

***This message has been approved by Tanya Rowell, CEO of the Public Service Commission***

***-Please convey this message to any employees who do not have computer access-***

### **Employee Update – May 8, 2020**

Thank you for your continued commitment as we work together in gradually and safely implementing a four-phased approach, in accordance with the guidelines outlined in [Renew PEI, Together](#) by the Chief Public Health Officer (CPHO), to re-open the Civil Service.

Departments are finalizing phased-in operational plans, and those will be implemented safely over the next two months, with a gradual re-opening of services over that time. We have included a number of general protocols for you below, and departments are ensuring site and service-specific measures are in place to maintain necessary physical distancing and cleaning protocols.

Departments will communicate with staff regarding details such as which departmental services are opening when, return to work dates for those working remotely and any amendments to work processes, etc.

All operations are encouraged to continue to offer virtual services throughout all of the phases, where ever feasible. Physical distancing, limiting access to the public, good hand hygiene, enhanced cleaning and disinfection of commonly touched surfaces and ensuring people stay home when sick is very important as we move forward through the phases.

Your Employer is exercising careful and appropriate caution when considering any necessary return of employees to the workplace. We will continue to follow the guidance of our Chief Public Health Officer, Dr. Heather Morrison, to make decisions. Safety is the top priority for employees and Islanders. Employees will return in a way that is safe to do so. The timeline for returning employees to the workplace will be aligned with the Renew PEI, Together plan. Determining employees to return will be based on what citizen-facing services are required as we move through the Renew PEI, Together phases.

Progress will be evaluated based on the latest information from our CPHO, and if necessary, progress will be slowed, halted or even reversed to continue to protect the health and safety of you and all Islanders.

### **General Protocols**

- ✓ Practice frequent [handwashing](#) (if not possible, use a hand sanitizer that contains 60% - 80% alcohol), coughing or sneezing into an elbow and avoid touching your face.
- ✓ Ensure physical distancing of 2 meters or 6 feet at all times. Many worksites have plexiglass barriers and/or floor markers already in place to assist in this.
- ✓ Limit unnecessary visits to other offices, shared spaces or public areas.
- ✓ Limit public access; meetings are to be held via video conferencing, teleconference or telephone where possible.
- ✓ Signage will be in place for the safe use of elevators, washrooms and common areas.

- ✓ Washroom capacity will be limited to 1-2 people at a time, depending on the washroom size/layout.
- ✓ Cleaning and sanitizing have been enhanced.
- ✓ Where appropriate, managers will consider having clients wait in their vehicle for their appointment and come in when they are contacted to do so. If clients must come to a waiting room, chairs must be arranged to maintain physical distancing at all times.
- ✓ Avoid greetings that involve touching, such as handshakes.
- ✓ Use paper towels instead of reusable dishcloths in lunchrooms.
- ✓ Wipe down high touch surfaces in common areas such as boardrooms and photocopy rooms after each use with cleaning products & supplies provided.
- ✓ Employees are instructed to clean their work surfaces and tools of workspaces regularly with cleaning products & supplies provided.
- ✓ Carpool or share drives if physical distancing is maintained.

### **Before Returning**

Identify any equipment or supplies you need to return to the office, including computers, monitors, docking stations and other accessories that you may have brought home to work remotely. Confirm with your manager once any government-owned equipment you brought with you has been returned.

Familiarize yourself with the following COVID-19 Employee Exclusion policies (also located at the [PSC website](#)).

### **Exclusion Policy for Employees and Clients Requiring Self-Isolation:**

Employees and clients who have been outside of PEI within the last 14 days and are required to self-isolate, are not permitted to enter a Government site.

### **Exclusion Policy for Employees Displaying Symptoms of COVID-19:**

- All staff must self-monitor for symptoms and report to their supervisor if they have concerns about possible COVID exposure or possible symptoms.
- Any staff member developing symptoms of COVID-19 at work must immediately perform hand hygiene, report to their manager, avoid contact with staff and leave as soon as it is safe to do so. Please call 811 to arrange testing.
- Symptomatic staff will be required to self-isolate until tested for COVID-19, and the results are confirmed.

