFUSAL TO WORK

As a manager, you have responsibilities, under the *Canada Labour Code, Part II*, for ensuring the health and safety of employees. In the context of a pandemic, you should be aware that employees may exercise their right to refuse dangerous work if they feel a danger exists, and could submit a formal health and safety complaint. Ensuring open and transparent communication aids in avoiding these situations.

Q10. Do employees have the right to refuse to work for health and safety reasons during a pandemic COVID-19 outbreak?

As the Canada Labour Code (CLC) promotes the spirit of the Internal Responsibility System, where health and safety is a joint responsibility, employers and employees are encouraged to work together to identify hazards and reach early internal resolution as much as possible.

Under the [Canada Labour Code](#), Part II, employees have the right to refuse work if there is reasonable cause to believe that a condition exists in the place that constitutes a danger. If you are faced with a potential or actual work refusal, talk to your supervisor, your Assistant Deputy Minister, and/or contact [Departmental Occupational Health and Safety](#) who will advise you and guide you through the process.

Q11. What if an employee refuses to come to work due to fear of exposure to COVID-19?

The existence of a pandemic virus does not mean that our workplace is dangerous. Unless otherwise instructed or agreed, employees should report to work if they are without symptoms or other underlying health concerns that place them at higher risk.

Talk to your supervisor, your Assistant Deputy Minister, and/or [Departmental Occupational Health and Safety](#) immediately to discuss the specific case, obtain advice and establish a plan to address the situation.

Q12. What should I do if I receive an OHS Complaint related to Pandemic COVID-19?

An employee who believes that there has been a contravention of the *Canada Labour Code, Part II* or that there is likely to be an accident or injury to their health arising out of, linked with or occurring in the course of employment has the right to make a complaint.

Should you be faced with an OHS complaint stemming from COVID-19, contact [Departmental Occupational Health and Safety](#); they will advise you and guide you through the process.

Detailed information on [managing workplace concerns and work refusals can be found here](#).

6.0 TRAVEL

Consult the Government of Canada's webpage [Travel Advice and Advisories](#), [travel health notices](#) and [The Source](#), for departmental direction before authorizing travel; to advise employees who are returning from business and personal travel; and with respect to hosting visitors who have travelled to meet with you or your teams.

Notwithstanding government travel advice, you should evaluate the benefits and risks associated with the travel when deciding whether to proceed. Consult your senior management team and/or OHS if you require further advice on whether to travel, after having reviewed the government advisories and our Deputies' direction.

Considerations include:

- the necessity of the travel;
- whether it could be cancelled or delayed without critical impact to operations; and,
- whether other means (e.g., teleconference, video conference) are available for connecting with individuals in other locations.

You and your travelling employees must apply necessary precautions in all cases as described in health advisories. Employees travelling for business or personal reasons must respect precautions imposed by health authorities upon re-entry to Canada, including self-monitoring and self-isolation, as may be required.

7.0 REASSIGNMENT TO CRITICAL FUNCTIONS

In the event of an emergency, you may require employees to perform tasks outside of their regular duties. This could happen in a pandemic situation where personnel have to be re-assigned in order to sustain critical functions. You may also require employees to work outside of their headquarters area.

You have the right to assign other relevant duties as deemed necessary. Every step should be taken, however, to ensure that when employees are asked to perform different tasks than their normal functions, they are:

- properly trained;
- delegated to carry out the requested duties;
- provided with the appropriate personal protective equipment, if applicable;
- not put at undue risk;
- provided with duties that are, to the extent possible, at an equivalent level to their position;
- compensated appropriately if the duties are at a higher classification level.

Q13. Do I have a right to change my employee's hours of work?

Subject to operational requirements and the provisions of the applicable collective agreement or terms and conditions of employment, managers may assign hours of work that are different than the employee's regular daily hours if, for example, there is a need during the pandemic outbreak to ensure continued operations. However, managers should make every effort possible to respect employee needs related to their hours of work.

Q14. Can an employee be required to work overtime?

Subject to collective agreements or terms and conditions of employment provisions, managers have the authority to request that employees work overtime due to operational requirements. In such circumstances, options such as voluntary overtime or standby status should be considered first. Should an employee be required or volunteer to work additional hours, the relevant provisions of their collective agreement and their terms and conditions of employment will apply.

Managers should make every effort to distribute overtime in a balanced manner.

