



Oifig an Stiúirthóra Náisiúnta, Acmhainní Daonna

Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhísí Sláinte

Ospidéal Dr. Steevens'

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To: Chief Executive Officer
Each National Director
Each Assistant National Director HR
Each Assistant Chief Finance Officer
Each Hospital Group CEO
Each Hospital Group Director of HR
Each Chief Officer CHOs
Each Head of HR CHOs
Head of HR, PCRS
Each CEO Section 38 Agencies
Each HR Manager Section 38 Agencies
Each Employee Relations Manager
Each Group Director of Nursing & Midwifery
Each Group Director of Midwifery
Each Clinical Director
Director National Ambulance Service

From: Anne Marie Hoey, National Director Human Resources

Date: 24th December 2020

Re: HR Circular 072/2020 Arrangements for health service employees in relation to travel overseas
Additional measures for HSE employees who return from travel overseas prior to attending the work premises

Dear Colleagues

As you are aware, the general travel advice remains to avoid non-essential travel as outlined in the Government's website [at this link](#).

1. Government travel advice

Ireland has implemented the EU 'traffic lights' approach to travel, which applies to countries in the EU/EEA (+ UK). Anyone coming into Ireland (apart from Northern Ireland and individuals arriving in Ireland from "green regions"), is required to restrict

their movements for 14 days, unless they undergo a test and receive a negative result (see [this link on gov.ie](#) for more details of when the test can be taken) or meet certain other criteria which can be found at [this link](#). Currently, anyone who arrived from Great Britain since 8 December is advised to self-isolate for a period of 14 days from the date of arrival into Ireland as outlined in the Government's website [at this link](#).

2. Public Health Service Employees who travel overseas for a non-essential reason

Responsibility to provide for the period of restricted movement arising from non-essential travel overseas is a matter for each individual employee. In order to protect public health, employees are required to advise their employer of any intention to travel overseas. Where there is an intention to undertake non-essential travel overseas to a non "green" country, all employees must make provision by way of an annual leave or unpaid leave application for the period of restricted movement on return to Ireland. This arrangement is applicable to all employees regardless of whether they can work from home.

Should an employee return from a "green" country there will be no requirement to restrict their movements.

In all instances, employees should continue to notify their manager of any intention to travel overseas. The travel advice in the Government's website will be regularly reviewed and may change, and employees should be aware that whatever restricted movement requirements are in place on their date of return to Ireland will apply to them. Employees should log on to www.dfa.ie immediately prior to their return to Ireland to ensure they are fully apprised of any changes, and any necessary requirement to restrict their movements upon arrival in Ireland.

3. Public Health Service Employees who travel overseas for an essential reason

Specific arrangements are in place for those undertaking essential travel. Employees should refer to the [gov.ie travel advice page](#) for the latest information and contact their management/local HR department for further details if they believe they fall into this category.

As per the Government website, those travelling for an essential reason are requested to carry supporting documentation. In the case of persons travelling for essential family reasons, for example, this may include documentation from doctors, undertakers, clerics, social workers or solicitors.

Health service employees who consider themselves to be in this exempt category will be required to provide their employer with satisfactory supporting documentation for essential travel prior to travel where possible. Employers should also request confirmation from the employee that they otherwise restricted their movements whilst

they were abroad. If no documentation is provided by the date of return to Ireland, employers should assume that the travel is non-essential and therefore the exemption does not apply. Employees should be notified of this when applying for annual leave.

4. HSE employees who return from travel overseas¹ - additional measures for those who normally attend the work premises

In relation to HSE employees who return from travel overseas, HSE managers should refer to the following updated HSE Occupational Health Guideline Documents:

1. Interim Guidance for Coronavirus – Healthcare Worker Management by Occupational Health (revised 23 December 2020).
2. Derogation for the Return to Work of Healthcare Workers (HCW) who are essential for Critical Services (revised 23 December 2020).

The updated HSE Occupational Health guidelines are available at [at this link](#).

In accordance with the provisions set out in these HSE Occupational Health guidelines, some HSE employees who return to Ireland from orange, red and grey regions, and are not required to restrict their movements based on the Government's travel advice upon arrival in Ireland, may still be required by the HSE to remain away from the work premises for 14 days depending on the nature of their HSE role. The HSE's additional requirement to remain away from the work premises is only applicable to those HSE employees whose role requires them to be *physically present at the work premises/onsite* and is a precautionary measure to protect the health and safety of other workers and patients/clients in healthcare facilities. This additional requirement applies to those HSE employees who travelled for an essential reason (see section 3 of this Circular) and are exempted from restricting their movements in accordance with the Government's travel advice. This additional requirement also applies to HSE employees arriving from an "orange" or "red" or "grey" region (not in any of the exempt categories) whose period of restricted movement can end if they receive a negative/'not detected' result of a PCR test that has been taken a minimum of five days after their arrival in Ireland [view here](#).

If it is determined by HSE management that in the interests of health and safety, and to protect patient/clients and other workers, an employee should not immediately attend the work premises (or following receipt of a negative test result in the case of non-essential travel), albeit they meet the specific criteria on the Government website for not having to restrict their movements upon return to Ireland, then HSE management must assign the employee work that can be carried out at home (WFH) for this specific period. This may include assigning duties outside the HSE employee's normal role. Please note that this

¹ This section is specific to HSE employees. Section 38 employers may put in place their own additional measures in respect of their employees.

WFH arrangement following return from travel overseas only applies for the specific period of having to remain away from the work premises applied by the HSE to relevant employees that goes beyond the criteria for restricting movements upon arrival in Ireland as set out in the Government's website. Any period of restricted movements that HSE employees are required to undergo in line with the latest information in the Government's website must be covered by annual leave or unpaid leave.

Please ensure that this Circular is brought to the attention of managers and staff within your area of responsibility. HSE managers should note the additional measures for HSE employees at section 4 of this Circular, and the updated HSE Occupational Health Guidance Documents, and ensure that this information is brought to the attention of relevant staff within their area of responsibility.

Queries

Queries from individual employees or managers should be referred to local HR/Employee Relations Departments. Please note that the National HR Helpdesk is also available to take queries from employees on 1850 444 925 or ask.hr@hse.ie.

Queries on the Workplace Health & Wellbeing Unit's Covid-19 guideline documents may be referred to hr.wellbeing@hse.ie or the HCW helpline t: 1850 420 420

Queries from HR/Employee Relations Departments on other aspects of this Circular may be referred to Corporate Employee Relations, HR Directorate, 63-64 Adelaide Road, Dublin 2. Tel: 01 6626966, Email: info.t@hse.ie

Yours sincerely



Anne Marie Hoey
National Director of Human Resources