

Guidance on Travel, Leave and Flexible Work Arrangements for Public Service Employees
COVID-19
March 2020

1. Where can I get regular updates on COVID-19?

The primary source of information related to COVID-19 is Canada.ca/coronavirus, which includes [Frequently Asked Questions](#) about the virus and the Government of Canada's actions.

You can also contact the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) by:

- Phone: 1-833-784-4397
- *Email: phac.info.aspc@canada.ca

Follow Canada's Chief Public Health Officer, Dr. Theresa Tam, on Twitter for up-to-date information.

You can also visit the [Defence Team Intranet site](#) for updated information for employees. [HR Connect RH](#) is your first point of contact for HR-related questions about COVID-19. [Submit](#) your questions or call 1-833-747-6363 between 08h00 and 16h00 EST. Stay informed of the latest information on COVID-19 by downloading the [HR GO RH App](#).

2. I am not sick and nor have I been in contact with someone who is sick. Why can't I come into work?

The objective of DND must be to preserve operational readiness and essential health services for the CAF and civilians. We must do our part to minimize the possible transmission and potential illness of the Defence Team members, impacting their ability to respond when called upon. Civilians have an important role to play in this operation and are expected to cooperate and help flatten the COVID-19 curve and abide by the Deputy Minister's direction.

3. I just read the DM's message and I am wondering if I can't work, will I be penalized?

In accordance with OCHRO direction, leave with pay for other reasons will apply in this situation as the circumstances that prevent non-critical employees from reporting to work are not directly attributable to them. (HR CONNECT RH - please consult OCHRO Q 32).

4. I just read the DM's message and does this mean that our workplaces are closed?

The bases and wings, including Headquarters in Ottawa (Carling and Pearkes) remain open, however, DND is invoking its business continuity plan and ensuring the protection of our CAF by preventing the furtherance of the virus. Essential services will continue. If you are identified as a critical service, your manager will contact you. Other employees need to find alternative means of working off-line such as training or using software that does not require access to the DWAN.

5. What if I can't work from home?

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An employee's manager is the first point of contact in establishing whether an employee can or should telework. If telework isn't possible, you can be granted other leave with pay (code 699) in line with your collective agreement.

6. When do I use sick leave versus other leave with pay?

DND's direction to employees, based on OCHRO guidance, is clear: telework wherever possible. **If you are available and ready to work but unable to do so due to circumstances beyond your control (e.g. your duties cannot be done remotely), use Leave With Pay for Other Reasons (code 699).**

If you are sick and unable to perform your duties, please use your sick leave. It's meant to ensure you will continue to be paid and will trigger further benefits in serious situations. Remember, when you sign a sick leave request, you are declaring on your honour that you are unable to perform your duties.

If you are well enough to continue working, please do so remotely to protect yourself and others.

7. Should I input the leave in the system now?

No. Please do not access the DWAN. When operations return to normal, instructions will be sent out on how to deal with the absence. At present, all employees should consider themselves to be working from home as, regardless of their duties, they are available and ready to work if required.

8. I had submitted my 'one-time vacation' leave request, but I now need to cancel it. How do I do this?

Please discuss your leave request with your manager and manually track the cancellation for the time being.

Managers can call HR Connect RH to request leave cancellations in HRMS.

****HR Connect HR Agents:** Requests related to paid leave can be created in HRSS and Compensation can manually adjust the balances once systems are back up.

9. Can a manager force their employees to work from home?

Yes. Only DND staff who are physically required to conduct critical tasks should be on DND premises. **All other employees should remain at home.**

Only essential core activities will continue at this time, including international and domestic operations, and anything that directly supports those functions. Each L1 will identify those core functions in their respective Business Continuity Plans.

Only DND staff conducting essential core activities should access DVPNI from home. This is to minimize burden on the Information Management and IT systems.

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DND civilian employees should engage in either telework or alternative work arrangements in all cases where operational requirements and circumstances permit.

10. Can my manager require me to come into the office to support essential operations (minimal manning), or to take on duties that are different from my regular position?

A manager can request that an employee supports critical duties, which can include reporting to the office. However, you cannot be asked to take duties that fall outside of your regular work. DND recognizes your right to refuse work under the Canada Labour Code and will protect your safety and health to every extent possible. Questions concerning refusals to work should be directed to your manager or General Safety Officer or General Safety (D Safe G, VCDS) – OHSSecretariatSST@forces.gc.ca.

