

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR OPS EMPLOYEES RE: 2019 NOVEL CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

Last Updated: **April 1, 2020**

For the latest information, the Ministry of Health has set up a web page where people can [learn more about the 2019 novel coronavirus \(COVID-19\) and stay informed through daily updates](#).

These Qs & As will be updated as new information becomes available.

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## Questions and Answers

### Public Services

**Q1. Will the Ontario Public Service (OPS) continue to provide public services as usual? (UPDATED)**

- A.** On April 2, 2020 the Secretary of Cabinet announced that until May 1 the OPS will only be asking employees to attend the workplace in-person, where a ministry requires them to deliver critical services. When it is critical for OPS employees to attend the workplace to maintain delivery of critical services, precautions are being taken to help our workplaces remain safe, including physical distancing, necessary cleaning protocols, and provision of personal protective equipment (PPE) as appropriate.

The OPS is taking steps to continue to provide public services while leveraging alternative work arrangements where operationally feasible. All services that can be delivered remotely will continue. Employees who do not support critical services and who cannot work remotely will be asked to remain at home.

Physical distancing is essential to protecting our health and the health of others and restricting the spread of the virus.

We understand that this situation may cause staff concern about potential health risks in our province. However, our integrated health care system is well prepared to manage this situation.

Ontario officials are actively working with partners in the health care system at the municipal, provincial and federal levels to monitor, detect and contain this emerging health issue in the province.

Our first priority is to protect the health and safety of our employees.

We will continue to monitor developments on COVID-19 take the advice provided by the Ministry of Health, Chief Medical Officer of Health and Public Health Officials, and keep employees informed of any new developments.

For the latest information, the Ministry of Health has set up two web pages which is updated twice daily, seven days a week where people can [learn more about the 2019 novel coronavirus \(COVID-19\) and stay informed](#). Visit [Ontario.ca/coronavirus](https://ontario.ca/coronavirus).

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR OPS EMPLOYEES RE: 2019 NOVEL CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

### Employee Health and Safety

#### Q2. What is the Government doing to protect its employees from COVID-19? (UPDATED)

A. The health and safety of our employees is a top priority.

On April 2, 2020 the Secretary of Cabinet announced that until May 1, 2020 the OPS will only be asking employees to attend the workplace in-person, where a ministry requires them to deliver critical services. When it is critical for OPS employees to attend the workplace to maintain delivery of critical services, precautions are being taken to help ensure our workplaces remain safe.

The OPS is taking steps to continue to provide public services while leveraging alternative work arrangements operationally feasible. It is important that OPS employees work from home unless it is critical for them to remain in the workplace to maintain delivery of services.

All services that can be delivered remotely will continue. Employees who do not support critical services and who cannot work remotely will be asked to remain at home until further notice from the Employer.

Physical distancing is essential to protecting our health and the health of others and restricting the spread of the virus. It is important that OPS employees work from home unless it is critical for them to remain in the workplace to maintain delivery of services.

Appropriate cleaning continues to be undertaken to reduce risk to staff and visitors within OPS occupied buildings. The current cleaning practice is to help ensure a hygienic workplace is maintained. Environmentally friendly cleaning products that are effective at reducing the spread of bacteria and viruses are used.

In addition, MGCS is coordinating with Infrastructure Ontario and ministry CAO's for the delivery of enhanced cleaning of all high contact areas at least three additional times per day at certain OPS occupied locations in circumstances where cleaning above the current practice is warranted.

High contact areas include: door handles, hand rails, elevators, push plates, light switches, bathroom areas, etc. Enhanced cleaning includes cleaning with stronger disinfectant cleaner consistent with the advice of public health officials.

Additionally, if there are any ministry in-person group gatherings or meetings scheduled of more than five people in the near future, that are not essential services, they should be cancelled until further notice. Ministries should consider

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videoconferences, teleconferences or e-mail communication as an alternative to face-to-face meetings.

