



Public Administration Sector COVID19 Planning Guidelines

19 March 2020

Updated as of 2nd July 2020

PURPOSE

These guidelines are expected to provide support to all agencies within the Public Administration Sector to ensure business continuity before, during and after the pandemic. They are meant to support key primary healthcare and pandemic management information issued by the Ministry of Health and the Disaster Advisory Committee.

SCOPE

These guidelines shall apply to all agencies within the Public Administration Sector. These include the following:

Public Administration	Agencies
Ministries	1. Agriculture and Fisheries
	2. Commerce, Industry and Labour
	3. Communications and Information Technology
	4. Education, Sports and Culture
	5. Finance
	6. Foreign Affairs and Trade
	7. Health
	8. Justice and Courts Administration
	9. Natural Resources and Environment
	10. Public Enterprises
	11. Prime Minister and Cabinet
	12. Revenue
	13. Women, Community and Social Development
	14. Works, Transport and Infrastructure
Constitutional Bodies	15. Attorney General
	16. Legislative Assembly
	17. Ombudsman
	18. Electoral Commission
	19. Audit Office
	20. Public Service Commission



Statutory Bodies	21. Office of the Regulator
	22. Samoa Law Reform Commission
	23. Samoa Bureau of Statistics
Public Beneficial Bodies	24. National Kidney Foundation of Samoa
	25. National University of Samoa
	26. Samoa Fire and Emergencies Services Authority
	27. Samoa Qualifications Authority
	28. Samoa Sports & Facilities Authority
	29. Samoa Tourism Authority
	30. Scientific Research Organisation of Samoa
	31. Samoa International Finance Authority
Public Trading Bodies	32. Development Bank of Samoa
	33. Electric Power Corporation
	34. Gambling Control Authority
	35. Land Transport Authority
	36. Polynesian Limited/Samoa Airways
	37. Public Trust Office
	38. Samoa Airport Authority
	39. Samoa Housing Corporation
	40. Samoa Land Corporation
	41. Samoa Ports Authority
	42. Samoa Post Limited
	43. Samoa Shipping Corporation
	44. Samoa Shipping Services
	45. Samoa Trust Estates Corporation
	46. Samoa Water Authority
	47. Unit Trust of Samoa
Mutual Bodies	48. Accident Compensation Corporation
	49. Samoa Life Assurance Corporation
	50. Samoa National Provident Fund

These guidelines may also apply to the following:

- Central Bank of Samoa;
- Samoa Police Services;
- Samoa Prisons and Correctional Services.

APPLICATION

While the PSC has intended for these guidelines to help all agencies with their pandemic management and business continuity plans, all CEOs are encouraged to determine how it would be best applied in line with their internal processes and plans in place.



GUIDELINES

Overall principles

The overall goal should be to ensure the safety of, and care for, all employees during the pandemic. In addition, all government agencies must identify measures to ensure that the delivery of services is as much as possible not disrupted although reduction in fit/healthy staff may mean services would be delivered at reduced levels.

In particular the following principles apply:

- Delivery of services to the public must remain a priority during the pandemic, unless Cabinet has authorized otherwise;
- This includes the efficient delivery of essential services;
- In the event the pandemic reaches critical levels to be advised by the Ministry of Health, the PSC will follow decisions of Cabinet on partial or complete workplace closure to minimise close contact and exposure;
- All agencies in the Sector must update or develop Business Continuity Plans. These BCP's must clearly outline how the agency will deal with employees who are suspected to have contracted or transmitted the virus (for example, quarantine and compulsory self-isolation);
- All public administration staff are expected to continue to attend the workplace in line with their usual employment arrangements, except where alternatives are activated as part of a business continuity or workforce management plan (such as a rotational arrangement within the workplace to ensure services are not disrupted);
- The PSC will provide any additional guidelines on approved leave arrangements for certain classes of employees (who may be classified as High Risk, on a risk assessment guideline provided by MOH) during the pandemic. All other employees must remain active and working unless otherwise advised, specified, or approved.
- High Risk groups may include, for example, only the following, ***but subject to guidelines provided by the Ministry of Health:***
 - ALL employees within the 60 years old and above age group;
 - Any employees with underlying medical conditions that may worsen with the transmission of the COVID19 (e.g., respiratory problems);
 - Employees who are pregnant;
 - Employees with young children (ages 0-4 years);
 - Employees who have to attend to their children due to closure of schools (Primary – Secondary School Aged Students);
 - Employees who care and live with their elderly.