11. I don't want to go to work but I provide a critical service. What should I do?

Speak to your manager. They will be able to provide you with information on what measures they have taken to protect your health and safety (eg. providing personnel protective equipment, implementing social distancing best practices, etc.). Unless you have a specific vulnerability (i.e. elderly age category based on GC COVID19 guidelines, compromised immune system, etc), you will need to exercise your right to refuse work under the Canada Labour Code, if you do not wish to work. Questions concerning refusals to work should be directed to your manager or General Safety Officer or General Safety (D Safe G, VCDS) – OHSSecretariatSST@forces.gc.ca.

If you do have a vulnerability, you must make a written, signed statement to that effect, and commit to providing a medical certificate to substantiate at a future date.

12. Do I have to use my Family Related leave first for school closures?

No you do not. Just as no visitors are allowed on DND premises until further notice, it is important that you do not bring your children into the workplace either.

We ask that anyone needed in a core capacity attempt to make alternative care arrangements.

- If such arrangements are not possible, please discuss telework options with your manager.
- If telework isn't possible, you can arrange with your manager to be granted "other leave with pay" (code 699).

13. OCHRO has provided new guidance around leave and travel. What does this mean for DND civilians?

UCHRO's guidance provides increased flexibility to departments and agencies who are still operating as "business as usual". Because DND invoked our Business Continuity Plan on 13

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March 2020, employees who have been identified as non-critical are being asked to work offline and offsite to the extent possible and to remain accessible and available. If working offline is not a possibility, leave will be captured through Leave With Pay for Other Reasons (code 699).

14. What if I think I was exposed at work? Should I apply for Worker's Compensation?

For civilian employees, if you develop fever, cough, or difficulty breathing within 14 days of a potential exposure, call your health care provider or local public health authority. Employees who are sick should use sick leave. If you believe you were exposed at work, please follow regular [Occupational Health and Safety](#) and [Injury on Duty](#) Procedures.

15. I am supposed to start maternity/paternity leave in April, but due to COVID-19 I want to move up my date, especially now that daycare is closed for my other children. How do I do this?

To change the date of your maternity/paternity leave, adjust your leave forms with the new date, have it signed by your Section 34 manager, and submit a PAR through HRSS as soon as possible. If you do not have access to the system, we can complete the forms and obtain approval on your behalf.

****HR Connect HR Agents:** You can complete the form on their behalf, and send to Christopher Garnier or Diana Moujaes to sign on behalf of their S.34 manager.

16. How can employees submit a request for an Emergency Salary Advance if needed during this time?

If you or your manager can access HR systems through the DVPNI, they should submit a request for an Emergency Salary Advance through the [Human Resource Services and Support](#) under the Pay Action Request option with the work type ESA.

If you or your manager are not able to access the system, Call HR Connect RH (1-833-747-6363) and indicate you are requesting an ESA. The Call center Agent can enter your request into HRSS for you.

17. How do I access a priority payment?

Priority Payment requests on Non-Basic Pay are processed by the Corporate Department Accounting Office – Employees and Managers need to follow the process in place and send the forms to [Corporate Departmental Accounting Office](#) (CDAO6BCCM6@forces.gc.ca).

**** HR Connect RH Agents:** individuals may not have access to the forms and process. You may need to assist them.

<http://hrciv-rhciv.mil.ca/en/e-compensation-priority-payment-claim-process.page>

18. Is training considered essential and can I continue my studies?

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The Canada School of Public Service (CSPS) has suspended all class room and online learning until April 10. If you have been identified by your chain of command as an employee providing a core activity and training is part of that activity, you should continue your studies. However, if you are not providing a core activity, please consult with your manager and supervisor what activities you should be working on and be mindful of the Deputy Minister's direction "Only DND staff conducting critical core activities should access DVPNI from home. This is to minimize burden on the Information Management and IT systems." Training from home is encouraged as long as it does not require access to the DVPNI or the CSPS.

19. Is language testing still available?

See Annex below.

20. I need a copy of my T4/Relevé 1 documents to complete my tax returns and I cannot access Phoenix. How do I get a copy?