### **Q3. Can I request local cleaners to provide additional cleaning to my work space?**

- A. Local cleaners are responsible for following consistent standards for the appropriate cleaning of their building. Employees should not be directing local cleaners on how to perform their services.

### **Q4. I am in close contact with someone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19. What should I do? (NEW)**

- A. If you are in close contact with someone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19 or who has been directed by public health to self isolate, please visit the Ministry of Health's [website](#), to use the new COVID-19 self-assessment tool.

If you receive direction to seek further assessment or self-isolate from medical authorities, please self-isolate immediately and notify your manager. If you remain asymptomatic and it is not feasible to work remotely, you may request a 14-day paid leave of absence.

### **Q5. Why is so much attention being paid to hand hygiene? (NEW)**

- A. Public Health officials have indicated that hand washing with soap and water is the best defense against common infectious diseases. Should soap and water not be readily available, employees should be encouraged to use hand sanitizer.

### **Q6. Will the employer provide medical masks, gloves, and hand sanitizers? (UPDATED)**

- A. Most OPS employees are not required to wear personal protective equipment (PPE). According to Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health, mask use is generally not recommended for non-health workers, particularly during this time when non-health care settings are being asked to transfer any PPE that is not needed. However, based on a workplace risk assessment, your employer will determine the need for PPE based on the circumstances of the workplace and nature of the services provided. Inquire with your manager if you are unsure if PPE is required for your workplace.

To reduce exposure to and transmission of a range of illnesses, including coronaviruses, the Chief Medical Office of Health is reminding Ontarians to:

- wash your hands often with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- sneeze and cough into your sleeve

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- avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth
- avoid contact with people who are sick
- stay at home if you are sick
- practice physical distancing

Appropriate cleaning continues to be undertaken to reduce risk to staff and visitors within OPS occupied buildings. The current cleaning practice is to help ensure a hygienic workplace is maintained. Environmentally friendly cleaning products that are effective at reducing the spread of bacteria and viruses are used.

In addition, MGCS is coordinating with Infrastructure Ontario and ministry CAO's for the delivery of enhanced cleaning of all high contact areas at least three additional times per day at certain OPS occupied locations in circumstances where cleaning above the current practice is warranted.

High contact areas include: door handles, hand-sanitizers rails, elevators, push plates, light switches, bathroom areas, etc. Enhanced cleaning includes cleaning with stronger disinfectant cleaner consistent with the advice of public health officials.

### **Q7. I am anxious about the possibility of contracting COVID-19. What should I do? (UPDATED)**

- A.** On April 2, 2020 the Secretary of Cabinet announced that until May 1 the OPS will only be asking employees to attend the workplace in-person, where a ministry requires them to deliver critical services. Where operationally feasible, OPS employees that support non-critical services have been asked to work remotely.

Given the nature of some services government delivers, working remotely may not always be achievable and in those circumstances, employees will be asked to remain at home until further notice.

We understand that this situation may cause staff concern about potential health risks in our province. Our integrated health care system is well prepared to manage this situation. Ontario officials are actively working with partners in the health care system at the municipal, provincial and federal levels to monitor, detect and contain this emerging health issue in the province.

To reduce exposure to and transmission of a range of illnesses, including coronaviruses, remember to:

- wash your hands often with soap and water
- sneeze and cough into your sleeve
- avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth

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- avoid contact with people who are sick
- stay home if you are sick
- practice physical distancing

As you may know the Federal Government has encouraged:

- all Canadian travellers to return to Canada
- all Canadians to avoid non-essential travel out of the country, including to the United States, until further notice.

Further restrictions were placed on international flights entering Canada, limiting access to a handful of airports across the country. It was also announced that borders will be closed – and entry denied - to everyone except Canadian citizens, permanent residents, family members of citizens, air crews, diplomats and U.S. citizens travelling on essential matters. In addition, anyone showing symptoms will not be allowed to board domestic flights or trains.

The OPS is doing everything it can help to ensure our workplace remains safe. We have implemented remote working and physical distancing practices as a precaution, so we can do our part to prevent and control the spread of COVID-19.