PREPAREDNESS, RESPONSE, RECOVERY PLAN

Stage 1: Preparedness

IN EFFECT	ACTION PLAN	COLOR CODE
<p><i>Effective immediately, as per DAC advice and Action Plan</i></p>	<p>All Ministries to immediately enforce the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Encourage proper hygiene practices, respiratory etiquettes and social distancing in work places; b. Avoid large gatherings/crowds, shaking hands, and other social contacts; c. Develop a strategy to manage ‘remote work’ away from offices to be in effect when in Stage 2. d. All Ministries to encourage the elevated use of telecommunication or social media means to respond to all customer enquiries and to reduce the movement of the general public; e. Promote use of video conferencing for non-essential meetings; f. CEOs should make determinations under their special powers to suspend or defer government programs that bring together more than 5 people in one place; g. Cancel all international/regional meetings that Samoa had planned to host or participate in; h. Contact information with details of Top tier Management to be referred to NEOC and Central Agencies to assist in communication <p>2. All Ministries (HRCs) to obtain contact details and profile information for all employees to be shared with first tier and second tier Management level (ACEO and Principal Officers). <u>HRCs may use the MQRs as the basis of developing the Employee profile list.</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Name b. Age c. Mobile number 	<p>Code Orange</p>



- d. **Dependents (60+ years & young children ages 0-4)**
 - e. Medical Conditions
 - f. **Place of Residence**
3. The above action item shall also apply to State Owned Enterprises and authorities who are not under PSC jurisdiction, but are part of the Public Administration Sector. These must be kept as part of the Business Continuity Plan or internal Disaster Response management plans.

Stage 2: Response

Effective *Immediately*
as per State of
Emergency Orders
issued.

PARTIAL SHUTDOWN

Code Pink

(A) Normal operations for all non-essential and essential services:

1. Non-essential services:

- a) Open from Monday to Friday for the duration of the SOE;
- b) Normal working hours will be from 9am – 5pm;
- c) All CEOs are encouraged to continue the elevated use of telecommunication or social media means to conduct government programs;
- d) All Government Agencies must continue to conduct essential awareness on proper hygiene practices, respiratory etiquettes and social distancing in work places and when responding to customer enquiries in accordance with current MOH guidelines.

(B) Special Leave with Pay available only for the following employees:

- a) Employees who have returned from overseas and are required to undergo the mandatory 14-day quarantine;
- b) Employees suspected or confirmed with the COVID19;



- c) Employees who need to care for family members suspected or confirmed with the COVID19.

(C) Support for NEOC Operations:

- a) All tier 1 (CEOs, DCEOs) and tier 2 (ACEOs, Principal Officers) must be on standby to provide on call assistance at the hospital, borders, etc as and when required by NEOC;
- b) All other employees not mentioned above are to be guided by further instruction through their CEO.

(D) Monitoring and Evaluation:

1. All HRCs and ACEO Corporate Services for Public Bodies must:
 - i. Maintain all accurate records of employees in accordance with the categories specified in (B) and (C);
 - ii. Circulate and update the contact/profile list of their employees to their Management;
 - iii. Facilitate and coordinate the completion and submission of the Situational Report due every 72 hours to the relevant Sector Coordinator for submission to NEOC;
 - iv. Coordinate and conduct essential awareness on proper hygiene practices, respiratory etiquettes and social distancing in workplaces in accordance with the current MOH guidelines;
2. All employees are responsible for:
 - i. Informing their office as soon as possible via mobile or other social media means if they fall within in any of the conditions specified in (B).
 - ii. Submitting (1) a medical proof of test result and (2) a medical clearance report at least five (5) days prior of



