

# STATE OF EMERGENCY

COVID-19  
CORONAVIRUS

## FOR EMPLOYEES

### QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Bulletin No. 2, March 25, 2020

#### **Q.** Will I be laid off during the pandemic?

**A.** Chief and Council hope that no more layoffs will be necessary during the pandemic. We made arrangements to lay off the employees at the Mystery Lake Hotel and restaurant during the pandemic in accordance with the collective agreement. We hope no further layoffs will be necessary and we will do everything we can to ensure our employees can continue working or will be able to come back to work as soon as it is safe to do so.

#### **Q.** Can I work from home?

**A.** A schedule has been developed to allow as many people as possible to work from home or alternate working at home and in the community. It is very important that everyone understand that working from home in these circumstances is not a paid holiday. You are still required to work. We recommend you try to do the following:

- Set boundaries with your kids by setting up a daily schedule so they know when it is your work time but schedule breaks to spend a bit of time with them and give them snacks and meals;
- Create a physical space for you to work;

- Stick to a schedule - if you start your day at 8:30 or 9:00 try to stick to that and schedule times you can check in with your colleagues so you stay connected;
- Be patient as we work through the technology problems that we know will arise given the speed of internet in the north;
- Maintain your mental and physical health while you are physically/socially distancing by taking time to go outside for a walk and enjoy the sunshine.

#### **Q.** Will I have remote access to NCN's network if I am required to work from home?

**A.** A review of each position is taking place to determine who may need access to the network in order to be able to continue doing their job from home. Not everyone will be able to do so due to internet speed issues as well as security concerns. You will be able to obtain your emails and respond but given the magnitude of the issue internet speeds may be even slower than normal (and we know they are already slow).

# STATE OF EMERGENCY QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

**Q. Can I refuse to go to work because I am afraid I will get coronavirus at work?**

**A.** You have the right to refuse unsafe work. At this point, the virus has not spread to NCN or northern Manitoba and we hope to keep it that way. If you exercise your rights under employment legislation and refuse to work there are steps that must be followed to address the concern you have raised. Generally, though fear alone is not a sufficient reason to refuse to go to work. As this situation is unprecedented, we encourage you to contact Diane Linklater at the Wellness Centre to discuss your fears. It is a time of anxiety and uncertainty for all of us and we empathize with the fears you may have and will try to address them as best as we can given this rapidly changing situation.

**Q. Can I refuse to go to work if my family does not want me around as they are afraid I will get coronavirus at work?**

**A.** You can assure your family that NCN has taken all the necessary steps to prevent the virus from entering the community and that plans are being updated daily as issues arise. Our goal is to keep everyone safe and healthy and if there are risks then we will address them. If you are suffering from anxiety because of the situation we all find ourselves in then please contact Diane Linklater at (204) 484-2341.

**Q. Why is my work being modified?**

**A.** NCN is trying to ensure people continue to have employment so that they can make their payments. The pandemic has created additional workloads in some areas and reduced needs in other areas. Therefore, work is being adjusted to meet the community's needs during this unprecedented situation.

**Q. Why am I being reassigned?**

**A.** You are being reassigned to assist in the areas with the greatest need during this pandemic. We need everyone to co-operate to protect our community to the maximum extent possible.

**Q. Will I continue to be paid my same salary if I work from home or am reassigned?**

**A.** Yes, for as long as we can afford to do this we will.

**Q. What should I do about working if I am pregnant or nursing my baby?**

**A.** Check with your supervisor to determine how you can continue to work while minimizing contact with other colleagues or the community.

**Q. Are visitors still allowed at my workplace?**

**A.** Restrictions are in place and in most of our workplaces no-one is allowed into the workplace except for the people who work there and are designated as essential services.

**Q. What protective measures have been put in place in my workplace?**

**A.** Visitors have been limited, positions have been reviewed to determine who can work from home, schedules have been modified, workplaces have been cleaned and sanitized or will be shortly, protective gear has been obtained for critical positions.

**Q. Do I have to serve someone who is sick?**

**A.** It depends on your job. If you are in an essential position you may be required to wear protective gear while helping a person who is sick. If you are unsure, additional information can be obtained from the Linda Wright, the NCN Health Director or Maria, Neepin, the Nurse in Charge.

**Q. Do I need to wear a face mask or other protective equipment when I go to work?**

**A.** Most NCN positions will not require you to wear a face mask or other protective equipment but some might. Your supervisor will advise you if you do. If you are unsure, then please contact Linda Wright, the NCN Health Director or Wayne Spence, the EMO Co-ordinator.

# STATE OF EMERGENCY QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

## **Q.** What happens if I get sick?

**A.** If you get sick from coronavirus you will be entitled to take sick leave. You will be entitled to access either paid sick leave, EI sick leave benefits or in certain cases disability benefits. You will be required to follow the instructions from the public health nurse. You must remain isolated until you are symptom free. If you get sick from another virus or something else, then the ordinary NCN sick leave policies continue to apply.

## **Q.** Who do I call if I can't come to work?

**A.** Call your supervisor as you normally would and if they are not available then call Kim Linklater, Executive Director of Human Resources or her Assistant.

## **Q.** Do I have to tell my employer what type of illness I have?

**A.** Given the current pandemic you must disclose if you have any symptoms of coronavirus even though you might think they are just a cold or the flu. The symptoms can include dry cough, fever, sore throat, runny nose, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, flu-like muscle aches, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea.

## **Q.** What proof of illness do I have to provide?

**A.** If you think you have symptoms of COVID-19 then you will be screened and tested if necessary. If you test positive you will be notified and that information will be provided to the NCN Health Director. If you have another type of illness the usual NCN personnel policies will apply.

## **Q.** If I get COVID-19 will I be able to return to work?

**A.** Yes, once the NCN Health Director or her designate confirms you are symptom free and you are fit to return to work. If you suffer from long term effects of COVID-19 for example, scarring of your lungs that causes you to have breathing or other problems you may need to have a workplace accommodation in accordance with NCN's personnel policies. You should discuss your needs with your Supervisor.

## **Q.** Will I receive my salary and benefits if I get sick?

**A.** Yes, in accordance with NCN personnel policies and any additional benefits available through Employment Insurance or our benefit policies.

## **Q.** If my co-worker or someone close to them gets COVID-19 what steps will be taken to clean our workplace?

**A.** Steps will be taken as directed by the NCN Health Director.

## **Q.** Do I have to report someone who traveled outside the community or was in contact with a person who had COVID-19 and lied about it?

**A.** Providing this information may assist in keeping this deadly virus out of our community. While we normally do not promote gossip and other forms of lateral violence in our community, the risks are great and if it is possible to save lives by disclosing this information then we recommend that you notify Linda Wright, the NCN Health Director so she can decide upon next steps.

## **Q.** Do I have to report people who refuse to abide by the physical/social distancing rules?

**A.** We recommend that you suggest politely to people who may not be following this rule that they should put some space between each other as we all have a responsibility to protect ourselves, our families and our community. If they do not follow the rules they are putting all of us at risk and then other more drastic forms of enforcement may become necessary.