For the latest information on COVID-19, please visit the Ministry of Health's [website](#), where you can also find the recently announced COVID self-assessment tool.

For more information related to physical distancing and community-based measures, please visit the Government of Canada [website](#).

Resources are also available through the [Employee and Family Assistance Program](#).

### **Q8. What should I do if I think I have symptoms of COVID-19?**

**A.** Symptoms range from common to severe respiratory illness and can include:

- Fever
- Cough
- Difficulty breathing

If you think you have symptoms you should immediately self isolate and the conduct a self-assessment on [Ontario.ca/coronavirus](https://ontario.ca/coronavirus) and if required, contact

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Telehealth Ontario at 1-866-797-0000 or your primary care provider to determine next steps.

Be sure to mention your symptoms and your travel history, including the countries you visited.

If you need immediate medical attention, call 911 and let the operator know of your travel history as well as your symptoms.

### **Q9. What should I do if I am diagnosed as having COVID-19?**

- A.** If you have been confirmed by a health care provider to have COVID-19, you must remain at home and inform your manager. Your health care provider can also help you connect with your local public health unit for information on how to self-isolate and other directions.

### **Q10. Will the government be implementing any enhanced cleaning in the buildings occupied by the OPS across the province?**

- A.** Appropriate cleaning continues to be undertaken to reduce risk to staff and visitors within OPS occupied buildings. The current cleaning practice is to help ensure a hygienic workplace is maintained. Environmentally friendly cleaning products that are effective at reducing the spread of bacteria and viruses are used.

In addition, MGCS is coordinating with Infrastructure Ontario and ministry CAO's for the delivery of enhanced cleaning of all high contact areas at least three additional times per day at certain OPS occupied locations in circumstances where cleaning above the current practice is warranted.

High contact areas include: door handles, hand rails, elevators, push plates, light switches, bathroom areas, etc. Enhanced cleaning includes cleaning with stronger disinfectant cleaner consistent with the advice of public health officials.

### **Q11. I saw a cleaning staff person wearing a mask and gloves. What's happening in my building?**

- A.** Enhanced cleaning using a strong disinfectant has begun within some buildings where the circumstances have warranted. The janitorial staff conducting the cleaning are required to work with these chemicals for long periods at a time. As a result, they have been provided with personal protective equipment to wear while performing these extended activities.

### **Q12. What are my responsibilities as an employee in the context of COVID-19?**

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- A.** Employees have the responsibility to review information provided by health authorities and by their employer. They are responsible for following their management's direction regarding reporting to work and workplace health procedures in the context of COVID-19.

While at work, employees must also report to the employer any issue or circumstance in a workplace that is likely to be hazardous to the health or safety of employees or other persons granted access to the workplace by the employer. This includes bringing to the attention of their manager any circumstances where it is suspected that a client might be ill.

To avoid spreading the virus to colleagues and clients, employees who have symptoms of COVID-19 (fever, cough, and difficulty breathing) should stay at home while they are showing symptoms or as directed by public health

### Travel

**Q13. I have upcoming travel scheduled outside of Canada and I'm still considering travelling. What should I do? (UPDATED)**

- A.** The Federal Government has encouraged:
- all Canadian travelers to return to Canada
  - all Canadians to avoid non-essential travel out of the country, including to the United States, until further notice.

On March 16, 2020, further restrictions were placed on international flights entering Canada, limiting access to a handful of airports across the country. It was also announced that borders will be closed – and entry denied - to everyone except Canadian citizens, permanent residents, family members of citizens, air crews, diplomats and U.S. citizens travelling on essential matters.

All OPS employees are advised not to travel internationally (including for personal travel), pending further direction.

If you must travel for essential reasons, you are strongly encouraged to review the Federal Government's travel health notices associated with [COVID-19 here](#).

**Q14. I recently travelled outside of Canada and have returned to Ontario. Should I go into self-isolation?**

- A.** All employees (including healthcare workers and essential service workers) must undergo a mandatory 14-day self-isolation when returning from traveling outside of the country, whether they are experiencing symptoms or not.

