

COVID-19 (Coronavirus)

UPDATED FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS FOR PUBLIC OFFICERS (EMPLOYEES)

28 May, 2020

The FAQs distributed on 13 April, 2020 now include updated and new information for your review to ensure you remain informed.

On 11 March, 2020, the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a pandemic. A pandemic is the increased and sustained transmission of a disease across many countries.

As an employer, we want to ensure public officers are equipped with information which has resulted in the compilation of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs).

Things are consistently changing; therefore, responses to these FAQs are subject to adjustment, and additional questions may be added.

Stay informed on the latest developments about COVID-19 by visiting the Government of Bermuda's website coronavirus.gov.bm

1. What can employees expect from the Bermuda Government as their employer in relation to information related to COVID-19 (Coronavirus)?

We are committed to providing employees with factual information from health officials and assuring employees that their health and safety is paramount. Government, through public health officials, can help to prepare and educate employees without causing unwarranted concern. Visit <http://www.gov.bm/coronavirus> for updates from the Government, and <http://govconnect.gov.bm> for specific updates for public officers.

2. What is physical distancing? (UPDATED)

Physical distancing (formerly referred to as "social distancing") is a term applied to specific actions that are taken to stop or slow down the spread of a highly contagious disease. Physical distancing measures are taken to restrict how, when and where people can gather to halt or slow the spread of infectious diseases. Physical distancing means putting space between yourself and others. It means maintaining a distance of at least 2 metres (6 feet) from others. Physical distancing measures include limiting large groups of people coming together, closing buildings and canceling events.

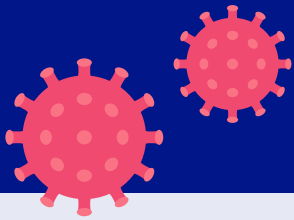
3. Is physical distancing a preventative measure? (UPDATED)

Yes, physical distancing can be a preventative measure. Question 4 below outlines how physical distancing will affect meetings and how you do your job.

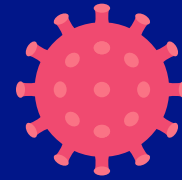
4. How will physical distancing affect my meetings and how I do my job? (UPDATED)

- Remote working has been introduced for those whose roles lend to this approach.
- Avoid or limit meeting people face-to-face. Employees are encouraged to use the telephone, online conferencing, e-mail or





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instant messaging to conduct business as much as possible, even when participants are in the same building.

- If a face-to-face meeting is unavoidable, the meeting time should be for a minimum period of time, in a large meeting room and participants should sit at least 2 metres (6 feet) from each other, if possible and wear a face mask.
- Avoid person-to-person contact such as shaking hands.
- Do not congregate in work rooms, copier rooms or other areas where people socialize.

5. What preventative measures can I start using to take precautions and help minimize the spread of any illness? (UPDATED)

- Stay at home if you are unwell or ill.
- Regular and thorough hand-washing with soap and water. If soap and water aren't immediately available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your eyes, mouth, and nose.
- Practice good respiratory hygiene. Cover your cough or sneeze.
- Maintain at least a 2 metres (6 feet) distance from others
- Wear a non-medical cloth face covering while in the workplace (where physical distancing of 2 metres (6 feet) cannot be maintained) and public.

6. Are Government offices closed? (UPDATED)

No, Government offices are not closed. As an employer the Bermuda Government has introduced a different way of working during this time. This includes ensuring social distancing is enforced and introducing remote working for those whose roles lend to this approach.

7. Can I work a second job during normal working hours? (UPDATED)

No, you are not permitted to work a second job during normal working hours even if you are not able to work remotely. All employees are still subject to all normal rules and regulations as if you were reporting to work.

8. When did the phased expansion of Government service commence? (NEW)

The phased expansion of Government services commenced on 4 May, 2020.

The health, safety and wellbeing of all public officers and the public is the Government of Bermuda's paramount priority as your employer. Therefore, the phased process will be based on physical distancing and other public health principles, as outlined by the Ministry of Health.