- If the test results are negative for COVID-19, but the staff member remains ill and/or symptomatic, they should remain on sick leave. All sick leave taken will be in accordance with Article 23 of the UPSE Civil Collective Agreement.

*Symptoms of COVID-19 include:*

- cough (new or exacerbated chronic)
- headache
- fever/chills
- sore throat
- marked fatigue
- sneezing
- congestion
- body aches
- runny nose

**If I am an active casual employee without entitlement to paid leave or I am an active temporary or permanent employee without adequate paid sick leave in my bank, and I test positive for COVID-19, will I be eligible for leave?**

In these extenuating circumstances, you will not incur loss of pay if you test positive for COVID-19. We will continue to pay active casual employees who have worked in the past 14 days, and active temporary and permanent employees who have worked in the past 14 days and do not have paid sick leave in their bank, who test positive for COVID-19, based on the average of their last three pay periods. Employees will receive pay for up to 2 weeks or until they are cleared to return to work, whichever is sooner. In exceptional circumstances, periods of paid leave in excess of 2 weeks may be authorized by the Employing Authority where warranted.

**If I have not tested positive for COVID-19 but have been advised to self-isolate, will I be eligible for leave?**

If you are **not ill** but are required to self-isolate, contact your manager to discuss whether working remotely is an option.

If this is not an option, and you are feeling well, you will be placed on paid administrative leave for the period of self-isolation. This includes casuals who have scheduled work hours during the period of self-isolation.

If you are **feeling unwell**, you will be eligible for sick leave benefits in accordance with your collective agreement. During this time, employees will **not** be requested to provide medical certificates for leave related to COVID-19. If you do not have enough earned sick time, you may request to be advanced sick leave credits, up to a maximum of 15 days, as per Article 23.04 of the UPSE Civil Collective Agreement.

More information on **self-isolation** can be found at <https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/en/topic/self-isolation>.

**What if I feel unsafe coming to work because of COVID-19?**

Please speak with your manager about any safety concerns about your workplace.

Your **Employee Assistance Program (EAP)** is here and available for you. EAP Counsellors can be reached at [\(902\) 368-5738](tel:902-368-5738) or toll-free at [1-800-239-3826](tel:1-800-239-3826) or by email at [eap@gov.pe.ca](mailto:eap@gov.pe.ca).

**Emergency child care services** will be available to employees who have no other alternative. If you are an employee with children and require child care, please fill out the online form survey at [Emergency Child Care Services](#).

**My child's school or early learning centre is closed, and I can't arrange child care. What do I do?**

We recognize school and daycare closures have presented challenging circumstances to employees who have young children in school and daycare. All unlicensed child care providers and licensed child care centres are permitted to operate starting May 22nd under the guidance set out by the CPHO. We appreciate they are opening with limited capacity and know we can count on you to do your best to balance your work and personal obligations and be present at work as much as possible.

1. **If you are unable to access daycare services**, please attempt to the best of your ability to make safe alternate child care arrangements, even for part of the day or the week.
2. If you are unable to make alternate child care arrangements, talk to your manager about possible options to work from home or to modify your work hours.
3. Finally, as a last step, if employees can demonstrate to their manager that they pursued all reasonable options, they will be provided with special leave with pay for those work periods where they have no reasonable alternate child care arrangements for the time being.

**If you have further questions or concerns, please contact your Manager or your departmental Human Resource Manager to discuss.**

Be safe and well and continue to stay informed by checking [www.princeedwardisland.ca/covid19](http://www.princeedwardisland.ca/covid19) regularly for CPHO updates regarding COVID-19.

Together we have done what we needed to do to keep ourselves, our families and Islanders safe. We have accomplished a great deal over these past few months and together, we will work safely and carefully for continued success throughout these next phases.

Thank you and have a wonderful weekend,

Tanya Rowell