Where an employee is returning from international travel, and:



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- is not exhibiting symptoms, and
- is available to work:
  - Please work remotely, if operationally feasible
  - When it's not operationally feasible to work remotely, request a paid leave to your manager for the 14-day self-isolation period.

As a result of these measures, all OPS employees are advised not to travel internationally (including for personal travel), pending further direction.

If employees have travelled outside of Canada (including the United States) and experience any symptoms within 14 days, they should conduct a self-assessment on [Ontario.ca/coronavirus](https://ontario.ca/coronavirus) and if required, contact Telehealth Ontario at 1-866-797-0000 or your primary care provider.

Should an employee become ill, Short-Term Sickness Plan (STSP) or attendance credits should be used.

**Q15. I have been advised to go into COVID-19 related self-isolation due to recent travel history, but do not have any symptoms, how will my absences be covered? (UPDATED)**

- A.** All employees (including healthcare workers and essential service workers) must undergo a 14-day self-isolation when returning from traveling outside of the country, whether they are experiencing symptoms or not.

Where an employee is returning from international travel, and:

- is not exhibiting symptoms, and
- is available to work:
  - Please work remotely, if operationally feasible
  - When it's not operationally feasible to work remotely, request a paid leave to your manager for the 14-day self-isolation period.

As a result of these measures, all OPS employees are advised not to travel internationally (including for personal travel), pending further direction.

If employees have travelled outside of Canada (including the United States) and experience any symptoms within 14 days, they should conduct a self-assessment on [Ontario.ca/coronavirus](https://ontario.ca/coronavirus) and if required, contact Telehealth Ontario at 1-866-797-0000 or your primary care provider.

Should you become ill, Short-Term Sickness Plan (STSP) or attendance credits should be used.

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### Absence Requests

**Q16. I need to take time off to attend to a child or other family members who have been directed to self-isolate, or are awaiting testing for COVID-19, or confirmed to have COVID-19, how will that absence be treated? (NEW)**

- A.** If you need to take time off to take care of a child or other family members who have been directed to self-isolate, are awaiting testing or confirmed to have COVID-19 where possible, please work with your manager to review alternate work arrangements, including remote work. If remote work is not operationally feasible due to the nature of your position, you may request to use accumulated credits, unpaid leave or special and compassionate leave requests which will be assessed on a case-by-case basis by your manager.

### Right to Refuse Unsafe Work

**Q17. I am concerned that by travelling to work on public transit, I may contract COVID-19. Do I have to report to work? (UPDATED)**

- A.** On April 2, 2020 the Secretary of Cabinet announced that until May 1, 2020 the OPS Service will only be asking employees to attend the workplace in-person, where a ministry requires them to deliver critical services and precautions are being taken to help ensure our workplaces remain safe.

Where operationally feasible, OPS employees that support non-critical services have been asked to work remotely. All services that can be delivered remotely will continue. Employees who do not support critical services and who cannot work remotely will be asked to remain at home until further notice from the Employer.

For more information, please visit the Ministry of Health web page where people can learn more about for the 2019 novel coronavirus (COVID-19) and stay informed through daily updates.

**Q18. Do I have to report to work if I am concerned about being exposed to the COVID-19 virus at the workplace? (UPDATED)**

- A.** The health and safety of our employees is a top priority for the Government of Ontario.

The Employer is doing everything it can to help ensure our workplace remains safe. We have implemented remote working and physical distancing practices as a precaution, so we can do our part to help prevent and control the spread of COVID-19.

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR OPS EMPLOYEES RE: 2019 NOVEL CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

On April 2, 2020 the Secretary of Cabinet announced that until May 1, 2020 the OPS will continue to only be asking employees to attend the workplace in-person, where a ministry requires them to deliver critical services. Where operationally feasible, OPS employees that support non-critical services have been asked to work remotely. Given the nature of some services government delivers, working remotely may not always be achievable, and in those circumstances, employees will be asked to remain at home.

