

Deputy Minister's update regarding temporary cessation of most education and training activities within the CAF

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📢 This message is an update for all civilian staff regarding the temporary cessation of schooling and training activities within the Canadian Armed Forces.

Team,

I'm writing to update you on recent developments regarding Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) training institutions, and what they mean for DND civilian employees.

As background, on Tuesday General Vance (CDS) issued orders to immediately cease most training and education activities at all Canadian Armed Forces Institutions. Practically speaking, the way military orders unfold is that the CDS's intent is cascaded through the CAF chain of command. Each Commander implements the direction in the way most appropriate to a given location, taking local factors and timing into account.

I spoke with June Winger of UNDE on Wednesday to discuss how this interim step is rolling out for civilian employees impacted by these changes.

In some cases, the local direction has been implemented quickly, particularly when the training is specific to current CAF members on a military base, such as CFB Borden. In those cases, DND civilian workers were able to check-in with their managers and, unless they were directly implicated in their L1's Business Continuity Plan (BCP), go home and stay home.

In cases where we are coordinating the departure of students and recruits, such as with RMC-Kingston and RMC-St-Jean, timing for civilian staff to go home and stay home will depend on their functions and their role in helping the cadets disperse. We need to ensure cadets leave campus safely and efficiently.

Some cadets do not have a designated residence outside school grounds. Therefore we may have a small ongoing need at RMC-Kingston to feed and care for those who remain. We will ensure that civilian employees who support those activities will do so in a safe work environment. Details on these requirements will be considered and consulted with local health and safety committees.

Important points for staff impacted by these changes:

- **This new posture is an interim measure.** Defence Team leadership is constantly assessing our measures, and BCP in line with maintaining operational readiness, and proper health and safety measures.
- **You should stay connected:** All DND civilian staff should review existing materials about the Defence Team response to COVID-19, as well as download the HR GO RH app to their phone to receive regular updates. I also tweet updates, so if you are on Twitter, you can follow me at: @DMDND_SMMDN.
- **How to direct questions about your specific situation:**
 - Your supervisor is best-placed to answer your questions about your local situation. If they don't know right away, they will escalate the question to ensure you get answers.
 - IF you have a pay-related question, contact HR Connect:
 - 1-833-RHR-MDND (1-833-747-6363)
 - Download the **HR Go RH App** (Apple or Android)
 - **If you are still onsite and see something unsafe, contact DSafeG:**
QHSSecretariatSST@forces.gc.ca

Let me also say that I appreciate hearing about internal staff matters in a public forum can be frustrating for employees. I'll keep working to strike the right balance between timeliness and getting the details right as we encounter and address emerging issues during the COVID-19 crisis. It won't always be perfect so thank you again for your continued patience in this rapidly evolving situation. I am so proud to work with all of you.

Stay safe,

Jody Thomas

Deputy Minister of National Defence