Tax slips are available on the [Canada Revenue Agency](#) and [Revenu Québec](#) websites through My Account. Creating a [My Account](#) gives you quick and easy access to your tax information and allows you to track your refund, view or change your return, set up [direct deposit](#), and [more](#).

You can also call the Client Contact Centre at Public Services and Procurement Canada at 1-855-686-4729. They are open Monday to Friday from 7 am to 7 pm eastern time.

From Managers:

21. Should my employee stay home if they have symptoms?

If an employee has any symptoms, they should **stay home** and call the [public health authority](#) in the province or territory they are in to inform them. They will provide advice on what you should do. Follow regular [Occupational Health and Safety](#) procedures.

Contact your L1 or Command Health and Safety Advisor and your General Safety Officer at the local level OR General Safety (D Safe G, VCDS) – OHSSecretariatSST@forces.gc.ca

22. What should I do if an employee refuses to come to work because they are afraid of contracting COVID-19?

Only DND staff who are physically required to conduct critical tasks should be on DND premises. **All other employees should remain at home.**

Only essential core activities will continue at this time, including international and domestic operations, and anything that directly supports those functions. Each L1 will identify those core functions in their respective Business Continuity Plans.

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Only DND staff conducting essential core activities should access DVPNI from home. This is to minimize burden on the Information Management and IT systems.

DND civilian employees should engage in either telework or alternative work arrangements in all cases where operational requirements and circumstances permit.

23. What is the correct procedure for reporting cases (ex. To military garrison directorates)

Follow regular [Occupational Health and Safety](#) procedures.

Contact your L1 or Command Health and Safety Advisor and your General Safety Officer at the local level OR General Safety (D Safe G, VCDS) – OHSSecretariatSST@forces.gc.ca and report the case to the Labour Program 1-800-641-4049.

24. Which leave code should we use? Is it code 655 for Quarantine?

No, **do NOT use code 665**. If telework isn't possible, you can be granted other leave with pay (code 699) in line with your collective agreement.

Speak to your [labour relations officer](#) about the type of leave you should be giving depending on the situation and the employee's [collective agreement](#).

25. What if I suspect misuse of leave?

If you suspect misuse of leave, speak to your [labour relations officer](#).

26. At some point soon, many employees may be at home without DWAN access and no more work to do. Should managers keep track of this time? Do employees need to submit Leave With Pay for Other Reasons (699) for any time not spent working?

You do not need to track employee hours. When normal operations return, communications will be provided on the process.

If you are available and ready to work but unable to do so due to circumstances beyond your control (e.g. your duties cannot be done remotely), you will be deemed to be on leave with pay for other reasons.

27. Is it reasonable to expect my employee to attend training?

The Canada School of Public Service (CSPS) has suspended all class room and online learning until April 10. If you have been identified by your chain of command as an employee providing a core activity and training is part of that activity, you should continue your studies. However, if you are not providing a core activity, please consult with your manager and supervisor what activities you should be working on and be mindful of the Deputy Minister's direction "Only DND staff conducting critical core activities should access DVPNI from home. This is to minimize burden on the Information Management and IT systems." Training from home is encouraged as long as it does not require access to the DVPNI or the CSPS.

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28. Will there be new labour relations contacts to work with for questions related to COVID-19, or should we continue to contact our current Labour Relations Officer?

There is a high volume of questions at this time and we want to ensure that your question or concern is answered as quickly as possible. Can you share your question with me and if I can't help you, I will have someone contact you as soon as possible.

29. Will my staffing and classification actions take place over the next three weeks?

Only staffing actions that are listed as an essential core activity will be supported at this time. Regular activities will resume as soon as possible.

30. I was planning to hire a new employee/a student. Can I still do this?

All new hires/hiring of students will be postponed until the end of April, at which point we will re-evaluate. Only critical staffing aligned to L1 Business Continuity Planning will be supported. Please contact your chain of command to make this request. A staffing resource has been dedicated to your organization for staffing critical positions.

If a Letter of Offer was already issued to the employee, DND will honour the start date. If the employee was not yet contacted, the letter will be retracted. However, if the employee is not considered performing a core critical duty, they will not be allowed access the DVPNI. If the employee is providing critical services, make the necessary arrangements through your Chain of Command to obtain the equipment and tools required. This may include L1 security services to obtain a building pass, their PKI card and laptop. Please contact your employee as soon as possible to ensure they are advised accordingly.

