

Human Resources - Employee FAQ

The details regarding Covid-19 is very situational and evolving. This information will be updated regularly and is subject to change.

1. Why do health authority employees have different direction about coming to work than other industries? What makes the Health Authority different?

The goal of our Pandemic Response Plan is to limit the spread of Covid-19 in the general public. In Pandemic times, we enact a call to action for Healthcare workers to help the rest of our citizens make their way through the pandemic. We play a critical role in caring for the rest of our population. Therefore, the benefit of having our teams at work is greater than the risk of keeping us at home.

2. I am providing care at a site where many patients/ clients are presenting with potential symptoms of COVID-19. Am I safe to go to work?

Island Health takes illness prevention and safety very seriously. We are taking active steps to improve measures where possible including:

- promoting and posting signage for hand hygiene practices for employees, volunteers, patients and visitors
- making appropriate personal protective equipment available
- signage for proper cough/sneeze etiquette, etc.
- ensuring that employees with flu-like symptoms do not come to work
- reminding employees to continue to self-monitor for flu-like symptoms
- addressing any relevant facility concerns, such as ensuring adequate hand washing and drying supplies, etc.

3. I think I have regular flu-like symptoms or am unwell. What should I do?

Employees with flu-like symptoms should not be at work, but should recuperate at home on sick leave. This allows you to get well and protects staff and patients. If you see a Physician and directed to observe a period of self-isolation, you will be provided with further instruction regarding when you should return to work. If you have not been directed to self-isolate, you will return to work when symptoms cease. If COVID-19 is suspected or confirmed as the reason for illness, you will need to self-isolate for 14 days.

4. Will my Manager need a sick note from a physician if I am unwell?

In order to avoid unnecessary utilization of your primary care physician, a sick note will not be requested for employees with a short-term illness such as the flu.

5. I think I may have had exposure to COVID-19. What should I do?

If you think you may have been exposed to COVID-19, you need to contact 8-1-1, your primary care provider, or the occupational health help line (a call to the public health office after hours gets routed to the MHO), and follow the directions you are provided by those sources. If you are instructed by a qualified medical practitioner to self-isolate at home, contact your Manager to

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determine whether a work from home/remote working arrangement can be established or you will be on general leave.

6. I have been instructed to self-isolate. Will I be paid?

You will be paid through general leave with pay or in accordance with your collective agreement.

FOR CASUAL STATUS: If you have been instructed by a qualified medical practitioner to self-isolate, you will be paid for any shifts you will miss during your isolation period.

FOR REGULAR STATUS: If you have been instructed by a qualified medical practitioner to self-isolate, you will be placed on general leave with pay.

7. I am living in the same residence as someone who has recently travelled. Should I come to work?

Given that you are healthy and are asymptomatic (not showing symptoms), you are required to report to work.

8. I have just returned from international travel. Am I expected to come to work?

Yes. Unless you are returning from Hubei Province of China, Iran, or Italy, you are required to come to work. Of course, regardless of where you travelled, you are required to monitor yourself for symptoms. You will be expected to take the same precautions as an individual who did not receive influenza vaccination – a mask at all times. For the rest of the time you will be expected to observe the general tenants of self-isolation such as limiting contacts and social distancing.

9. I haven't travelled. Can I self isolate at my own discretion?

No. Unless you have been directed to self-isolate by a qualified medical practitioner, or are actively seeking assessment about COVID-19 exposure we expect you to report to work.

10. I have decided to cancel my upcoming vacation plans. Can I cancel my vacation leave and come to work instead?

The simple answer is yes. Please work with your leader to work out details as our goal will be to maximize the number of employees in our system (from March 12 through April 30).

11. I am currently away from work while waiting on COVID-19 results. Will I be paid?

You will be paid through general leave with pay or in accordance with your collective agreement.

12. I haven't been directed to self-isolate but I would like to work from home. Is this possible?

Your leader will be considering requests to work from home should it be feasible for your role and operationally possible. Please contact your leader.

13. I want to stay updated about COVID-19. What is the best source of information?

The [Covid-19 Intranet page](#) for Island Health is being constantly updated and we recommend starting there. It includes links to trusted sources of information.

14. **I am immunocompromised, should I come to work?**
Yes. Staff who are immunocompromised can work safely if they follow infection prevention and control processes.
15. **My loved one is immunocompromised, should I come to work?**
Yes. Staff who are immunocompromised can work safely if they follow infection prevention and control processes. Those same processes will help ensure staff do not bring illnesses home with them.
16. **I am off on sick leave related to COVID-19. I'm out of paid sick time/bank. Can I continue to be paid by Island Health.**
No. Paid sick leave must be administrated in accordance with each collective agreement. You will be coded to unpaid sick should your paid sick leave be exhausted. You may be eligible for sick leave benefits through the Federal Employment Insurance program.
17. **I have recently had a patient/client that I was providing care to test positive for COVID-19. Do I have to return to work?**
When a client/patient/resident tests positive for COVID-19 public health officials will be actively involved. If you are deemed by a qualified medical professional to be at risk, you will be provided instructions. If you are instructed to self-isolate, you will be placed on a paid general leave. If you are asymptomatic and not instructed to self-isolate, you are expected to attend work and follow the directions provided in Question 8.
18. **Why are my colleagues who have chosen to travel or who have been instructed to self isolate, being paid?**
Paid leave reduces potential monetary incentives to ignore these instructions which helps protect patients, volunteers, and other employees.
19. **I contracted COVID-19 while I was at work. Will Island Health notify WorkSafeBC?**
As an employer, Island Health is obligated to report any illness or injury arising at a workplace. If you contracted COVID-19 in the workplace, Island Health will work closely with WorkSafeBC to make sure that you are paid.
20. **When will Island Health release more information related to working remotely?**
Island Health is exploring all possibilities of alternative work arrangements at this time. Examples of alternative working arrangements may include being deployed to a different site or working from home. We will continue to update this FAQ as the situation develops. Please keep visiting Island Health's [Covid-19 intranet page](#) for details.

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21. I have a family member that requires care due to COVID-19. Is there a paid leave I can access?
Depending on the collective agreement or terms and conditions, you may be eligible for a leave to support the care of a family member