- being physically fit to resume work if recovered from the COVID19 (refer to MOH guidelines);
- iii. Submitting a medical clearance report at least three (3) days prior if suspected with the COVID19 before resuming work (refer to MOH guidelines);
- iv. Submitting a copy of the medical report for a family member suspected or confirmed with the COVID19 he/she is caring for and additionally (2) ii and iii;

(E) Disciplinary Action:

1. Any government employee who deliberately provides false information or intentionally lies to use Special Leave WITH PAY will be subject to disciplinary action under “Section 19, Code of Conduct,” of the Public Service Act 2004 or any applicable laws.

Pandemic Alert	COMPLETE SHUT DOWN	Code Red
<i>(Relies on MOH and Cabinet Advise)</i>	<p>In the event a COVID19 case is CONFIRMED, the following will come into effect:</p> <p>*Essential Services to remain open*</p> <p>Aside from essential services, all other employees must observe or implement the following measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ALL employees must remain at home unless advised otherwise, or until Cabinet issues an official directive declaring that it is safe to resume work. <p><i>Non-essential employees are NOT required to come to work but the first tier (CEOs, DCEOs) and second tier (ACEOs, Principal Officers) may be asked to be on</i></p>	



standby in the case of providing support and assistance to essential services Emergency Teams.

Stage 3: Recovery

(Relies on Cabinet Advice)

RECOVERY

Upon receipt of official Cabinet advice to resume work:

- ALL employees must return to work on the specified date as per the Cabinet directive;
- ALL employers must ensure that ALL employees (whether or not they were ill with COVID-19) are fit to return to the workplace before resumption of work;
- All employees must continue to observe proper hygiene practices as per MOH advice in Stage 1;
- All Corporate Divisions and responsible officers must clarify or settle any issues in relation to leave entitlements and other work arrangements made before and during the pandemic response

- PSC
- All Ministries
- All SOEs
- Constitutional authorities

Code White

All employers must consider the following in their Business Continuity Plans:

Official Communication during the 3 Stages

The most updated and official information in relation to the COVID-19 and the government's response planning procedures can be found on the Samoa Ministry of Health website and official Facebook page.



Ministry of Health Website: www.health.gov.ws

Government of Samoa Website www.samoagovt.ws

Facebook: @samoagovt @publichealthsamoa



Annex 1: Public Administration Sector – Contact List

Public Administration	Agencies	Contact Person	Email
Public Administration	Agriculture and Fisheries	Tilafono David Hunter	tilafono@maf.gov.ws
	Commerce, Industry and Labour	Pulotu Lyndon Chu Ling	lyndoncl@mcil.gov.ws
	Communications and Information Technology	Fualau Talatalaga Mata'u	t.matau@mcit.gov.ws
	Education, Sports and Culture	Afamasaga Karoline Fuatai	k.fuatai@mesc.gov.ws
	Finance	Leasiosiofaasisina Oscar Malielegaoi	Oscar.Malielegaoi@mof.gov.ws
	Foreign Affairs and Trade	Peseta Noumea Simi	noumea@mfat.gov.ws
	Health	Leausa Take Naseri	taken@health.gov.ws
	Justice and Courts Administration	Moliei Vaai	Moliei.Vaai@mjca.gov.ws
	Natural Resources and Environment	Ulu Bismarck Crawley	bismarck.crawley@mnre.gov.ws
	Public Enterprises	Elita Tooala	elita.tooala@mpe.gov.ws
	Prime Minister and Cabinet	Agafili Shem Leo	shem.leo@mpmc.gov.ws
	Revenue	Matafeo Avalisa Viali Fautualii	aviali@revenue.gov.ws
	Women, Community and Social Development	Afamasaga Faauiga Mulitalo	fmulitalo@mwcsd.gov.ws
	Works, Transport and Infrastructure	Magele Hoe Viali	hoe.viali@mwti.gov.ws
Constitutional Bodies	Attorney General (Acting Attorney General)	Galumalemana Loretta Teueli	loretta@ag.gov.ws
	Legislative Assembly	Tiatia Lima Graeme Tualaulelei	Graeme.tualaulelei@palemene.ws
	Ombudsman	Maiava Iulai Toma	info@ombudsman.gov.ws



