

COVID-19 : HR Bulletin #1 – Leaves of Absences

TO: All EM/ANB employees

FROM: Beth Simkins-Burrows, Senior Manager, Human Resources/

The World Health Organization (WHO) has declared a public health emergency related to COVID-19 (coronavirus). We have had the first confirmed case of COVID-19 identified in NB. As of March 12, 2020, Medical experts currently consider the overall risk to non-travelling New Brunswickers as low. The risk to New Brunswickers travelling abroad will vary depending on the destination.

Employees need to be mindful of the direction provided by Health Canada regarding international travel and any subsequent requirement for self-isolation ([for more information, click here](#)).

EM/ANB is not requiring employees to self-isolate following travel unless they are ill or have personally been to Hubei Province of China, Iran, or Italy.

As always, employees are required to adhere to all routine practices and hand washing protocols.

Please note the following for the application of leave provisions:

- An employee with flu symptoms, regardless of any recent international travel, should stay home and use available sick time.
- Employees who have traveled to these high risk areas (As of March 12, 2020: Hubei Province of China, Iran and Italy) will be required to self-isolate for 14 days upon return. These employees are to be coded for paid leave for 14 consecutive calendar days.
 - If an employee becomes ill during this self-isolation period, the paid leave will be switched to sick leave as of the date of the illness.
- Employees who travel to other countries and are feeling unwell and choose to remain home as a precautionary measure, but are not directed to do so, and who have not yet tested positive for COVID-19 are to be coded as paid sick leave.
- Employees who develop symptoms of COVID-19 are required to self-isolate, contact 811, and follow the directions provided. These employees are to be coded for sick leave pending testing for COVID-19.
- Employees who test positive for COVID-19 are to be coded as sick leave.
- If caring for a family member who is sick, employees may have access to leaves, such as family responsibility leave, according to the applicable collective agreement or Part III non-bargaining policy. Paid sick leave is not applicable in these circumstances.

Direction from Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

As you may be aware, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (EECD) is requiring that all children, students, staff, volunteers, and family members avoid entering public schools, early learning facilities (i.e. daycares) or school district offices for 14 days if they return from a trip to any international destination after March 8, 2020.

Please note that there is no similar directive for EM/ANB employees.

This means that EM/ANB employees are expected to report for work unless they are returning from Iran, Hubei province of China or Italy or if they are sick or feel unwell.

It is recognized that EECD's directive will mean that some among you may need to take care of your children who cannot attend school/daycare because they are returning from international travel.

As an employer, EM/ANB wants to support you in attending to these needs while ensuring also that we can continue to deliver on our mission to serve New Brunswickers.

If your children are unable to attend school/daycare, we ask that you make alternate childcare arrangements.

In the event that alternate childcare arrangements cannot be arranged, EM/ANB will apply the following leave guideline:

- Any family responsibility leave available in your collective agreement or Part III non-bargaining policy.

When family responsibility leaves have been exhausted for employees unable to make alternate childcare arrangements, one of the two following options will apply based on the circumstances of their trip:

- Employees whose children are currently on a personal trip to an international destination and who return by **March 14, 2020** will be placed on a paid leave of absence for the portion of their childcare-related absence not covered by family responsibility leave.
- Employees whose children start a personal trip to any international destination **after March 14, 2020** are required to make alternate childcare arrangements until their children can return to school or daycare. In extraordinary circumstances and with demonstrated proof that alternate arrangements could not be made, employees will be required to use vacation leave, pro-rated leave, or leave without pay for the remainder of their leave or childcare-related absence not covered by family responsibility leave or banked time.

Personal travel to destinations outside Canada

The situation related to COVID-19 is fast-changing and we cannot predict the evolving travel restrictions and/or self-isolation requirements at home or abroad.

If you are planning a personal trip to any international destination (note: this does not apply to situations where employees travel back and forth across the Maine border as part of their normal routine), please be advised of the following to help you make an informed decision:

- Traveling abroad means running the risk of getting caught up in another country's travel or quarantine restrictions (i.e. not being able to leave that country).
- Should you be unable to report back to work immediately upon your return because Public Health Agency of Canada has issued self-isolation requirements for your destination, you will be required to use your vacation leave, banked time, pro-rated leave, or leave without pay until you are able to return to work.

We know we can count on you to do your best to balance your work and personal obligations as much as possible. New Brunswickers count on us to continue to provide quality and safe patient care.

The Department of Health has created a website and we invite you to visit it at: www.gnb.ca/coronavirus regularly. It is updated as information changes. If you have any questions about the foregoing, please contact Human Resources.