

# Message from Deputy Minister regarding COVID-19

---

**\*\*\*This note is intended for all Defence Team civilian employees. It contains updates to the messages sent by the Deputy Minister and the Government of Canada's Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer (OCHRO) on 13 March.\*\*\***

Team,

Thank you for your ongoing flexibility as we adjust to the rapidly evolving COVID-19 situation.

Over the weekend, we've received additional guidance from Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat (TBS) that applies to our civilian workforce. While largely in-line with what was shared on 13 March, I wanted to make you aware of the following variations:

## **1) Update—Do you need to be on DND premises?**

DND civilian employees should engage in either telework or alternative work arrangements in all cases where operational requirements and circumstances permit.

All L1s will re-evaluate the elements of their Business Continuity Plans (BCP) that stipulate which civilian employees must be physically present on DND property.

Once that evaluation has taken place, L1s will clearly communicate any changes since Friday with their management and teams. Please be patient as this adjustment takes place.

## **2) Update—Reducing burden on systems like DVPNI**

As noted on Friday, only DND staff conducting critical core activities should access DVPNI from home. (Ask your manager or chain of command if you're not sure whether your BCP includes your function as a critical core activity.)

Anyone working from home should use mobile devices whenever possible to send and receive emails, as well as the BBMe application to communicate with colleagues (up to Protected B work).

You can also collaborate on **Unclassified** work using public cloud services like Facetime, MS Teams, Google Hangouts, etc.)

## **3) Update – Declaration of intention to travel**

Following updated active travel health notices, please declare any intent to travel to your manager.

As shared on 13 March, all business travel is suspended. Additionally, staff who have chosen to engage in personal international travel, will be required to self-isolate as per Public Health Agency of Canada direction.

#### **4) Amendment—Employees who are required by public health officials to self-isolate**

If you've been requested by Public Health Officials to self-isolate, but you feel in good health and able to work, please discuss telework options with your manager.

If telework isn't possible, you can be granted other leave with pay (code 699) in line with your collective agreement.

**Note:** Individual cases may have to be examined on their own merits (i.e. if you willingly choose to travel to affected areas contrary to public health advice).

#### **5) Update—Employees with school-age children**

Many of our employees have school-age children who are impacted by COVID-19-related school closures.

Just as no visitors are allowed on DND premises until further notice, it is important that you do not bring your children into the workplace either.

We ask that anyone needed in a core capacity attempt to make alternative care arrangements.

- If such arrangements are not possible, please discuss telework options with your manager.
- If telework isn't possible, you can arrange with your manager to be granted "other leave with pay" (code 699).

**Note regarding #5:** This provision will be in effect until 10 April 2020, after which it will be reassessed in line with specific regional education jurisdictions.

If you need support, please don't struggle alone. The 24-7 Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is available to all of you. You can also access the Public Service Healthcare Plan (PSHP) or use the nationwide Specialized Organizational Services (SOS).

We'll continue to update you as new information becomes available. In the meantime, please keep informed through the below-listed resources.

Jody Thomas  
Deputy Minister of National Defence

## **Additional Information and Resources**

- The information in this note and other Government of Canada information will also be made available on the [GCIntranet](#).
- In light of the increased telework on VPN use, the Government is now working to ensure that all [GCIntranet](#) content will be available on [Canada.ca](#).
- DND/CAF will continue to share important information via [HR GO RH](#) and other additional resources as listed below.
  - [Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat – COVID-19 information for Federal Public Servants](#)
  - [Canada.ca - Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\)](#)
  - [The Maple Leaf](#)
  - [Facebook | Canadian Armed Forces](#)
  - [Facebook | Department of National Defence](#)
  - [Twitter | Canadian Armed Forces](#)
  - [Twitter | Department of National Defence](#)
  - [GC Intranet - Information for employees: Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\) \(link accessible only on the Government of Canada network\)](#)
  - [Defence Team Intranet - Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\) \(link accessible only on the National Defence network\)](#)
  - [For HR related questions: HR Connect RH \(link accessible only on the National Defence network\)](#)
  - [HR GO RH App](#)

For HR related questions: HR Connect RH/Virtual Client Contact Centre at 1-833-RHR-MDND (1-833-747-6363) between 08h00 and 16h00 EST