



March 18, 2020

To: Deputy Heads, Heads of Agencies (including separate Employers), Heads of Human Resources, Chairs of the Regional Federal Councils

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.
- Under Section 2.2.2 of the *Directive on Leave and Special Working Arrangements*, managers have discretion to provide leave with pay to an individual who does not have the capacity to report for duty or remain on duty, due to environmental or climatic conditions. This provision is interpreted as encompassing pandemics.
- Paid leave should only be provided to students, casuals and terms of less than three months whose work is determined by a schedule, and who are required to be absent for hours they otherwise would have worked. In no circumstance should paid leave be extended beyond the term of employment.
- Employees in these categories whose first day of work commenced on or after March 18, 2020 are not expected to be eligible for paid leave.
- This guidance will remain in effect until April 10, 2020, at which time it will be reassessed.

COVID-19 and Mental Health

- Employees may be experiencing a high degree of uncertainty, worry, anxiety and stress about the health and safety of their loved ones, and how COVID-19 (coronavirus) may disrupt their work and personal lives.
- It is important for all of us to acknowledge these impacts and to engage in an open dialogue about them, including on ways to maintain and support our mental health. It is particularly important to recognize and support those who are more directly involved in the management of the situation, and those who have been instructed to self-isolate or who are suffering from symptoms of COVID-19.
- Employees wanting to get more tips on how to deal with COVID-19 in the workplace, and to learn about the supports available to them, should visit :
<https://www.canada.ca/en/government/publicservice/covid-19/covid-19-mental-health-work.html>

Travel Advice

- Canada has recommended that all travellers, including public servants, [self-isolate](#) for 14 days when entering the country. These efforts will contribute to slowing the spread of COVID-19.

- PHAC has introduced [exemptions](#) to the 14-day self-isolation rule that apply to workers who are essential to the movement of goods and people. Departments should determine whether the exemptions apply to their employees. Please consult the [latest advice](#) for more guidance.
- Bargaining Agents have identified situations where employees returning from international travel, and do not fall within the exempted categories, are requested to attend work if they are asymptomatic. In these circumstances PHAC guidance calls for self-isolation. Therefore, departments are encouraged to consider other options such as asking those employees to work from home, or identifying alternate resources for the duration of the self-isolation.

Cyber Security

- Employees should be aware of the current heightened risk of COVID-19 phishing campaigns to lure targets to click on a malicious link. The Communications Security Establishment's Cyber Centre recommends employees use the following guidance to protect themselves from these types of attempts: <https://cyber.gc.ca/en/guidance/cyber-hygiene-covid-19>

Web content

As many employees will now be working remotely, we have created pages on Canada.ca/coronavirus-publicservice to ensure they have access to the most up-to-date information as it evolves whether on or off government networks.

Nancy Chahwan

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