

***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 -***

On Saturday, our Chief Public Health Officer, Dr. Heather Morrison and Premier Dennis King announced Prince Edward Island's first COVID-19 case associated with the U.K. variant. While there is no indication that the variant strain of COVID-19 has spread within our province, the arrival of a variant confirms how important it is that we remain vigilant and do not become complacent with COVID-19 (<https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/en/news/uk-variant-identified-pei>). Together, let's continue to do what is needed to push through this.

**All staff must self-monitor for [symptoms](#) of COVID-19 and report to their supervisor immediately if they have concerns about possible COVID-19 exposure or possible symptoms.** Any staff member who develops symptoms of COVID-19 at work must immediately perform hand hygiene, report to their manager, avoid contact with staff, leave as soon as it is safe to do so and visit a Drop-In Testing Clinic. Managers should then consult with their Human Resource Manager on the next steps.

**If Public Health has advised you that you need to be [tested](#) and [self-isolate](#),** you should arrange to get tested and contact your manager or supervisor as soon as possible. Managers should then consult with their Human Resource Manager on appropriate next steps.

**The following measures must continue to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace:**

- Staying home when ill. Anyone experiencing symptoms related to COVID-19 should contact their family physician, nurse practitioner, call 8-1-1 or visit one of the COVID-19 Drop-In Testing Clinics.
- Screening all clients and visitors before entry using the **screening tool** at <https://psc.gpei.ca/sites/psc.gpei.ca/files/PDF%20Files/COVIDScreeningToolNov24%2C2020.pdf>.
- Adhering to the **Civil Service Mask Protocol** at <https://psc.gpei.ca/sites/psc.gpei.ca/files/MaskProtocol19Nov2020.pdf> and ensuring clients and other visitors are advised of mask expectations before their arrival.
- Physical distancing (2m/6ft) at all times in your workplace and in common areas such as elevators, stairs, lunchrooms, etc. This includes staggering lunch breaks, booking larger boardrooms, and not meeting in hallways where others need to pass, etc.
- Limiting the number of people in the workplace where necessary by having people work remotely where possible, limiting public access where appropriate, meeting virtually or via teleconference, and offering virtual services where feasible.
- Washing your hands and not touching your face with unwashed hands, covering your cough or sneeze with tissues or your sleeve, and enhanced cleaning of commonly touched surfaces.
- Stay informed by checking [www.princeedwardisland.ca/covid19](http://www.princeedwardisland.ca/covid19) regularly for CPHO updates and download the free national [COVID Alert app](#), which will let you know if you have been exposed to someone who has tested positive for COVID-19.

**Employees should not travel off Island unless absolutely necessary**

If it becomes necessary for you to travel outside of Prince Edward Island, you must follow CPHO advice. If you are required to self-isolate following your travels, please talk with your manager in advance about the option of working from home during your self-isolation period. If this option is not possible, you may apply to work isolate through the online application at <https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/en/information/health-and-wellness/work-isolation> provided you have your employer's support to work isolate if approved. It is recommended that you discuss the application with your manager before submitting the application and before you leave the province. **Managers are to discuss work isolation requests with their Director and Human Resource Manager.** Employees who **do not apply or are not approved to work isolate** and are required to self-isolate for 14 days upon return, must use vacation or other accrued leave during the self-isolation period if not approved to work from home. Sick leave is not available unless symptomatic.

**Family Violence Prevention Week- February 14-20**

All employees are invited to participate in Family Violence Prevention Week, February 14-20, to raise awareness and learn more about how to help prevent family violence. **On Wednesday, February 17, please wear purple to**

**remember victims of violence and their families. For a full schedule of events for the week, visit: [Family Violence Prevention Week 2021](#). “The Guidelines for Addressing Family Violence and the Workplace” is a handbook created as a resource for PEI Government workplaces to help recognize and respond to employees affected by family violence. It can be found at [https://psc.gpei.ca/files/HRManual\\_9.06.pdf](https://psc.gpei.ca/files/HRManual_9.06.pdf) and contains helpful information for employees and supervisors. If you would you like to talk to someone about family violence, please don't hesitate to reach out to your Supervisor, Manager or HR Manager or connect with the services listed in Appendix A of the Guidelines.**

**Working from Home and your 2020 Tax Return:**

If you are an employee who worked from home due to COVID-19, the Canadian Revenue Agency (CRA) recently announced a temporary simplified method for claiming home office deductions on your 2020 tax return. This will allow employees who worked from home due to COVID-19, more than 50 percent of the time for at least four consecutive weeks during the pandemic, to claim an amount of \$2 per working day (up to a maximum deduction of \$400). This simplified method does not require you to obtain a T2200/T2200S form. If you are claiming a deduction that is greater than the simplified method, you will need to contact your payroll department to obtain a T2200 form. For more information related to the home office deduction please visit the CRA website: <https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/news/2020/12/simplifying-the-process-for-claiming-a-deduction-for-home-office-expenses-for-employees-working-from-home-due-to-covid-19.html>. If you have any further questions, please contact your payroll office or HR Manager.

**Your Employee Assistance Program is Here for You**

EAP is confidential and counsellors can be reached at [\(902\)368-5738](tel:9023685738) or toll-free at [1-800-239-3826](tel:18002393826) or by email at [eap@gov.pe.ca](mailto:eap@gov.pe.ca).

**If you have any questions or require more information on any of the above, please don't hesitate to reach out to your manager or your Human Resource Manager.**

Thank you and have a great week!