9. What was done to assist with the phased expansion? (NEW)

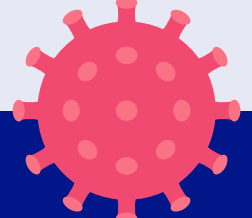
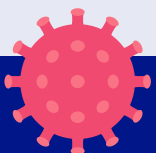
Permanent Secretaries and Heads of Department developed plans for the re-opening and those plans were discussed with the Unions.

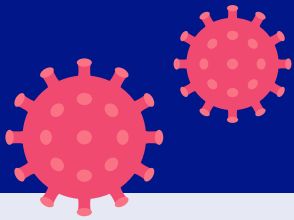
10. Is there a protocol on what is required for accessing and working out of Government Buildings, operated facilities and leased offices? (NEW)

Yes. The Bermuda Government, as an employer, has issued a document entitled "Coronavirus Return to Work Protocols for Government Buildings" which can be accessed on the Government's HR intranet site at <http://hr/default.aspx>. This document also pertains to any facilities operated by Government as well as office spaces that are leased by Government. You can obtain a copy of the document from your Head of Department in order to familiarize yourself of requirements.

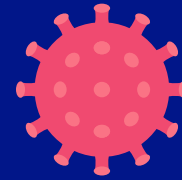
11. Who should I contact regarding concerns about the risk of COVID-19 exposure at the workplace? (NEW)

Employees are encouraged to raise concerns with their Department's Safety and Health Committee. However, if you have concerns about your





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particular health status or risks you should speak with your supervisor after consulting your medical practitioner.

12. Is there a procedure for screening persons prior to entering a Government Building, operated facilities and leased offices? (NEW)

Yes. In accordance with the Bermuda Government's "Coronavirus Return to Work Protocols for Government Buildings" document, all individuals (staff, visitors, vendors, contractors, etc.) must be subjected to a temperature check. Individuals who have a temperature greater than 100.4°F (38°C) or refuse to participate in the screening process must be denied access to buildings and facilities or refused service.

13. Are there restrictions on who can visit Government Buildings, operated facilities and leased offices? (NEW)

Yes. In accordance with the Bermuda Government's "Coronavirus Return to Work Protocols for Government Buildings" document, family visits, children of employees and non-essential visits by other persons are not allowed.

14. How do I know if I am an extremely vulnerable? (NEW)

The Ministry of Health has produced a Guidance for Protecting Persons at Higher Risk from Infection (Shielding) which is available at <http://www.gov.bm/coronavirus>.

15. What steps should I take if I am extremely vulnerable? (NEW)

If you are able to work remotely, you should seek the permission of your Head of Department to do so. If you are unable to work remotely you are required to obtain a copy of the standardized Government of Bermuda medical certificate from your Head of Department, submit it to your physician for completion and return it to your Head of Department. Your Head of Department

will review and submit it to the Head of the Public Service who may grant Special Leave.

16. What if I am prevented from attending to my place of employment because of contact with a colleague and/or customer with COVID-19 while carrying out the duties of my job? (NEW)

If you are concerned about attending your place of employment because you suspect you might have had contact with COVID-19, you must notify your direct line manager immediately, seek advice from a registered Medical Practitioner, and must follow the instruction of the Ministry of Health guidelines even if you feel well.

17. What type of leave will I be entitled to if absent from work because of contact with COVID-19 (NEW)

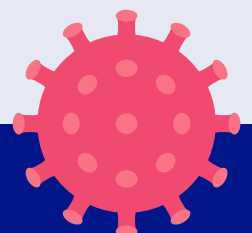
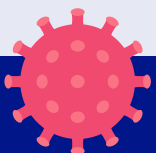
If you are absent because of contact with COVID-19, and you are symptomatic, you shall be entitled to full pay sick leave up to the maximum of your entitlement, but such sick leave shall be in addition to your existing entitlement. If you have been in contact with COVID-19 and are not showing symptoms of the virus, you may be entitled to Special Leave in the discretion of the Head of the Public Service on the recommendation of the Head of Department.

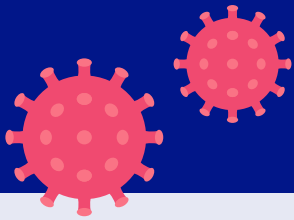
18. What will be required when I return to duty after contracting COVID-19 and self-quarantining? (NEW)

On returning to duty you shall submit a medical certificate of fitness, if so required by the Head of Department.