	Electoral Commission	Faimalomatumua Mathew Lemisio	m.lemisio@oec.gov.ws
	Audit Office	Fuimaono Camillo Afele	fuimaono.afele@audit.gov.ws
	Public Service Commission	Aiono Mose Sua	msua@psc.gov.ws
Statutory Bodies	Office of the Regulator (Acting Regulator)	Fesolai Cecily Faasau	cecily.faasau@regulator.gov.ws
	Samoa Law Reform Commission	Teleiai Dr. Lalotoa Mulitalo	lalotoa.mulitalo@samoalawreform.gov.ws
	Samoa Bureau of Statistics	Aliimuamua Malaefono Taua Taaloga	malaefono.taua@sbs.gov.ws
Public Beneficial Bodies	National Kidney Foundation of Samoa	Mulipola Roger Hazelman	mhazelman@nkfsamoa.org.ws
	National University of Samoa	Aiono Professor Dr. Alec Ekeroma	a.ekeroma@nus.edu.ws
	Samoa Fire and Emergencies Services Authority	Lelevaga Taueva Faafouina Mupo	f.mupo@sfesa.ws
	Samoa Qualifications Authority	Lealiifano Easter Manila Silipa	eastermanila.silipa@sqa.gov.ws
	Samoa Sports & Facilities Authority	Iuli Moefaaauo Salale Moananu	msmoananu@ssfa.ws
	Samoa Tourism Authority	Faamatuainu Suifua Faamatuainu	faamatuainu@samoa.travel
	Scientific Research Organisation of Samoa	Seuseu Dr. Joseph Tauati	seuseu@srosmanagement.org.ws
	Samoa International Finance Authority	Tuifaasisisna Sieni Voorwinden	sifa@sifa.ws
Public Trading Bodies	Development Bank of Samoa	Susana Lauulu	susanal@dbsamoa.ws
	Electric Power Corporation	Tologata Tile Tuimalealiifano	epcgm@samoa.ws
	Gambling Control Authority	Tuala Tamalelagi Siaki Tuala	ceo@gca.gov.ws
	Land Transport Authority	Galumalemana Taatialeoititi T Schwalger	titi.tutuvanu@lta.gvo.ws



	Polynesian Limited/Samoa Airways	Seiuli Alvin Tuala	atuala@polynesianairlines.ws
	Public Trust Office	Leaupepe Peleseuma Matautia Ropati	ptrustee@ipasifika.net
	Samoa Airport Authority	Silimana'i Ueta Jr Solomon	jsolomona@saa.ws
	Samoa Housing Corporation	Matautia Rula Levi	rula.levi@samoahousing.ws
	Samoa Land Corporation	Ulugia Petelo Kavesi	ulugia.petelo@slc.gov.ws
	Samoa Ports Authority	Sooalo Kuresa Sooalo	sooalo.kuresa@spasamoa.ws
	Samoa Post Limited	Tupe Ualolo Nun Yun	tupe.ualolo@samoapost.ws
	Samoa Shipping Corporation	Leiataua Samuel Phineas	s.phineas@samoashipping.com
	Samoa Shipping Services	Lautimuia Afoa Vaai	lauvaai@sssltg.ws
	Samoa Trust Estates Corporation	Patea Loli Malo Setefano	patea@stec.ws
	Samoa Water Authority	Seugamaalii Jamie Saena	Jammie.Saena@swa.gov.ws
	Unit Trust of Samoa	Tevaga Viane Tagiilima	viane.tagiilima@utos.ws
Mutual Bodies	Accident Compensation Corporation	Muliagatele Makerita Matafeo	accsamoa@samoasonline.ws
	Samoa Life Assurance Corporation (Acting General Manager)	Seiuli Masalosalo Levale	masal@samoalife.ws
	Samoa National Provident Fund	Pauli Prince Suhren	prince@npf.ws