8.0 FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS & ALTERNATE WORK LOCATIONS

All employees should continue to work from home until further notice, with the exception of those supporting critical services or COVID-19 priority matters related to our NRCan mandate which cannot be performed remotely.

Q15. Are flexible work arrangements an option for employees?

Yes, flexible work arrangements, such as remote work and flexible hours, may be leveraged to respond to the circumstance of COVID-19, which requires a higher degree of flexibility. These arrangements should be discussed with the employee's manager.

Managers should consider assigning work activities that can be conducted offline, such as writing or reviewing documents (reports, research, papers, policies), analysis or analytical work, and science or policy research (e.g., literature reviews), etc.

Managers remain accountable for work performed by their employees while working remotely, so regular communication between the manager and the employee is strongly recommended.

Furthermore, managers must keep in mind that NRCan may not have the ability/capacity to allow all employees to work remotely. Priority for remote access will be given to employees working on critical NRCan functions.

In order to maximize our department's capacity to support remote work, employees using telework or VPN connectivity should only log on periodically to upload or download documents, or send/receive emails.

Q16. Can employees work on sensitive / protected / classified information from home?

Employees must safeguard personal or sensitive information outside the workplace. You should assist employees on the aspects of safe custody and the control of sensitive information, and make the necessary arrangements for employees to meet their obligations when working away from the designated workplace.

For more information, please review NRCan's security article [Every day, Everywhere](#) on The Source.

Q17. Can I ask an employee to perform their duties in a different work location?

Although working from home is likely the preferred first course of action if the normal place of work is not available/feasible, managers have the authority to request that an employee work from an alternate office location.

Employees may be entitled to the provisions of the [NJC Travel Directive](#) such as travel status and various expense reimbursements if asked to work from an alternative work location.

Talk to your supervisor and/or contact [Labour Relations](#) to discuss specific cases as appropriate.

Q18 Can employees retrieve ergonomic equipment from their office if needed?

Employees cannot go to the office for ergonomic equipment. All employees working from home are encouraged to follow best practices for ergonomics, to the extent possible. Frequent breaks are also encouraged to help alleviate additional stress and prevent musculoskeletal strains. See the recent [Source article](#) focused on tips to set up home work areas.

Q19 Can I be reimbursed for home internet overage charges incurred due to remote working?

The employer does not cover any costs associated with home internet, a point which has been reiterated in recent guidance provided by the Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer. However, in very exceptional circumstances and on a case-by-case basis, management can consider reimbursing costs. In order to be considered for reimbursement, evidence must be provided clearly demonstrating that the employee incurred incremental costs (i.e. data overage charges) directly as a result of remote working on NRCan files.

Please note that many home internet service providers have temporarily provided all their customers with unlimited data during the COVID-19 crisis, in which case employees will not incur incremental costs due to remote working. Any reimbursement must be approved at the ADM level.

9.0 LEAVE MANAGEMENT

This section provides direction on dealing with leave situations in a fair and consistent manner. Where employees are affected personally by a pandemic outbreak, they must communicate with you to review their individual circumstances, provide the reasons preventing them from performing their work and seek your approval for leave.

Normally, for privacy reasons, management does not have the right to ask an employee about the nature of a medical diagnosis; **however, employees in the workplace have a duty to inform you if they have been diagnosed with COVID-19 because this would constitute a workplace hazard.** In these cases, managers should take steps to protect their employees' privacy. If you believe there is a possibility that an employee is suffering from COVID-19, talk to your supervisor, your Assistant Deputy Minister, and/or contact [Labour Relations](#) for assistance on how to approach the situation.

An employee can request, and managers must approve, leave in accordance with the

provisions set out in the employee's collective agreement and the Policy on Terms and Conditions of Employment for all types of leave, including sick leave with or without pay, leave with or without pay for family-related responsibilities, vacation, or other leave with or without pay.

If employees are prevented from working due to circumstances out of their control, and telework is not an option, they may be authorized to submit for leave with pay for other reasons (i.e. 699 leave), subject to the applicable collective agreement or terms and conditions of employment.

Up-to-date guidance from TBS is available on the [COVID-19 intranet page on The Source](#). Specific instructions are provided for the recording and tracking of leave code 699.

Talk to your supervisor and/or contact [Labour Relations](#) for advice on dealing with these situations on a case-by-case basis.

