**SUBJECT: COVID-19 Communique**

Most federal employees are at no higher risk of contracting COVID-19 relative to members of the general public.

Some facts about the novel coronavirus:

Coronaviruses are most commonly spread from an infected person through:

* Respiratory droplets generated when you cough or sneeze;
* Close personal contact, such as touching or shaking hands, then touching your mouth, nose or eyes; and
* Touching something with the virus on it, then touching your mouth, nose or eyes before washing your hands.

COVID-19 symptoms may take up to 14 days to appear after exposure to the virus.

At this time, the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) has assessed the public health risk associated with COVID-19 as low for the general population in Canada. Based on the current PHAC advisories and prevention recommendations, if you have travelled to an at-risk area as identified by PHAC ([Hubei province, China, Iran or Italy](https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/diseases-conditions/2019-novel-coronavirus-information-sheet-travelled-hubei-province-china.html)) in the last 14 days, limit your contact with others for 14 days, starting the day you began your journey to Canada. This means self-isolate and **stay at home.**

**Do not come to work** if:

1. If you develop symptoms of respiratory illness (fever, persistent cough, difficulty breathing). In such cases, isolate yourself from others as quickly as possible. Immediately call a health care professional or the public health authority in the province or territory where you are located;
2. You have travelled abroad or live with someone who has travelled abroad **and** are experiencing symptoms of respiratory illness;
3. You have been diagnosed with COVID-19; **or**
4. Your local public health authority has identified you as a close contact of someone diagnosed with COVID-19.

CSC will send home employees who meet any of the four criteria above.

If you start having symptoms of COVID-19, isolate yourself from others as quickly as possible. Immediately call a health care professional or the public health authority in the province or territory where you are located.

Please keep in mind that circumstances can change rapidly and each case must be assessed based on individual circumstances.

If an employee takes time off work, the applicable leave provisions under their collective agreement are to be utilized (e.g. sick leave, family related responsibilities leave, vacation leave). **Leave with pay for other reasons is not applicable at this time. Leave without pay for other reasons** will only be considered once other types of leave have been exhausted. Alternate work arrangements such as telework may be considered on a case-by-case basis in accordance with existing policy.

Accordingly, staff should **not be sent home or granted leave** on the basis of solely **having been in contact** with persons exhibiting influenza symptoms. Employees should self-monitor. Employees concerned that they may have contracted COVID-19 should take preventative measures, immediately contact the public health authority in their province or territory, and keep their manager apprised.

Managers are also advised that employees are not required to wear masks and gloves **for normal interactions with individuals without symptoms**.

I will keep you updated as this situation evolves. For additional information, please consult the Frequently Asked Questions as well as the Public Service Occupational Health Program (PSOHP) Advisory on COVID-19. You can also consult the [PHAC](https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection.html) website.

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