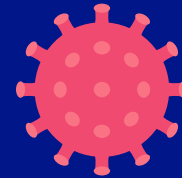
19. I have a cold, but it is not the flu, can I still come to work?

If you have a cold or cough, we are asking that you, stay home until you are no longer sick. If you are getting over a cold or cough, you should stay home until you are completely well again. The usual





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provisions regarding sick leave entitlement, the responsibility for notifying the manager, and the requirement to present a medical certificate will all still apply.

20. What are the Public Health (COVID-19) Regulations 2020, Quarantine (COVID-19) Order 2020, and the Emergency Powers (COVID-19 Continuing Precautions) Regulations 2020, and how do they impact me? (UPDATED)

The Bermuda Government, as an employer, acknowledges the Public Health (COVID-19) Regulations 2020, the Quarantine (COVID-19) Order 2020, the Emergency Powers (COVID-19 Continuing Precautions) Regulations 2020 ("the Regulations") and such other regulations as may be applicable from time to time.

Employees may be subject to the requirements for travelers, and other lawful restrictions on their movement. Therefore, public officers are expected to obey a lawful order of a public health officer under the Regulations. An employee who disobeys the direction of a public health officer and endangers the health of other public officers may be subject to discipline and/or penalties under the Regulations.

21. What is the Emergency Powers (COVID-19 Continuing Precautions) Regulations 2020, and how does this impact me? (NEW)

The Bermuda Government, as an employer, acknowledges the Emergency Powers (COVID-19 Continuing Precautions) Regulations 2020 ("the Regulations").

The Regulations, as a new authority, effectively mitigates the risk of community transmission that continues to implement strict measures to control the movement of people in and around Bermuda.

No employee shall be away from his/her home during night-time curfew, i.e. 10:00 pm to 6:00 am, except for medical or other emergency. Employees exempt from the curfew are outlined in Schedule 1 of the Regulations; however, this is

only when they are on official business, working or travelling to and from work. All such persons shall carry identification at all times and show to an enforcement officer on request.

Also, employees authorized by an Exemption Notice issued by the Head of the Public Service under Schedule 1 - paragraph 10 of the Regulations are exempt from the curfew imposed by these Regulations, when on duty or travelling to and from duty for the period 10:00 pm to 6:00 am Monday to Friday. All such persons shall carry identification, together with the Exemption document from the Head of the Public Service, at all times and show to an enforcement officer on request. No other purpose is authorized. If it is determined that those exempted are in breach of the Regulations, they may be subject to discipline and/or penalties prescribed in the Regulations.

All other employees must remain at home and abide by the Regulations until further instruction is issued by Government. Should employees breach the Regulations, they too may be subject to discipline and/or penalties prescribed in the Regulations.

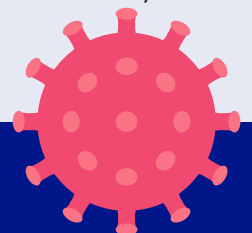
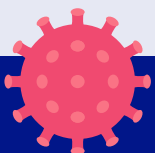
22. Can I be prevented from coming to work? (UPDATED)

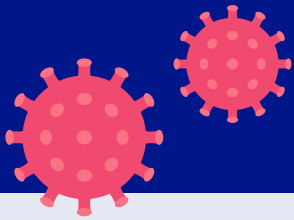
Yes, due to the implementation of the new Public Health (COVID-19) Regulations 2020, the Quarantine (COVID-19) Order 2020 and the Emergency Powers (COVID-19 Continuing Precautions) Regulations 2020 ("the Regulations"). It is expected employees will abide by the law and fulfill their social responsibility to protect workplace colleagues from being exposed to infection.

However, if an employee fails to comply with the requirements, they may be subject to discipline and/or penalties under the Regulations.

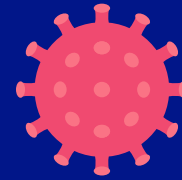
23. Can my manager ask if I have the coronavirus?

Your manager can ask how you are feeling in general. Also, he/she can ask if you have any





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respiratory symptoms, as a form of risk assessment enabling your manager to make a decision on whether you should be asked to go home and seek medical advice. Your manager, however, should not inquire about a specific illness.

