



## COVID-19 (Coronavirus): Employee related and general FAQs

This guideline aims to provide clear and consistent guidance to DHB employed staff on how leave will be provided for in relation to absences as a result of COVID-19 and how work-related and personal travel will be managed.

### General Principles

- Where a staff member is ready and willing to work but the DHB requires them to stay home or self-isolate, they will be entitled to special leave.
- Where possible, flexible working arrangements should be explored for staff able to work at home but due to infection control risk and/or the need to look after dependants need to remain away from work
- Payment of sick leave will be in accordance with the staff members employment agreement and the Holidays Act
- As a responsible employer and provider of essential community health services, we are taking the decision to place restrictions on international travel. These restrictions apply to all staff, because we are all important members of the teams that enable the care that we deliver.
- Business travel advice will continue to be updated regularly.
- The DHB are advising all staff to consider carefully any private international travel. We would expect any international travel to be discussed with your line manager and further, advise that if self-isolation is required as a result, special leave will not apply, and other forms of leave can be discussed with your line manager.
- Further advice or clarification on leave entitlements for staff can be obtained from your union, HR or line manager in line with these FAQs

In the event employees are required to be off work in relation to the virus, please find advice below in relation to **leave to be granted**. This advice is for employees of the DHB – Please click here if you are a volunteer, patient or visitor [Ministry of Health website](#).

Shown below are examples of possible scenarios that may arise as a result of the coronavirus and how DHBs what leave is available to employees.



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Leave Type		
Scenario	Employee Asymptomatic / No symptoms	Employee Symptomatic / Sick Employee should be appropriately assessed to confirm CoV-19 as per MoH Health Professional Advice. <Link to MoH>
Employee requested by DHB or Ministry of Health to <b>stand down</b> or <b>self-isolate</b> for incubation period of the disease.  Note: Stand-down requirements will be clinically informed and	Working from Home/Special Leave*  Staff member may work from home if these arrangements are suitable.	Sick Leave
Leave Type		
Scenario	Employee Asymptomatic / No symptoms	Employee Symptomatic / Sick Employee should be appropriately assessed to confirm CoV-19 as per MoH Health Professional Advice. <Link to MoH>
changed as the situation and MOH advisory evolves.		
Leave Type		
Scenario	Employee Asymptomatic / No symptoms	Employee Symptomatic / Sick Employee should be appropriately assessed to confirm CoV-19 as per MoH Health Professional Advice. <Link to MoH>
Employee prevented from returning to the country through border controls.	Working from Home/Annual Leave and Special Leave *  <i>To be reviewed at the same time as governmental updates</i>	Sick Leave



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	<p><i>to border restrictions.</i>  <i>In the first instance a discussion by Manager with Employee should be held to seek agreement on taking annual leave until exhausted.</i>  <i>In event no agreement is reached regarding annual leave, Special Leave may be granted for up to 14 days after which we will review your situation with you and may direct you to take annual leave.</i></p>	
<p>Leave Type</p>		
Scenario	Employee Asymptomatic / No symptoms	Employee Symptomatic / Sick Employee should be appropriately assessed to confirm CoV-19 as per MoH Health Professional Advice. <Link to MoH>
Employee prevented from returning to the country through border controls.	<p>Working from Home/Annual Leave and Special Leave *</p> <p>To be reviewed at the same time as governmental updates to border restrictions.</p> <p>In the first instance a discussion by Manager with Employee should be held to seek agreement on taking annual leave until exhausted. In event no agreement is reached regarding annual leave, Special Leave may be granted for up to 14 days after which we will review your situation with you and may direct you to take annual leave.</p>	Sick Leave



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Leave Type		
Scenario	Employee Asymptomatic / No symptoms	Employee Symptomatic / Sick Employee should be appropriately assessed to confirm CoV-19 as per MoH Health Professional Advice. <Link to MoH>
Employee requested by DHB to <b>stand-down</b> for incubation period after <b>knowingly placing themselves at risk by ignoring advice</b> e.g. ignoring MOH or MFAT travel advisory.	Working from Home/Annual Leave or Unpaid Leave  <i>Discussion by Manager with Employee to seek agreement on working from home, taking accrued annual leave in the first instance, otherwise unpaid leave is to be granted.</i>	Sick Leave
Leave Type		
Scenario	Employee Asymptomatic / No symptoms	Employee Symptomatic / Sick Employee should be appropriately assessed to confirm CoV-19 as per MoH Health Professional Advice. <Link to MoH>
<b>Children stood down</b> from school or other dependent required to isolate by DHB/MoH	Annual Leave	Sick Leave if either Employee or Dependent becomes symptomatic and requires care
Leave Type		
Scenario	Employee Asymptomatic / No symptoms	Employee Symptomatic / Sick Employee should be appropriately assessed to confirm CoV-19 as per MoH Health Professional Advice. <Link to MoH>



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<p><i>Discussion with Manager to explore alternatives of care for children first, before leave is granted.</i></p> <p><i>Discussion by Manager with Employee to seek agreement on working from home if suitable</i></p>		
Leave Type		
Scenario	Employee Asymptomatic / No symptoms	<b>Employee Symptomatic / Sick</b> Employee should be appropriately assessed to confirm CoV-19 as per MoH Health Professional Advice. <Link to MoH>
Employee is <b>symptomatic and may have been exposed to COVID-19.</b>	N/A	Sick Leave
Leave Type		
Scenario	Employee Asymptomatic / No symptoms	<b>Employee Symptomatic / Sick</b> Employee should be appropriately assessed to confirm CoV-19 as per MoH Health Professional Advice. <Link to MoH>
Employee is <b>potentially exposed to COVID-19 during the course of their work.</b>	Working From Home/Special Leave* Staff member may work from home if these arrangements are suitable.	Sick Leave/Special Leave* Special Leave may be available where the exposure can be directly linked to an employee's work.
Leave Type		
Scenario	Employee Asymptomatic / No symptoms	<b>Employee Symptomatic / Sick</b> Employee should be appropriately assessed to confirm CoV-19 as per MoH



