



Guidance for Employers

Leave arising from COVID-19 exposure

As the COVID-19 cases continue to increase, many employers have been faced with many leave requests over the last few weeks. However, every scenario is not the same as some employees fall into varying categories such as positive cases (persons in hospital or home isolation), primary contacts or secondary contacts. To allow for careful application of the policy, we have broken down the guidance into three scenarios. The scenarios include treatment of secondary contacts, primary contacts, and positive cases (persons in hospital or home isolation).

PRIMARY CONTACTS:

Who is a primary contact?

Primary contacts are persons who have been identified as a close contact of a positive case.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR EMPLOYEES IDENTIFIED AS PRIMARY CONTACTS:

- Primary contacts are placed in quarantine and restricted from moving around and therefore they are unable to report to work.
- Should the employee be able to work remotely, they may exercise this option.
- These employees are entitled to sick leave and may claim sick benefits through the National Insurance Department (NIS).
- The Ministry of Health and Wellness and the National Insurance Department (NIS) have confirmed that there are delays in receiving the forms to date. They indicated that they are working to streamline the processing and provision of NIS "sick benefit" claims for persons in home isolation due to COVID-19. They have also confirmed that affected individuals will be allowed adequate time for submission of the forms for processing by the NIS. Additionally, persons should only submit the completed sickness certificate to the NIS for processing.

- As the process for submitting the NIS sick leave forms is still being streamlined, employers are reminded that there will be delays in employees submitting the requisite documents to your various departments.

SECONDARY CONTACTS:

Who is a secondary contact?

A secondary contact is a person who has been in close contact with a primary contact. While the primary contact is awaiting results there are no restrictions on the movement of the secondary contact.

CONSIDERATION FOR EMPLOYEES IDENTIFIED AS SECONDARY CONTACTS:

- An employee who is a secondary contact is considered as available for work and therefore still entitled to pay as per regular company policy.
- Should the employer ask the employee to stay away from the workplace to minimise risk to the organisation, the following can be utilized:
 - Remote work
 - Company leave e.g., personal days
 - vacation days (must be mutually agreed by employer and employee)
- Secondary contacts are unable to make sickness claims to the National Insurance.
- Should the primary contact return a positive Covid-19 test result, the secondary contact transitions to a primary contact and the relevant provisions apply.



CONSIDERATIONS FOR EMPLOYEES AT HOME – ISOLATION OR QUARANTINE

HOME ISOLATION

Employees in home isolation are unable to report for work as they have received a positive COVID-19 result. Persons who test positive can claim sick leave benefits through the National Insurance Department (NIS).

Employers are encouraged to allow employees some time to submit the forms as the National Insurance Department (NIS) has informed that there are delays at this time.

QUARANTINE

Similarly, employees in quarantine are unable to report for work as they are suspected of exposure to a positive COVID-19 case or of having COVID-19 due to symptoms. These persons are unable to report to work while awaiting their test result and will be required to quarantine until that time.

Employers are again encouraged to allow employees some time to submit the forms as the National Insurance Department (NIS) has informed that there are delays at this time.

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