ANNEX 2:

COVID-19 HIGH RISK SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

This medical questionnaire¹ will help you identify if you are at greater health risk if you become infected with COVID-19. This is subject to clinically proven tests and official guidelines issued by the Samoa Ministry of Health. The questionnaire shares with you the COVID-19 high-risk groups so that you can self-identify whether these may apply to you or your family members. The high-risk groups have been identified based on the information released by The Chinese Centre for Disease Control (CCDC).²

Process

1. Please read through the questionnaire in Table 1 carefully. Tick yes or no.
2. Complete Table 2 and select the box that is most applicable to you.
3. The survey classifies individuals into **three risk categories** – *low, medium and high*.
 - a. Staff self-assessed as high risk would have answered ‘yes’ to three or more of the 11 questions posed.
 - b. For the medium risk category, staff would have answered Yes to 1-2 questions.
 - c. Low risk staff would have answered no to all questions.
4. Consider voluntarily sharing this with the Head of your agency.

Table 1:

QUESTIONS	YES	NO
Are you aged over 60?		
Have you ever been diagnosed or treated for any cardiovascular disease? <i>i.e., coronary heart disease, heart failure, arrhythmia, peripheral artery disease, congenital heart disease</i>		
Have you ever been diagnosed or treated for diabetes mellitus? <i>i.e., type 1 diabetes, type 2 diabetes, prediabetes</i>		
Have you ever been diagnosed or treated for any respiratory disease / lung disorder / pulmonary disease? <i>i.e., asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), pulmonary fibrosis, pneumonia</i>		
Have you ever been diagnosed with hypertension? <i>i.e., high blood pressure</i>		
Have you ever been diagnosed with any type of cancer?		

¹ This medical questionnaire was shared by the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. It has been contextualized to suit Samoa’s situation.

² This information consisted of medical data collated from the first 72,314 cases of COVID-19 found in the first 40 days of the outbreak (until 11 February) in China. The information released by the CCDC highlights that certain groups of patients are at greater risk of developing severe disease if they become infected with COVID-19.



Have you ever been diagnosed or treated for any cerebrovascular disease? <i>i.e., any types of stroke (silent, minor), mini stroke, transient ischaemic attack</i>		
Have you ever been diagnosed or treated for a condition that affects your immunity?		
Have you ever been told by a medical professional that you have reduced function of the spleen?		
Are you currently pregnant?		
Is your body mass index greater than or equal to 40? <u>Web Link to CDC Adult BMI Calculator</u> <u>Web Link to CDC BMI Percentile Calculator for Child and Teen</u>		

Table 2:

Full Name:		Position:	
<input type="checkbox"/> Please select this box if you answered NO to all the questions above			
<input type="checkbox"/> Please select this box if you answered YES to <u>one or two questions</u> above			
<input type="checkbox"/> Please select this box if you answered YES to <u>three or more questions</u> above			



Annex 3:

**NATIONAL EMERGENCY OPERATION CENTRE
SECTOR SITUATION REPORT**

NAME OF EVENT:	SITREP #:
DATE/TIME: From:	To:
SECTOR RESPONSE OVERVIEW:	
RESPONSE ACTIONS TO DATE:	
RESPONSE ACTIONS TO BE COMPLETED:	
MEMBER AGENCIES/STAFF INVOLVED:	
RESPONSE GAPS:	
ANY OTHER MATTER:	



Annex 4:

REPORTING TEMPLATE FOR STAFF WORKING FROM HOME



Government of Samoa
MINISYRY OF _____

<i>Start Date</i>	<i>End Date</i>
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The following are key performance targets for _____(Name)_____,
_____ (Position)_____ while working remotely / away from Office during the COVID-19 State of Emergency.