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		Health Professional Advice. <Link to MoH>
<p>Employee has <b>run out of paid sick leave entitlement.</b></p> <p><i>Discussion with Manager on options.</i></p>	<p>Situations should be looked at on a case-by-case basis with managers working with HRBP to determine whether any additional entitlements exist under a particular employee’s employment agreement and what other leave entitlements may be utilised. Forms of leave should ideally be explored and exhausted in the following order for Cov-19:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Accrued Annual Leave (agreed with the employee to take).</li> <li>- Annual Leave in advance (agreed with the employee to take and if leaves employment before accrual comes available will be expected to repay).</li> <li>- “Employment Agreement” Discretionary Sick Leave* (Manager agrees to exercise discretion in line with employment agreement entitlements).</li> <li>- Leave Without Pay.</li> <li>- “Non-Employment Agreement” Discretionary Sick Leave* (GM agrees to exercise discretion taking into account all relevant context including the exhaustion of the above leave types and where extreme hardship would be experienced by the employee if not granted).</li> </ul>	

**Travel**

- **Work-related travel:** All non-essential international business travel to June is cancelled and any future booking are deferred until further notice, including to Australia. Non-essential travel includes all travel for the purposes of training, education, conference, seminar or meeting attendance. Travel pre-booked for June-Sept should be reviewed in mid-June.



If you are travelling to attend exams, education or sabbaticals that ensures you meet your professional certification or regulatory bodies' requirements, please discuss this within your DHB with the relevant approvers before you book your travel. Where staff are already on sabbatical please stay in touch to make sure they are supported if they have any concerns.

For RMOs, any examinations overseas are approved, and your attendance will be supported. For any other education or conference-based travel please contact your local RMO unit in the first instance.

We will consider exceptional circumstances where work related travel may be supported and approved, subject to New Zealand and international travel advisories.

- **Personal travel:** Please consider carefully any private international travel and discuss this with your line manager before you travel. If you choose to travel and self-isolation is required on return as a result, special leave will not apply and other forms of leave and or alternative working arrangements, such as working from home, will be discussed with your line manager.

#### **What about work-related domestic travel?**

All domestic travel should be approved by your general manager or director and will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Where video-conferencing is available, this will be preferred. We also recommend that teams and services consider the number of people attending from each service events and conferences in New Zealand. This is to minimise the risk of multiple people from one team being away from work unexpectedly.

#### **Does the DHB travel insurance cover COVID-19 – medical treatment, travel plans and time away from work?**

If travel insurance was taken out on or before noon of 30 January 2020 then you will be covered for any COVID-19 issues. After that date, as it was a known event, insurers may not cover medical expenses or cover loss of deposits, cancellations, travel disruption and time off work in connection with COVID-19. This is likely to be the same with all insurers. Please check with your travel co-ordinator.

The Employer's Liability policy will cover our employees for injury/disability/death provided there is no ACC cover.

#### **What happens to CME or PD funds that are expiring?**

We will carry-over any expiring CME or PD funds that are at risk due to these travel restrictions.

#### **What if I am currently booked to travel for work purposes and I incur non-refundable cancellation charges not covered by insurance?**



Airlines, hotels and insurance companies are – in many instances – waiving cancellation charges or reimbursing them. Where there are costs for you as an employee arising from cancellations that are not covered by vendors or insurance, these will be met by the DHB.

The DHB does not cover insurance for personal travel.

## DEFINITIONS

**Available Paid Leave:** – this is by agreement between line manager and the staff member on what type of leave will be taken including:

- o Entitled Sick Leave
- o Lieu days
- o Shift Leave
- o On-call leave
- o Accrued Annual Leave (agreed with the employee to take).
- o Annual Leave in advance (agreed with the employee to take and if leaves employment before accrual comes available will be expected to repay).

**Special or Discretionary Leave:** Paid leave granted during exceptional situations including the Covid-19 outbreak where the employee is not sick or injured

- **“Employment Agreement”** Discretionary Sick Leave: Some MECAs specifically allowing the application and granting of additional paid sick leave where an employee has exhausted their accrued paid sick leave entitlements. All MECAs prescribe the exact amount that may be granted, and some allow for the deduction of any leave given to be deducted from future entitlements. Please check the employee’s relevant agreement to see the parameters around granting this.
- **“Non-Employment Agreement”** Discretionary Sick Leave: Paid sick leave granted in addition to any contractual entitlements granted in exceptional circumstances in response to all relevant context including the exhaustion of the other leave types and where extreme hardship would be experienced by the employee if not granted.

**Accrued Annual Leave:** Accrued annual leave is leave that is accrued as you work during the year and is separate from your leave that you earned during the previous year.

**Vulnerable Employee:** A vulnerable employee is a low paid employee who may not have sufficient annual leave or sick leave accrued to be able to take paid leave if they become unwell or need to



self-isolate and also a vulnerable employee is our aged workforce who is more at risk of contracting the virus than younger staff members.

**Special Leave:** Where there is an agreement that employees will receive paid special leave, the payment will be based on their normal rostered duty they were due to work during the period of paid leave.