24. Can my manager tell me to leave the office (or stay home) if I am sick?

Yes, employees who show signs of respiratory illness can be asked to leave the workplace and stay home until they are symptom free. The usual provisions regarding sick leave entitlement, the responsibility for notifying your manager (or the designated person as per your departmental policies and procedures), and the requirement to present a medical certificate will all still apply.

25. How many days are required for self-quarantine?

Persons with a high-risk travel history, or who have travelled to an affected area, or who have been in close contact with and/or living in the same household of a confirmed case **must** self-quarantine for 14 days after potential exposure.

26. My manager has asked me to stay at home: will I be paid?

Yes, however, you are still subject to all normal rules and regulations as if you were reporting to work.

Many office workers will be able to work from home though, so it becomes a usual working day. However, if you cannot work from home as the type of work you undertake does not lend itself to such and as it is at the manager's request, you will still be paid.

27. I'm back from an affected area. I feel fine but I'm stuck at home due to mandated self-quarantine, will I be paid?

If you can work from home and your manager can help you to do that by providing a means to do so, then you can carry on working and being paid as normal. However, if it's not possible for you to work

at home you will still be paid during the 14-day quarantine.

28. What type of leave will I be entitled to receive if I am required to travel overseas for an emergency and must self-quarantine if I cannot work from home due to the type of work I do?

It is recognized there are emergencies and an employee may have to leave the island unexpectedly to attend to an urgent matter. In such instances, Special Leave will be granted.

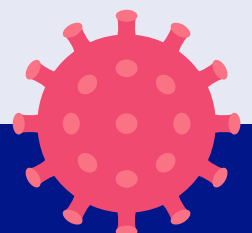
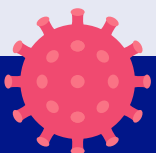
29. I am a parent and my child's school has been closed, how will this be managed?

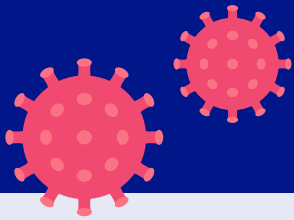
If you wish to remain at home with your child, contact your manager immediately to confirm the reason for your absence so your manager can verify that there is a legitimate need to be absent from work. Children not attending schools are not under quarantine. Where possible, employees can work from home. If it is determined you are required to be absent from work because your child is in need of supervision and would otherwise be unsupervised, and you are unable to work from home, Special Leave can be granted.

If, your manager deems the request not to be legitimate, then a request for annual leave can be made. If you are dissatisfied, you can follow the grievance process.

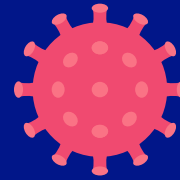
30. I live with a family member who must self-quarantine, and do not have the facilities or financial means to not be able to share space with that family member. I prefer to self-quarantine for 14 days to ensure I do not put my colleagues at risk. If I cannot work from home, can this leave be taken as paid leave?

Household members of persons under self-quarantine are not required to also self-quarantine but should not have close contact with the person under self-quarantine. If this is not possible, the





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person under self-quarantine can request to be placed in a Government quarantine facility. If you who are living in the same household of a person under self-quarantine, you **must** immediately inform your manager if you will not be reporting to the office.

Employees staying at home under these circumstances, where possible, must work from home using the Remote Desktop Service that has been launched. If the nature of your work makes it difficult to work from home, then Special Leave may be considered.

31. I have a pre-planned trip, can I still travel once the airport reopens? (UPDATED)

There will be no non-essential government travel for any Public Officers until further notice. All travel requests on behalf of the Bermuda Government must be approved by the relevant Permanent Secretary and the Head of the Public Service. If you take a personal vacation to a high-risk location, and the Quarantine (COVID-19) Order 2020 is still effective, you will be required to comply with the requirements of the Regulations or the order of a public health officer, including quarantine or self-quarantine.

You can work remotely using the Remote Desktop Service; however, if the nature of your work makes it difficult for you to work remotely the leave required due to quarantine in Bermuda or overseas, because you have travelled to a high-risk destination, will be counted as Annual Leave.