Key Performance Targets		
❖ M&E report		%
❖ Organizational Review reporting		
Activities		%
Performance Management	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Follow up on all SE performance plans and appraisals 2. Manage PMG implementation 3. Arrange PR Consultations for Contracts that are due for advertisement 	%
Recruitment and Selection	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Manage the R&S <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appointments • JD Reviews and position advertisements: • Panels, Shortlisting and Interviews 	%
Policy Advise	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Contract Management issues 	%



Administration	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Management of Ministry requests daily 2. Management of the division 3. Management of staff 	%
Other Activities		%
ACEO Comments (for Officers below Senior Executive Level – i.e., Principal/Senior/Officer Level)		
CEO Comments ((for ACEO Level)		
HRC COMMENTS (IF APPLICABLE)		
..... ACEO/CEO Approval Officer Approval (if applicable) PSC Chairman Endorsement (if applicable)
Date:	Date:	Date:



Annex 5:

GUIDANCE FOR PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION SECTOR EMPLOYERS DURING COVID-19 STATE OF EMERGENCY FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS MARCH 2020

1. When will the partial shut-down of non-essential services come into effect?

As per the PSC Circular Memorandum 2019/2020-22-23, and the Public Administration Sector COVID-19 Planning Guidelines, the partial shut-down of non-essential services is effective immediately (i.e., 23 March 2020).

2. For staff who no longer have access to public transport, will they be entitled to an allowance or overtime if they stay on site 24/7? For example, a night-watchman who lives out of town and works 5pm – 9am from Monday – Thursday and then Friday 5pm – Monday 9am.

If transportation is an issue for the employee, CEOs may make appropriate transportation arrangements using government vehicles to transport employees if necessary, to meet the needs of the service.

3. Which services are classified as essential services?

As per FK(12) 41, the following services are classified as essential services (*in relation to the Public Administration Sector COVID-19 Planning Guidelines and PSC CM 2019/2020-22*):

- MAF – Quarantine & Regulatory Division
- MCIT – Broadcasting Services (Radio 2AP)
- MPMC – Immigration Services
- MOF – Payroll & Accounts
- MNRE – Meteorology & Disaster Management Division
- MOH – Public Health & Inspectorate Division
- MfR – Customs & Border Management Division
- MWTI – Maritime Division, Civil Aviation Division and Land Transport Division
- Office of the Regulator – Spectrum Management and Technical Division

4. With the COVID-19 High-Risk Self-assessment questionnaire, how would you determine if an employee is considered a high risk?

The survey classifies individuals into three risk categories – low, medium and high. Staff self-assessed as high risk would have answered ‘yes’ to three or more of the 11 questions posed. For the medium risk category, staff would have answered Yes to 1-2 questions. Low risk staff would have answered no to all questions.



5. Why are pregnant employees and employees with children between the age of 0 - 4 not included in category(C) Special Leave with pay?

Similarly, to the conditions that were set out for the measles that affected Samoa last year. The Public Service Commission (PSC) depends heavily on the medical advice from MOH as well as Cabinet specifically the Cabinet Directives (FK) and State of Emergency Order(s). Nevertheless, the current stage activated by the PSC is only for *suspected cases* of the COVID19 and not for a confirmed case.

Moreover, the current statistics obtained from the World Health Organization only emphasizes *people aged 60 years + and people with underlying health conditions as those with the highest risk if affected by the COVID19*. Although Pregnant women and employees with children between the ages of 0-4 are still considered vulnerable they are currently not included in the high-risk groups mentioned unless they have underlying health conditions. Therefore, the conditions of the Special Leave with pay will be subject to medically sound advice provided by MOH through Cabinet. However, the Public Administration Sector COVID19 Planning Guidelines provided indicates that in the event of a *confirmed case*, a complete shutdown will follow and ALL employees will be entitled to Special Leave with pay.

Finally, part A(c) allows *CEOs to make roster arrangement or flexible working hour arrangements for employees* to accommodate pregnant employees and those with children between the age group 0 – 4. Divisions can consider placing employees on rostered shifts so that less than 5 people are working within distance of each other. The key objective is to ensure that staff are available to sustain business continuity during the partial shutdown. Any reductions in hours should not affect an employee’s pay due to the preventative measures being put in place.