The Occupational Health and Safety Act governs the rights of workers to refuse work where they believe their health and safety is likely to be in danger.

Under the Occupational Health and Safety Act, an employee can refuse to work if he or she has reason to believe that the physical condition of the workplace is likely to endanger the employee.

The OPS Occupational Health and Safety Policy also establishes the enterprise framework for occupational health and safety in the OPS by providing strategic direction including direction to ministries and Commission Public Bodies regarding compliance with statutory requirements for occupational health and safety, including reporting and addressing unsafe acts and conditions and potential and actual workplace hazards.

If you do have concerns about your safety at work, please talk to your manager.

### Workers' Compensation

**Q19. If I contract COVID-19 as a result of exposure in the workplace, could that be covered under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act instead of STSP or other accumulated credits?**

**A.** The Workplace Safety and Insurance Act does not provide coverage for workers who are symptom-free even when in self-isolation or sent home on a precautionary basis. However, should a symptom-free worker develop symptoms or illness while in self-isolation, they may be eligible for WSIB benefits.

A worker is entitled to benefits for COVID-19 arising out of and in the course of the worker's employment. Claims for COVID-19 will be adjudicated on a case-by-case basis. In all cases, WSIB will make a determination based on the merits of the case, taking into account all of the relevant facts and circumstances.

### Accommodation and Alternative Work Arrangements

**Q20. How are pregnant employees being accommodated during the COVID-19 pandemic?**

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- A. Medical experts have advised that pregnant women are not considered at a greater risk; however, where employees are concerned about their risk of contracting COVID-19 in the workplace, they are encouraged to work with their manager to discuss such concerns.

In accordance with the Disability Accommodation Policy, the OPS is obligated and remains committed to providing reasonable and timely employment accommodation, to employees with illnesses, injuries, or disabilities. For guidance on employment accommodation, contact your Centre for Employee, Health Safety and Wellness Disability Accommodation Specialist.

The Employer is doing everything it can to help ensure our workplace remains safe. We have implemented remote working and physical distancing practices as a precaution, so we can do our part to help prevent and control the spread of COVID-19. You can review the most up to date information on the OPS [2019 Novel Coronavirus](#) website.

For the latest information on COVID-19, please visit the [Ministry of Health's website](#), where you can also find the recently announced COVID self-assessment tool.

For more information related to physical distancing and community-based measures, please visit the [Government of Canada website](#).

Resources are also available through the [Employee and Family Assistance Program](#).

### **Q21. What should I do if I require accommodation to work from home?**

- A. In accordance with the *Ontario Human Rights Code*, the OPS is committed to offering and providing timely and effective employment accommodation to employees with illnesses, injuries, or disabilities. This duty continues to apply when employees are required to work from home. For guidance on employment accommodation please speak to your manager. You can also refer to the [Disability Accommodation Policy](#) or contact your Disability Accommodation Specialist, Centre for Employee Health Safety and Wellness.

### **Q22. I am in a position which has been deemed critical however I have concerns with childcare due to the closure of schools and licensed child care centres. What should I do?**

For OPS staff with children, it can be challenging to balance work and family responsibilities with the closure of:

- all provincially funded and private schools.
- all licensed child care centres.

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**If you are not able to make alternate child care arrangements**, please work with your manager to review alternate work arrangements, including remote work.

If remote work is not operationally feasible due to the nature of your position, special and compassionate leave requests will be assessed on a case-by-case basis by your manager.

The province has recently allowed select licensed childcare centres to open to provide health care and other frontline workers, including doctors, nurses, paramedics, firefighters, police, and correctional officers, with access to safe, local emergency child care. These child care centres will be required to follow existing health and safety requirements and have a plan in place should any staff, children or parents be exposed to the virus.

A list of reopened child care centres will be posted on the [Ministry of Health website](#).