31. What will happen to Terms whose term is ending soon and who we intended to extend?

All new hires, including terms will be postponed until the end of April, at which point we will re-evaluate. Only critical staffing aligned to L1 Business Continuity Planning will be supported. Please contact your chain of command to make this request. A staffing resource has been dedicated to your organization to make this arrangement.

32. What do I tell my contractor who is not providing a core critical activity and is not able to telework (work from home)?

Contractors are being contacted by your contracting authority following a message from ADM Mat (material and procurement authority). If you have any further questions, please connect with your L1 contracting authority.

33. With the move to essential / critical staff only, what if I have signed a letter of offer with an employee prior to the 13 March or earlier and they have signed the letter and are expected to starting working prior to 18 March?

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Where letters of offer have already been confirmed and signed by the delegated manager and the employee, we will honour our commitment in terms of pay and benefits. You should contact your employee and advise them how they can telework or what you need them to do.

34. I have a casual employee with an 'as and when required' status with no schedule. What do I do to establish a schedule?

The HR Connect RH Agent will gather the schedule details and input into Phoenix on your behalf.

35. I have an "as and when required casual" employee who is not able to work from home. Are they entitled to special leave code 699, as are casuals with regular schedules?

No, "as and when required casual" employees are not entitled to this leave.

36. How will my student/casual or term employees be affected? Will they continue to be paid?

Students, casual employees and term employees of less than three months are also impacted by the response to the pandemic where they may be required to stay at home to telework, to self-isolate or stay under quarantine. Accordingly, delegated managers are encouraged to use their discretion under the *Directive on Leave and Special Working Arrangements* to extend them paid leave in these circumstances.

*****FOR HR CONNECT RH AGENTS:**

Of note, *term employees of less than three months* is a specific employment tenure governed by the *Terms and Conditions of Employment*, whereas term employees over three months, fall under collective agreements, and are also entitled to this special leave, if and when required.

37. What if my casual, term or student are unable to perform their duties remotely?

As directed by the DM, DND employees are asked to telework to the extent possible. If your employee is unable to perform their duties remotely, managers can use their discretion and under the *Directive on Leave and Special Working Arrangements* extend them paid leave as required using code 699.

38. Who does this apply to?

To students, casuals and terms of less than three months.

Under the *Directive on Leave and Special Working Arrangements*, paid leave should only be provided to students, casuals and terms of less than three months whose work is determined by a schedule, and who are required to be absent for hours they otherwise would have worked. In no circumstance should paid leave be extended beyond the term of employment.

39. How do managers submit the leave with pay if no access to the system?

We can accept your request verbally.

40. How long does this remain in effect?

This guidance will remain in effect until April 10, 2020, at which time it will be reassessed.

41. The deadline for PSPM is looming. Will there be an extension?

The deadline for completion of performance agreements in the PSPM application is currently April 15.

Treasury Board of Canada is expected to provide further guidance about the deadline and whether it will change given the current and foreseeable circumstances. Please monitor HR GO App and your other preferred sources of information for updates as they become available.

FOR HR Connect RH agents: your PoC is Siobhan Whelehan.

42. Based on DM direction, my staff needs to work from home but I don't have a flexible work agreement in place with them. What do I do?

Managers should establish a temporary flexible workplace arrangement (FWA) with their employees and establish how you will communicate and determine their tasks during this time.

43. The new flexible work agreements are due April 1? Given the limitation to the DVPNI and HR systems, will this deadline be extended?

Yes. The deadline for transferring existing Alternative Work Arrangements (AWAs) to the new FWA will be extended until May 2020 or until further notice pending when systems will be back online.

44. I have a new employee scheduled to start work, but they are not set up to work from home and can't come into the office. Can I change the start date? Will they still be paid on time?

Yes, the date of the Letter of Offer can be adjusted if required. However, most employees have limited access to the DVPNI at DND and VPN for other government departments, so this action could be difficult.

It is preferable to keep the original date that was agreed to between you and the employee. DND will honour the commitment made on the letter of offer.

A reminder that as directed by the DM, only those performing a core critical duty can access the DVPNI. If the employee is providing critical services, make the necessary arrangements through

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your Chain of Command to obtain the equipment and tools required. This may include L1 security services to obtain building a building pass, their PKI card and laptop. Please contact your employee as soon as possible to ensure they are advised accordingly.

