

Circular No: 03/2020

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To: ALL MEMBERS

Guidelines to Employers on Employment Issues Relating to the Outbreak of Novel Coronavirus (COVID19)

1. The MEF recommends the following measures to be adopted by employers whose employees are affected by COVID19 or are at risks of contracting COVID19.

a) Quarantine Order - In Hospital or at Home Due to COVID19

Employees required by the Government to be quarantined either in hospital or at home on matters related to COVID19, will be considered to be on sick leave and as such the quarantine period should be treated as hospitalization leave. Where an employee has exhausted his eligibility to paid hospitalization leave, employers are advised to exercise their discretion and compassion to grant additional hospitalization leave with pay. Such hospitalization leave is to be treated as part of the employees eligibility under their respective terms of employment, Collective Agreement or the Employment Act 1955.

b) Employers requesting employees to stay away from work Due to COVID19 without quarantine order

Where an employer requests an employee to stay away from work as a precautionary measure arising from matters related to COVID19, especially where the employee has returned from

a country affected by COVID19 or has family members affected by COVID19, employers may consider the following measures:-

- i) The employer may agree with the employee for the employee to take half day's annual leave while the employer make up the other half day's pay during the specific period;
- ii) The employer agrees with the affected employees to pay not less than half day's pay during the specific period the employee is away from work; and
- iii) Employer and employees/union may by agreement make some other arrangements for the employees absence due to COVID19

c) Employers requesting employees to work from home due to COVID19

Where employees have returned from overseas or are at risk of contracting COVID19 and where the employer has requested the employee to work from home for a specific period as a precautionary measure, such employee should be paid full salary during such a period.

d) Employees who do not wish to work on their own accord as a precautionary measure due to COVID19

For employees who choose not to work on their own accord for fear of contracting COVID19, employers are advised to adopt a flexible and enlightened approach by allowing such employees to take their annual leave. For employees who have exhausted their annual leave, employers may consider granting unpaid leave.

e) *Travel advisory*

Employers are advised not to require their employees to travel on non essential work matters to the countries affected by COVID19. Employees should also be advised not to travel to the countries affected by COVID19 outbreak for any personal reasons for the duration of the outbreak of COVID19.

2. For further clarification or advice on the above please contact MEF.

Thank you.



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Executive Director