**Q23. I'm in a position which cannot be done remotely and is deemed critical. I'm concerned that I'm at a greater risk of contracting COVID-19, as I have a pre-existing medical condition (I'm a person with a disability). What steps should/can I take, to better protect myself? (UPDATED)**

**A.** Medical experts have advised that some individuals are at greater risk of infections and developing severe complications from COVID-19.

Vulnerable populations may include anyone who is:

- an older adult
- at risk due to underlying medical conditions (e.g. heart disease, hypertension, diabetes, chronic respiratory diseases, cancer, multiple sclerosis, spinal cord injuries)
- at risk due to a compromised immune system from a medical condition, disability or treatment (e.g. chemotherapy)

The OPS is taking steps to continue to provide public services while leveraging alternative work arrangements where operationally feasible. It is important that OPS employees work from home unless it is critical for them to remain in the workplace to maintain delivery of services.

If you are a person who is at greater risk of contracting COVID-19, and you are in a position where you are required to report to the workplace in-person to maintain delivery of critical services, please speak with your manager about requesting a leave of absence to support your time away from work.

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**Q24. If I'm over seventy years old or have a compromised immune system and I am concerned that I am at a greater risk of contracting COVID-19, what should I do? (NEW)**

**A.** Medical experts have advised that some individuals are at greater risk of infections and developing severe complications from COVID-19 including older adults.

It is important to note that on March 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020, Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health urged all individuals over the age of seventy years old or have a compromised immune system to self-isolate for 14 days.

The OPS is taking steps to continue to provide public services while leveraging alternative work arrangements where operationally feasible. It is important that OPS employees work from home unless it is critical for them to remain in the workplace to maintain delivery of services.

If you are a person who is at greater risk of contracting COVID-19, and you are in a position where you are required to report to the workplace in-person to maintain delivery of critical services, please speak with your manager about requesting a leave of absence to support your time away from work.

## Employee and Family Assistance Program

**Q25. What Employee Assistance supports are available if I have concerns related to COVID-19?**

**A.** Every employee has access to an Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP 1-844-880-9142). These programs provide confidential counselling and deal with a wide variety of personal problems, including stress, anxiety, or any other issues that may affect your well-being. The services of the EFAP continue to be available to you and your immediate family. For more information about the services offered by your EFAP, ask your manager or contact your Human Resources Services Branch or visit your Ministry's intranet site.

For the latest information, the Ministry of Health has set up a web page where people can [learn more about the 2019 novel coronavirus \(COVID-19\) and stay informed](#) through daily updates.

## Out-of-Country Benefits Plan

**Q26. Will my coverage in the Out-of-Country benefits plan continue?**

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- A.** Yes, coverage for OPS employees and their eligible dependent(s) who have elected to enrol in the Optional Upgrade plans (OUP), that include Emergency Out-of-Country medical coverage and Emergency Travel Assistance/Global Medical Assistance continues to apply. Claims related to the novel coronavirus or claims that occurred during travel to a country with travel advisory warnings will be treated like any other claim under your plan. Please refer to the brochure posted on the Total Compensation Strategies Branch page at InsideOPS or you may contact the insurance carrier directly at:

*Manulife - OPSEU represented employees*

Phone: 1-800-268-6195

Website: [www.manulife.ca](http://www.manulife.ca)

*Canada Life (formerly Great-West Life) - All Other Employees*

Phone: 1-800-874-5899

Website: [www.canadalife.com](http://www.canadalife.com)

### Fixed-Term Employees

**Q27. I am a fixed-term employee who recently travelled abroad and have been advised to go into mandatory COVID-19 related self-isolation but am not symptomatic, how will my absences be covered? (UPDATED)**

- A.** All employees (including healthcare workers and essential service workers) are now being asked to undergo a mandatory 14-day self-isolation when returning from traveling outside of the country, whether they are experiencing symptoms or not.

Where an employee is returning from international travel, and:

- is not exhibiting symptoms, and
- is available to work:
  - Please work remotely, if operationally feasible
  - When it's not operationally feasible to work remotely, request a paid leave to your manager for the 14-day self-isolation period.