Please note: the LOO is normally sent to the pay center for action 10 working days prior to the start date. Given the current circumstances, DND must hold on submitting LOO until systems are running again. In this case, retro pay will be provided to the employee.

****For HR Connect RH Agents:** if the staffing action is needed for a core critical duty, or if the start date must change, please contact the National Staffing Operations team for further guidance.

45. What do we do with Return to Work cases? Specifically, the end of parental leave or coming back from LWOP? Should (could) the HR Functional Authority action the PAR on behalf of the managers?

I will connect you to an agent who will take your information.

****HR Connect RH Agents** – refer to a Compensation Advisor

46. I am returning from a period of leave without pay and need to have my pay started. How do I do this?

To reactivate your pay for your return from leave without pay, your manager should submit a PAR through HRSS with the work type: *Leave* and sub work type: *Return from LWOP* as soon as possible. If your manager does not have access to the system, we can submit the case on their behalf. Please have your Section 34 manager call HR Connect RH and will ensure the necessary actions are taken.

****HR Connect RH Agents:** You can submit the HRSS request on behalf of the manager in HRSS. Include the Section 34 managers name in the *Requestor's Email* when submitting the case and the Trusted Source will process.

47. How do I terminate my casual employee contract without pay given that the employee does not provide a critical activity?

Where letters of offer have already been confirmed and signed by the delegated manager and the employee, DND will honour our commitment in terms of pay and benefits. As directed by the DM, DND employees are asked to telework to the extent possible. If your employee is unable to perform their duties remotely, managers can use their discretion and under the Directive on Leave and Special Working Arrangements extend them paid leave as required using code 699.

48. Will accommodations be made for personnel with school age children if schools remain closed for a long period of time?

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Current OCHRO and DND direction requires employees with school-aged children to telework if possible. If this is not possible, leave with pay for other reasons is to be granted. If the employee provides a critical service, an alternate should be chosen to ensure continuity of service.

49. Will there be assurances that long term COVID-19 restrictions will not result in work force adjustments (lay-offs)?

The primary objective of the leave flexibility is to ensure financial stability of our employees. There will be no WFA situations resulting from COVID-19.

50. Members noticed that a new leave category was available in Oracle: "Quarantine Leave". What are the circumstances when it should be used? Does it count against an employee's sick leave credits, or is it a different type of leave?

Quarantine Leave only applies to certain groups (e.g. nurses) and only in particular circumstances. Please do NOT use Quarantine Leave in the system. No leave should be entered in the system at this time. The network should not be accessed except by those performing critical functions. Once restoration stage occurs, we will provide communications on how to capture the appropriate leave in the system.

51. There are certain types of civilian leave that are "use-it or lose-it if not used by FY end". If an employee was scheduled to use that kind of leave, but now due to Op LASER they should be on 699 Leave, what actions should be taken?

OCHRO will provide guidance on those situations upon restoration of regular business. OCHRO will determine if this leave is carried over or restored.

52. Will HR-Civ be able to surge to re-institute the staffing process post Op LASER?

Yes.

53. More direction needed on the role of JOSHE Committees in Refusal to Work situations.

**** HR Connect RH agents** – this should be answered by D Safe G

54. Why can't SBPs be enabled to answer questions from Senior Managers?

SBPs are not a critical function as per HR-Civ L1 BCP. HR Connect RH will respond to your question or forward it to the appropriate resource. We have also added critical information about COVID-19 to the HR GO RH app, which will be kept updated. Please download the HR GO RH app to stay informed of the latest news, including Government of Canada frequently asked questions.

55. My employee doesn't want to come to work but they perform a critical service. What can I do?

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For employees who are fearful to physically report to work but provide a critical service per the business continuity plan, it is our advice that they be provided with any and all information to demonstrate that we have taken measures to protect their health and safety. Engagement with the Local Occupational Health and Safety committee is recommended. Should they still not want to report, they will need to exercise their right to refuse work under the Canada Labour Code. Contact your General Safety Officer or General Safety (D Safe G, VCDS) – OHSSecretariatSST@forces.gc.ca.

If the employee has a specific vulnerability (i.e. elderly age category based on GC COVID-19 guidelines, compromised immune system, etc.), they must make a written, signed statement to that affect, and commit to providing a medical certificate to substantiate at a future date.

