

**WORK FROM HOME GUIDELINE FOR CIVIL SERVANTS**  
**Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19)**  
**APRIL 2020**

**1. Summary**

- 1.1. In the interest of encouraging physical distancing in the workplace, civil servants deemed non-essential by their Permanent Secretaries will work from home from 1 April 2020 as part of Fiji's nationwide COVID-19 response. During this period, it is vital we achieve business continuity and the Fijian public continues to receive a high quality of essential services.

**2. Objective**

- 2.1. The work-from-home (WFH) guidelines for civil servants are aimed at containing the spread of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19), whilst ensuring continuity of service where possible.

**3. Background**

- 3.1. In light of the spread of COVID-19, the Prime Minister has announced a number of measures to prevent the spread of the disease. This includes stopping unnecessary contact with other people and may require working from home where possible, avoiding busy commuting times on public transport, and avoiding gatherings of people (whether in public, at work or at home).
- 3.2. Ministries may also support their workforce to take these steps through:
- (i) agreeing to more flexible ways of working (for example: changing start and finish times to avoid busier commuting times);
  - (ii) cancelling face-to-face events and meetings and rearranging to remote calling where possible (for example: using video or conference calling technology).

**4. Definition and Abbreviation**

- 4.1. Work-from-home (WFH): alternative working condition whereby staff undertakes the usual functions of his/her work from a home setting, utilizing telecommunications wherever possible to maintain a connection with colleagues and clients as if they were at the office.

**5. Application**

- 5.1. This policy applies to all non-essential civil servants on remote work, whereas positions that are deemed "essential" are subject to the discretion of the Permanent Secretary.

**6. Approval**

- 6.1. Approval of WFH and the duration is at the discretion of the Permanent Secretary. The staff may be recalled at any time to work at their respective office as the need arises, when deemed appropriate and in alignment with government's COVID-19 containment measures.

- 6.2. Employees who do not have adequate meaningful work to be performed from home, or where WFH is neither practical nor possible, may be asked to take annual leave or any entitled time off in lieu.

## **7. Terms and Conditions**

- 7.1. The terms and conditions of staff on WFH remain the same as stipulated in the employment contract.

## **8. Making the WFH Arrangement**

- 8.1. Before working remotely, each ministry's respective staff and the Permanent Secretary should document the arrangement, specifying:
- (i) the duration of the arrangement, hours of work, etc.;
  - (ii) key responsibilities and outputs;
  - (iii) the technology and other equipment needed; and
  - (iv) health, safety, wellbeing, and security while working remotely.

## **9. Ad hoc arrangements for working from home**

- 9.1. The Permanent Secretary may permit a staff to work on projects, tasks, or reports at home on an ad hoc basis.
- 9.2. Under this arrangement, staff may be required to report to office on certain days in a week and WFH on other days.

## **10. Staff responsibilities**

- 10.1. When working remotely, the staff shall ensure that they:
- (i) are contactable during the normal span of hours;
  - (ii) adhere to the Civil Service Code of Conduct;
  - (iii) do not, under any circumstances, hold meetings with colleagues or clients at their home;
  - (iv) take reasonable steps to keep the ministry's equipment safe and in working order; and
  - (v) safeguard confidentiality of official information.

## **11. Ministry's responsibilities**

- 11.1. The Ministry shall:
- (i) ensure the staff is working in accordance with their WFH arrangement and adhering to government policies and procedures;
  - (ii) monitor and review the WFH arrangement on a regular basis;
  - (iii) establish and schedule regular communication (emails, calls and video conferences), to continue the dissemination of information to staff who are working from home;

- (iv) where practicable, provide equipment and tools required to perform the tasks; and
- (v) accurately document the ownership and usage of the equipment and assets.

## **12. Monitoring WFH**

- 12.1. The supervisor shall monitor individual work performance of staff on a regular basis.
- 12.2. Where required output is not achieved, the Permanent Secretary may decide the appropriate action.

## **13. Self - Quarantine**

- 13.1 Self-quarantine is an effective precautionary measure to protect those around an individual — his/her family, friends, colleagues — from contracting COVID-19. It means taking simple, common-sense steps to avoid close contact with other people as much as possible.
- 13.2 Staff must follow all government directives, including self-quarantine for 14 days, if he/she is:
  - (i) returning from an overseas travel (from the day of arrival into Fiji);
  - (ii) been in close contact with someone confirmed with COVID-1 (from the date of contact); and
  - (iii) showing symptoms of COVID-19.
- 13.3 Any staff being self-quarantined, must inform HR, through his/her supervisor.
- 13.4 Self-quarantine shall be treated as WFH.

## **14. Staff Diagnosed with COVID-19**

- 14.1. Any staff diagnosed with COVID-19 must inform HR, through his/her supervisor, with a medical confirmation from a registered Medical Practitioner.
- 14.2. The staff must avoid coming to work and undertake medical measures as prescribed by a medical practitioner.
- 14.3. Regular monitoring of the staff's health and wellbeing should be undertaken by their supervisor, with daily updates provided to HR.

**Ministry of Civil Service  
1 April 2020**