9.1. Building or Other Closures Affecting Employees (Office/School/Daycare)

Q20. If employees use a daycare, located in a government building, that is closed, will the department reimburse daycare costs?

The department will not reimburse costs; the employer is not responsible for any costs associated with day care. In addition, employees are responsible for making alternative daycare arrangements in the event that building closures affect co-located daycare operations.

Managers are encouraged to contact [Labour Relations](#) to discuss situations where an employee is unable to work because childcare is unavailable.

Q21. What about school and/or daycare closures?

As per TBS guidelines, for employees whose children cannot attend school due to a school closure or because of attendance restrictions in place in relation to the coronavirus situation, they are to:

- Attempt to make alternative care arrangements.
- If that is not possible, discuss with their manager the option to telework.
- If that is not possible, they can be granted "other leave with pay" (699 code).

The above provisions for disruption of school and daycare operations related to the coronavirus will remain available to employees and managers until further notice by Treasury Board Secretariat.

9.2. Leave Due to Illness

In a pandemic COVID-19 situation, consideration must be given to the fact that physicians may be overwhelmed and therefore may not be available to provide medical certificates. NRCan will not require a medical certificate to justify absences due to illness. You should consult with your employee to determine a time frame for their return to work based on information about the contagious stages of the virus from PHAC which will be available on The Source

You should only request medical certificates should you be concerned about an employee's return to work, suspect abuse of sick leave, or in a Duty to Accommodate situation.

Talk to your supervisor, and/or contact [Labour Relations](#) for case specific advice.

Q22. What type of leave should an employee take if they become ill with COVID-19 or are showing/developing flu-like signs or symptoms?

Employees who are ill with COVID-19 or have symptoms of COVID-19 should use leave code 699 instead of sick leave. Up-to-date guidance from TBS is available on the [COVID-19 intranet page on The Source](#).

For privacy reasons and under normal circumstances, employees are not obliged to reveal the details of a medical diagnosis. However, in these circumstances, they should advise you if they have been diagnosed with COVID 19 and you have an obligation to report the confirmed case immediately by emailing Andrew Crain, Labour Relations Manager, at andrew.crain@canada.ca. Please also report suspected cases of which you become aware.

You and your employee should work together to respect the Government of Canada guidelines regarding symptoms, treatment and self-isolation: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/symptoms.html>

Talk to your supervisor or contact [Labour Relations](#) for advice on dealing with these situations on a case-by-case basis.

Q23. If an employee is at work and exhibits flu-like symptoms and I direct them to go home, does the employee have to submit a leave form?

Yes. Employees will be required to submit a leave form for their absence. Employees who are ill with COVID-19 or have symptoms of COVID-19 should use leave code 699 instead of sick leave. Up-to-date guidance from TBS is available on the [COVID-19 intranet page on The Source](#).

Talk to your supervisor or contact [Labour Relations](#) for advice on dealing with these situations on a case-by-case basis.

Q24. Will NRCan provide time off with pay for medical appointments during a pandemic influenza situation?

It is preferable for employees to attend appointments on their own time, however NRCan wants to encourage employees to see their doctor should they have concerns related to COVID-19. If time away from work is required for medical appointments, managers can consider such time as a "periodic medical appointment," which is not deducted from an employee's sick leave credits.

9.3. Leave to Care for Family Member

Q25. What type of leave should an employee use to take time off to provide care for a family member who is ill?

Up-to-date guidance from TBS is available on the [COVID-19 intranet page on The Source](#). Talk to your supervisor, and/or contact [Labour Relations](#) for advice on dealing with these situations on a case-by-case basis.

9.4. Vacation Leave

Q26. I approved vacation leave for an employee, and the office was closed, or operations were suspended during the leave period. Does the employee still have to use up those vacation days?

Up-to-date guidance from TBS is available on the [COVID-19 intranet page on The Source](#).

Talk to your supervisor and/or contact Labour Relations for advice on dealing with these situations on a case-by-case basis.

9.5. Volunteerism

During a pandemic situation, employees may ask for time off to provide volunteer services to assist in their community. In these cases, employees must be on an authorized leave, either with or without pay, in accordance with their collective agreement or terms and conditions of employment.

You must ensure that employees are:

- excused from their regular work;
- on an authorized leave; and
- aware that they are not performing their volunteer functions on behalf of NRCan.