56. Where can I find more information?

Additional information is available at:

WWW.CANADA.CA/EN/PUBLIC-HEALTH/SERVICES/DISEASES/2019-NOVEL-CORONAVIRUS-INFECTION.HTML

[HTTPS://WWW.CANADA.CA/EN/PUBLIC-HEALTH/SERVICES/DISEASES/2019-NOVEL-CORONAVIRUS-INFECTION/FREQUENTLY-ASKED-QUESTIONS.HTML](https://WWW.CANADA.CA/EN/PUBLIC-HEALTH/SERVICES/DISEASES/2019-NOVEL-CORONAVIRUS-INFECTION/FREQUENTLY-ASKED-QUESTIONS.HTML)

[HTTPS://TRAVEL.GC.CA](https://TRAVEL.GC.CA)

Annex – Second Language Training Information

Given the ongoing situation related to COVID-19, please take note of the following information for the next 3 weeks.

Second Language Training

- Some suppliers are able to offer second language training through online tutoring. Please discuss with your teacher/pedagogical advisor to see if this is a good option for you. Should you choose to proceed with online tutoring, please ensure to inform your manager.
- If training through online tutoring is not possible and the supplier only offers classroom training, please alternatively consider self-study (i.e., review of classroom training materials) from your home. If you choose self-study, please ensure to inform your manager.

Here is the link to some online tools that you may find useful for self-studying:

- Allies Web: <http://cda.mil.ca/lang/index-eng.asp>
- PSC Self-assessment written expression and reading comprehension Test: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-service-commission/services/second-language-testing-public-service/self-assessment-tests.html>
- CSPS : <https://www.csp-efpc.gc.ca/lt/index-eng.aspx> Please note that the CSPS's GCcampus system has been taken offline until April 10, 2020.
- Other resources:

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For English SLT

<https://www.anglaisfacile.com/plan-du-site.php>
<https://www.busuu.com/fr/course/apprendre-anglais-en-ligne>
<https://www.britishcouncil.fr/anglais/en-ligne>
<https://www.loecsen.com/fr/cours-anglais>

For French SLT

<https://apprendre.tv5monde.com/fr>
<https://wirtschaftssprachen.hslu.ch/francais/grammaire-en-video/>
<https://savoirs.rfi.fr/fr/apprendre-enseigner/langue-francaise/journal-en-francais>
<https://la-conjugaison.nouvelobs.com/file/exprimer-la-concession-83.php>

Second Language Training, Public Service Commission

- Face-to-face operations, second language evaluations, will be temporarily postponed across all PSC test centres. Tests of Oral Proficiency (TOP) administered by telephone will continue but priority will be given to departments working on COVID-19 and other urgent requests. The Assessment Centre will contact us regarding the steps to follow to confirm new testing dates.

Other

- We would ask you to contact your manager if:
 - You have concerns about the current status of COVID-19.
 - You have questions or requests related to any leave.

While our regular customer service channels remain available, unusual delays may occur due to our limited access to the system.

Thank you for your understanding.

Second Language Training Program
Department of National Defence

Annex 2

I am a politician/ concerned citizen/journalist and want to know more about what DND is doing to respond to employee needs during the COVID-19 crisis.

****HR Connect Agents:** All public enquires should be directed to ADM.

Submit a public inquiry to the Department of National Defence

If you have a general question for the Department of National Defence or the Canadian Armed Forces, you can contact us by:

Mail

Assistant Deputy Minister (Public Affairs)
Department of National Defence
National Defence Headquarters
Major-General George R. Pearkes Building

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101 Colonel By Dr
Ottawa ON K1A 0K2

Toll free: 1-888-995-2534

Email: information@forces.gc.ca

Faites une demande de renseignements du public au ministère de la Défense nationale

Si vous avez une question d'ordre général pour le ministère de la Défense nationale ou les Forces armées canadiennes, veuillez communiquer avec nous :

Courrier :

Sous-ministre adjoint (Affaires publiques)
Ministère de la Défense nationale
Quartier général de la Défense nationale
Édifice Major-général George R. Pearkes
101 promenade du Colonel-By
Ottawa ON K1A 0K2

Sans frais : 1-888-995-2534

Courriel : information@forces.gc.ca