6. Our CEO has asked all our employees to continue working from 9am – 5pm. Which legal authority prevails the Commission or the CEOs powers as specified in the Orders?

A misinterpretation of the orders has resulted in employees being asked to work beyond the hours set by the Commission which is from 9am – 3pm. While the Special powers of Government CEOs are empowered; they are specifically empowered for two reasons only and that is the *implementation of the Sector Preparedness and Response Matrix Consolidated for Corona Virus Pandemic*. No specific mention is made for working conditions which is the current and existing mandate of the Commission.

Therefore, all working conditions as per the following conditions are to be adhered by all Ministries and Public Bodies as signed by *The Head of State of the Independent State of Samoa, in consultation with Cabinet under FK (20) Faapitoa 16, and pursuant to Article 105 of the Constitution, make the following ORDERS:*



SOE Orders 8 – #9. Restriction for Government Services (Aiaiga mo Galuega a le Malo):

- (1) The Public Service Commission (“Commission”) is to *determine conditions in which employees are to continue working under*, with the objective of ensuring minimal spread of infection.
- (2) The Commission’s conditions *shall apply to all Government Ministries and Public Bodies*.
- (3) All Government trips overseas are hereby suspended until further notice.

This above means that the authority alone remains with the Commission for determining working hours and working conditions and Ministries must adhere to the proposed conditions as specified in the PSC Circular Memorandum 2019/2020-22.

7. Where can I find the COVID-19 High Risk Self-Assessment Questionnaire?

Please refer to page 14 of the Public Administration Sector COVID-19 Planning Guidelines.

8. If an employee took overseas leave, and upon resumption was unable to travel back, what is the appropriate leave to be applied?

Upon resumption of employee’s overseas leave (and if the employee is unable to travel back to Samoa due to border shut down or as a result of travel restrictions put in place as a result of the State of Emergency Order) SPECIAL LEAVE to apply.

9. If the employee’s leave application was approved prior to SOE proclamation, will their usual leave entitlement still apply? For both local and overseas leave?

Yes – leave application to apply given it was applied for and approved PRIOR to SOE. This was the same practice applied during the SOE for the Measles outbreak.

10. For employees who are eligible under Special Leave as per conditions approved by the Public Service Commission through PSC CM 2019/2020-22 but they have untaken approved carried forward Annual Leave which is forfeited in April 2020, should these employees be given special consideration to utilize their approved carried forward AL upon return from Special Leave?

Since the State of Emergency affected these employee’s abilities to utilize their approved carried forward Annual Leave, they should be given a 1-month extension to utilize any untaken approved carried forward Annual Leave. The 1-month extension will provide some flexibility as the CEO may not be willing to let employees take leave straight after returning from special leave, especially if the SOE period is extended.

11. Is an employee eligible for special leave to care for an elderly parent who is above 60+ years old?

No, only the following employees specified below are eligible for Special Leave.



C. Special Leave with Pay available for the following employees;

1. Employees aged 60 years+;
2. Employees with underlying medical conditions³;
3. Employees affected by restrictions placed on public transportation and are disadvantaged due to:
 - i. Buses not operating within their area of residence;
 - ii. The Government agency was unable to provide transportation to the requesting employee.
4. Employees unable to travel back to Samoa due to border shut down or as a result of travel restrictions put in place as a result of the State of Emergency Order;
5. Employees who need to care for family members suspected or confirmed with the COVID19;
6. Employees suspected or confirmed with the COVID 19;
7. Employees with returning family members who have travelled from an MOH restricted country.

Similar to advice provided for employees who are pregnant and are parents to children within the age group of 0 – 4 concerned with safety and in complying with conditions of State of Emergency. Part A (c) *CEOs to make roster arrangement or flexible working hour arrangements for employees* to accommodate employees who care for an elderly parent who is above the 60 years + age group. Divisions can consider placing employees on rostered shifts so that less than 5 people are working within distance of each other. The key objective is to ensure that staff are available to sustain business continuity during the partial shutdown. Any reductions in hours should not affect an employee's pay due to the preventative measures being put in place.