As a result of these measures, all OPS employees are advised not to travel internationally (including for personal travel), pending further direction.

If employees have travelled outside of Canada (including the United States) and experience any symptoms within 14 days, they should conduct a self-assessment on [Ontario.ca/coronavirus](http://Ontario.ca/coronavirus) and if required, contact Telehealth Ontario at 1-866-797-0000 or your primary care provider.

Should an employee become ill, attendance credits should be used.

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### **Q28. What should I do if I have been diagnosed as having COVID-19?**

- A.** If you have been confirmed to have COVID-19, you should stay at home and use attendance credits while you recover and are instructed by public health that you are medically cleared to return to work. You should also remain in regular contact with your manager.

## **Critical Services**

### **Q29. How are critical services defined in the OPS?**

- A.** Critical / Time-critical services are defined in each ministry's Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) as services that need to be continuous operations, or need to be operational within one week.

Generally speaking, time critical services are defined as:

- Delivery of services to the public that affect their health, life and safety
- Delivery of services to clients that affect their health, life and safety
- Emergency management services in all ministries
- Government services that seek to prevent the destruction or serious deterioration of government assets
- Government services whose disruption could lead to environmental damage
- Government services that affect the administration of justice
- Government services necessary to meet mandatory legal requirements to deliver a time-critical service
- Government services necessary to avoid a significant financial impact on the economy
- Reputation of, and Confidence in, Government

These critical services may vary across ministries depending on the mandate and objectives of each ministry. Deputy Ministers will communicate their critical services within their organizations.

### **Q30. Why is the Government switching to critical services now?**

- A.** Following the government's recent order for the mandatory closure of all non-essential businesses in the province, the OPS will be taking immediate action to align with these efforts and move to critical services only, while continuing non-critical services remotely.



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Where operationally feasible, OPS employees have been asked to work remotely. Given the nature of some services government delivers, working remotely may not always be achievable. In these circumstances, precautions are being taken to help ensure our workplaces remain safe.

**Q31. Are employees required to attend the workplace if they deliver a critical service?**

- A.** Yes, where a critical service cannot be performed remotely, employees are still expected to attend the workplace in person.

Where operational circumstances permit, the way in which those services are delivered may also be temporarily changed in consideration of the evolving COVID situation. Any changes will continue to be communicated as updates become available.

**Q32. What is the Government doing to ensure the health and safety of employees delivering critical services?**

- A.** The health and safety of our employees is a top priority.

Where operationally feasible, OPS employees have been asked to work remotely. Given the nature of some services government delivers, working remotely may not always be achievable. In these circumstances, precautions are being taken to help ensure our workplaces remain safe.

Physical distancing is essential to protecting our health and the health of others and restricting the spread of the virus. It is important that OPS employees work from home unless it is critical for them to remain in the workplace to maintain delivery of services.

Appropriate cleaning continues to be undertaken to reduce risk to staff and visitors within OPS occupied buildings. The current cleaning practice is to help ensure a hygienic workplace is maintained. Environmentally friendly cleaning products that are effective at reducing the spread of bacteria and viruses are used.

In addition, MGCS is coordinating with Infrastructure Ontario and ministry CAO's for the delivery of enhanced cleaning of all high contact areas at least three additional times per day at certain OPS occupied locations in circumstances where cleaning above the current practice is warranted.

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High contact areas include: door handles, hand rails, elevators, push plates, light switches, bathroom areas, etc. Enhanced cleaning includes cleaning with stronger disinfectant cleaner consistent with the advice of public health officials.

**Q33. Will the Government still deliver non-critical services?**

- A.** All services (critical or otherwise) that can be delivered remotely will continue. Employees who do not support critical services and who cannot work remotely will be asked to remain at home.

**Q34. Will employees that deliver non-critical services that can't work remotely be compensated?**

- A.** Yes, employees with regularly scheduled hours who do not support critical services, and who cannot work remotely, will be asked to remain at home on paid leave.