9.6. Cancellation of Leave

Q27. If I already approved an employee's leave (e.g., vacation leave) can the leave be cancelled?

You have the authority to cancel non-mandatory leave due to operational requirements. In a pandemic situation, your decision to cancel annual leave should be made only after all other options have been exhausted. There are provisions in most collective agreements, and terms and conditions of employment specifying that the employer may be liable for expenses incurred if annual leave is cancelled. Any portion of annual leave not taken is returned to the employee's leave bank.

It is recommended that managers consult with [Labour Relations](#) on a case-by-case basis.

9.7. Students, Casuals and Terms under Three Months

Students, casual employees and term employees of less than three months are also impacted by the response to the pandemic where they may be required to stay at home to telework, to self-isolate or are under quarantine. Accordingly, delegated managers are encouraged to use

their discretion under the Directive on Leave and Special Working Arrangements to extend them paid leave in these circumstances.

Up-to-date guidance from TBS is available on the [COVID-19 intranet page on The Source](#).

Talk to your supervisor and/or contact Labour Relations for advice on dealing with these situations on a case-by-case basis.

10.0 STAFFING & CRITICAL FUNCTIONS

You are responsible to ensure there is enough staff to cover critical functions in your area during a pandemic situation. Under the *Public Service Employment Act (PSEA)*, several options exist to facilitate quick staffing of positions during an emergency. The following options are available: casual hires, non-advertised appointments, internal acting assignments and secondments, and temporary (term) hiring. You may also consider procuring/contracting services.

You should review your critical functions in the context of a potential pandemic outbreak, complete an analysis of your business continuity plan, and develop contingency plans for critical functions. You should revisit your contingency plans throughout the pandemic and seek prompt assistance from HR and/or senior management to address gaps should initial contingency strategies become unworkable.

Due to the government-wide emergency, certain limitations are in place for portions of hiring processes, namely language testing and security clearance.

You should contact your Human Resources Advisor for advice and guidance on staffing options, and Finance and Procurement Branch for contracting needs.

This document will be updated as appropriate when new information becomes available.

Please direct all questions related to COVID-19 to the [COVID-19 mailbox](#). A subject matter expert will reply to your inquiry.

ANNEX A: Recommended Personal Measures to Limit the Spread of Influenza

| Personal Measures | SOME HOW-TO TIPS |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Hand Hygiene | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Frequent and careful hand washing is an effective way of preventing the spread of infection. Wash your hands regularly with warm, soapy water, especially before and after eating, and after going to the bathroom, coughing, sneezing and touching surfaces that may have been contaminated. ▪ Remove jewelry before washing hands. Rinse hands under warm running water. Lather with soap and, using friction, cover all surfaces of the hands and fingers for a minimum of 20 seconds. Rinse under warm running water. Dry hands thoroughly with a single-use towel. Turn off faucet without re-contaminating hands (e.g., using a single-use towel to avoid touching the faucet). ▪ Alcohol-based hand sanitizers (with an alcohol concentration of 60 to 80 percent) should be used only if you do not have soap and water. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers act only as a disinfectant and do not contain antibiotics. |
| Cough and Sneeze Etiquette | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A virus can travel one metre in the air and live for some time on your hands and surfaces. ▪ Limit the spread of infection by covering your nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing, especially if near other people. Use a tissue, raise your arm up to your face to cough, or sneeze into your sleeve. ▪ Throw away used tissues promptly, and wash your hands as soon as possible. |
| Social Distancing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Social distancing strategies are non-medical measures intended to reduce the spread of disease from person to person by reducing close contact between people. ▪ Some options include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Avoid handshakes (encourage non-contact greetings). b) Avoid face-to-face meetings. Use telephone meetings, instead. c) Cancel or postpone non-essential meetings/workshops/training sessions. d) Meet in large meeting rooms, and minimize meeting times. e) Avoid using public pens or whiteboard markers – carry your own. f) Wipe down computer keyboards if shared. g) Avoid the lunchroom rush. h) Avoid cafeterias and restaurants. i) Avoid commuter rush periods. j) Avoid unnecessary travel (especially to endemic regions). |
| Cleaning of Surface Contact Material | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Viruses lives in cool, dry places. They can live for days on hard surfaces and for many hours on cloth, tissue and paper. ▪ Regularly clean surface contact material to minimize the spread of the virus. |