12. We are essential services and our staff who were 60 years+ were asked to continue work for the past two weeks because no one was available to work those shifts. Now that there are employees to cover those two weeks. We have been told that they are only entitled to 5 days of leave because Special Leave is only for the period 23rd March to 04th April 2020. Are we only eligible for Special Leave up until the period the SOE ends?

Similar to the conditions of the Measles the current PSC CM 2019/2020-22 for COVID 19 depends on the State of Emergency Orders (SOE). Therefore, until the SOE is lifted and another PSC CM is sent out officially advising employees of no longer being entitled to Special Leave with pay, employees will continue to be eligible for Special Leave with pay. The same process was applied during the measles where an official PSC CM 2019/2020-16 was sent out specifying the last day for when employees would no longer be eligible for Special Leave with pay.

The second paragraph of PSC CM 2019/2020-22 specifically mentions “*The Public Administration Sector COVID19 Planning Guideline is activated with the following conditions*

³ Refer to the COVID19 High Risk Self-Assessment Questionnaire



to be effective immediately until further notice.” This was intentionally left open as conditions for the PSC CM are officially guided by the conditions of the SOE and any amendments.

Thus, since the employees affected are essential employees. The Ministry is reminded that service must not be disrupted and a sufficient number of staff is made available to sustain continuity of service. If therefore, the Ministry has indicated that there are a sufficient number of employees are available to cover a 2-week shift, then those employees aged 60 years+ requesting Special Leave with pay are eligible for Special Leave with pay until further advise from the Public Service Commission is received.

13. Because Tier 1 (CEOs and DCEOs) and Tier 2 (ACEOs and Principal Officers) are provided with the opportunity to work from home. They are not eligible for Special Leave with pay?

All employees are eligible for Special Leave with pay regardless of their classification. Thus, the Tier 1 and Tier 2 employees were specifically mentioned and permitted to work from home as the Commission understands a majority of Ministries or Public Bodies have already provided these employees with the adequate technological means or resources such as a laptop or other tools making it easier and practical to provide the technical support if these employees should choose to work from home.

Additionally, since business continuity is another essential element to be considered during the partial shutdown apart from the usual indicators such as the Health and Safety of employees and the effect of the SOE on an employee’s ability to come to work. This would ensure that any high-level decision making required is provided despite being physically absent from work. However, if there are circumstances that make it equally challenging for a Tier 1 or Tier 2 to continue coming to work, they may choose to apply for Special Leave with pay provided they meet the conditions specified.

14. How is overtime calculated for staff who continue working after 3pm especially for agencies who are still working from 9am to 5pm, with overtime to start after 5pm as per normal conditions?

The change in hours are only for non-essential service while essential services are to remain open as per our CM.

PSC retains its position that overtime should still commence from 5pm. Our conditions specify that essential services remain open, which means they continue work hours as usual. However, the CEO may include flexible working hour arrangements so that not more than 5 people are working within a shift or rostered schedule.



However, similar to how our operations are being conducted as of now, our concern is that allowing the overtime to commence from 3pm would defeat the whole purpose of the hours being put in place specifically for non-essential services.

If we consider overtime for non-essential employees, this also means we have to include strict conditions to ensure that the usual office work that can be conducted had the normal operating hours still remained is not considered as overtime.



Annex 6:

LIST OF ESSENTIAL SERVICES

- MAF – Quarantine & Regulatory Division
- MCIT – Broadcasting Services (Radio 2AP)
- MPMC – Immigration Services
- MOF – Payroll & Accounts
- MNRE – Meteorology & Disaster Management Division
- MOH – Public Health & Inspectorate Division
- MfR – Customs & Border Management Division
- MWTI – Maritime Division, Civil Aviation Division and Land Transport Division
- Office of the Regulator – Spectrum Management and Technical Division