

Message from Deputy Minister regarding COVID-19

*****This message is intended for Defence Team civilian employees and includes specific direction effective 13 March 2020 and lasting for a period of at least three weeks.*****

Team,

As you are aware, the World Health Organization has declared the novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak to be a global pandemic. The virus is spreading, and while Canada is not yet experiencing the outbreak to the same degree as other countries, it is both prudent and responsible to plan as if the full brunt of COVID-19 will reach us soon.

All of us share real and valid concerns about the health of our families and friends and, in many cases, aging parents and relatives. I share this worry. At the same time, every single member of our Defence Team has a role to play to protect and preserve the capacity of the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) to defend our country, and to support CAF's readiness to serve where needed.

Our actions right now matter enormously. As such, and in full coordination with the CAF, with Health Canada's Public Service Occupational Health Program (PSOHP), and the Public Health Agency of Canada, National Defence (DND) is shifting to pandemic response footing, effective 13 March.

You will note that DND direction differs in some ways from other government departments. This difference is rooted in our fundamental responsibility to support and preserve operational readiness and essential health services for the CAF, and continuing to respond to the wider Government of Canada's pandemic response.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR DND EMPLOYEES

- 1) Only essential core activities will continue at this time, including international and domestic operations, and anything that directly supports those functions. Each L1 will identify those core functions in their respective Business Continuity Plans.
- 2) Only DND staff who are physically required to conduct critical tasks should be on DND premises. All other employees should remain at home.
- 3) Only DND staff, CAF members or contractors who support critical functions are permitted on DND premises.
- 4) Only DND staff conducting essential core activities should access DVPNI from home. This is to minimize burden on the Information Management and IT systems.
- 5) All business travel is suspended.
- 6) All non-essential events are postponed.
- 7) Whenever possible, any meetings should be conducted via VTC or teleconferencing.

- 8) Any staff returning from leave or work travel outside Canada are encouraged to self-isolate for 14 days.
- 9) Managers requiring advice or support should contact HR-CIV via HR-Connect/Virtual Client Contact Centre.

In addition to this note, please review the below-mentioned additional resources, as well as the OCHRO note that was issued earlier today.

I cannot stress enough how much General Vance and I appreciate your service, your professionalism and your hard work, now more than ever.

We will keep you advised as further developments occur. In the meantime, stay safe, and thank you for all that you do.

Jody Thomas
Deputy Minister of National Defence

Additional Resources

[GC Intranet - Information for employees: Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\)](#)

[Defence Team Intranet - Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\)](#)

[Canada.ca - Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\)](#)

[HR Connect](#)

[The Maple Leaf](#)

[Facebook | Canadian Armed Forces](#)

[Facebook | Department of National Defence](#)

[Twitter | Canadian Armed Forces](#)

[Twitter | Department of National Defence](#)