

**From:** Administrator

**Sent:** 23 March 2020 20:34

**To:** Administrator <administrator@who.int>

**Subject:** COVID-19 : Important information to all Staff at headquarters - 23 March 2020

Dear Colleagues,

As we enter into our second week of alternative work modalities, I hope that you were able to take some time over the weekend to rest and recharge. While we had hoped to focus on healthy teleworking, psychosocial support and other support mechanisms today, there have been a number of practical issues that have come up since our last communication, which we feel should be addressed sooner rather than later. We will be in touch again this week with more information.

### 1. National guidelines

As residents of either Switzerland or France, all Staff are reminded to follow the instructions of local and national authorities, on both sides of the border. In particular, you are strongly encouraged to familiarize yourself with provisions restricting free circulation, limiting commercial activities and opening times of shops and guidelines on how to report new cases. For the latest updates, please periodically visit the website of the [Swiss Government](#) (also available in [English](#)) and/or the [French Government](#) (also available in [English](#)). Additional information on locally applicable provisions can be found [here](#) (also in [English](#)).

We would like to remind you that individuals travelling from countries designated by the Swiss authorities as being “at high-risk” might be refused entry into Switzerland, even when passengers were allowed to board the plane at the port of origin – we have had several cases in the last few days. Exceptions are only granted to Swiss nationals and people who live or work in Switzerland. More information can be found [here](#).

### 2. Security related reminders

In view of the COVID-19 business continuity plan activation and in particular the implementation of alternate work modalities, the attached **UNDSS Communiqué** was issued with the aim of ensuring that all UN personnel remain informed of security updates.

In line with the above-mentioned *Communiqué*, all Staff are requested to:

- access their accounts in **TRIP** (<https://dss.un.org/>) to update their respective profiles (e.g. duty station, contact details). Please ensure that the profile you have in TRIP is attributed to your WHO official email address. You may need to create a new profile if this is not the case.
- have an approved security clearance before they travel **or are teleworking** outside their duty station.
- download the e-TA mobile app, and enable geolocation and notifications on their phones. This will enable you to receive updated notifications; emergency contact numbers

at your locations, reminders on your security clearance, among other support options that the e-TA app provides.

For additional information and guidance, please contact [sec@who.int](mailto:sec@who.int).

### 3. Teleworking vs leave

Further to the guidance sent to all headquarters Staff last week, I would like to confirm that all Staff should be teleworking during this period, except those Staff who have been otherwise notified. However, in accordance with the [Administrative Guidelines](#) previously issued, in cases where Staff cannot telework full time or at all, a request should be submitted to Director, HRT (through [Teleworking@who.int](mailto:Teleworking@who.int)), for consideration of special leave with full pay. Please note that Staff **will not** be required to exhaust their annual leave before special leave with full pay is applied.

Additional information is included [in this document](#).

### 4. Compensation and Pension Services (CPS)

The following functions remain operational remotely: CPS Team for Pension matters (separation, validation, restoration and other requests) and for claims; and the Advisory Committee for Compensation Claims (ACCC) Secretariat. Consequently, all Staff and pension participants can communicate with these services by email, until further notice.

Contact details and additional information is accessible at this [link](#).

We will provide you with more updates in the coming days.

Best regards,

Raul Thomas  
ADG/BOS

**From:** Administrator

**Sent:** 18 March 2020 20:47

**To:** Administrator <[administrator@who.int](mailto:administrator@who.int)>

**Subject:** COVID-19 : Important information to all Staff at headquarters - 18 March 2020

Dear Colleagues,

As we continue to do most of our work through teleworking, I would like to thank all Staff for their support, and to acknowledge all the colleagues who have been proactively helping others and in particular our IMT colleagues.

In today's update you will find additional information on psychosocial support, teleworking, HR Liaison services, recruitment, interns, Staff on short term development assignment and JPOs.

### 1. Psychosocial support

In this particular and challenging time, please remember that our usual psychosocial services to Staff remain in place and will be provided remotely. Our Staff Psychologist Eva Murino is available for telephone consultations. In addition, our Staff Counsellor, Nathalie Casalis, is available for e-counselling sessions related to COVID-19 or any other work or non-work issues for Staff and their dependents. Nathalie is also working on establishing virtual support groups and workshops so stay tuned for more in this space!

To schedule an appointment, please contact Nathalie [CasalisN@who.int](mailto:CasalisN@who.int), Eva [MurinoE@who.int](mailto:MurinoE@who.int), or SHW [shws@who.int](mailto:shws@who.int) or 13040.

## **2. Teleworking - additional FAQs**

The previously published document has been updated in order to provide answers to additional questions you have raised in the last few days - the revised document is available [here](#).

## **3. HR Liaison Services**

In order to facilitate access to HR Liaison Services (HRS), we have put the following measures in place to ensure that essential services are delivered as smoothly as possible whilst reducing the presence of Staff on premises.

Please note that while the HRS Front desk is closed until further notice, HRS services will continue to be provided. In particular, an **HRS Mailbox** is installed at the headquarters reception for dropping off documents, and we will schedule appointments with Staff in the main reception to pick up documents, if required. This applies to legitimisation cards and UN travel documents.

Additional information is provided through [this link](#).

## **4. Update on recruitments, interns, short term development assignments and Junior Professional Officers.**

### **A) Recruitments**

Interviews which were scheduled for this week are being reviewed and will be re-scheduled as soon as the recruitment teams are able to ensure connectivity of all participants. This may also be the case for some selection panel meetings. Your understanding and flexibility is very much appreciated. While selections may be completed in the coming weeks, the start dates and location for reporting for duty will be reviewed on a case by case basis depending on the evolving situation and limitations of travel.

### **B) Interns**

For interns already recruited, supervisors, in agreement with their interns should decide if the internship should be shortened or not and then inform their internship HR focal point of that decision. If the internship can continue, interns will temporarily telework from their accommodation in the duty station. Living allowances will continue to be provided and the medical insurance will also continue.

If the internship is terminated by mutual agreement, the intern should go back home. The living allowances will cease, and the medical insurance will also be terminated. Teleworking will not continue from the intern's home country.

Additional information on interns is available [here](#).

For any other questions on interns, please contact Isabelle Nuttall ([nuttalli@who.int](mailto:nuttalli@who.int))

**C) Staff on Short Term Development Assignments (STDA)**

Supervisors, in agreement with the Staff Member should decide if the STDA can continue. If the decision is to end the STDA earlier than planned and if the Staff can go back to their official duty station, then please inform the STDA HR focal point ([cannas@who.int](mailto:cannas@who.int)) of that decision. In this case, the receiving office covers the costs for the return travel in economy class back to the official duty station. On return, the living allowance will no longer be paid.

If the Staff Member cannot travel back to their duty station and /or if the STDA can continue, staff members will temporarily telework at the duty station. The supervisor will ensure that the Staff Member is able to telework (e.g. loan of office equipment to facilitate the teleworking arrangements). Living allowances will continue to be provided.

Additional information on SDTA is available [here](#).

**D) Junior Professional Officers**

JPOs should stay informed and follow the guidance provided to all WHO Staff and guidance for their respective duty station. Should you have queries, please contact both the WHO and UNDP focal points as follows:

- WHO HR JPO Focal Point: Cornelia Griss – [grissc@who.int](mailto:grissc@who.int)
- UNDP JPO Service Centre Focal Point: Lisa Fialla Andresen - [lisa.andresen@undp.org](mailto:lisa.andresen@undp.org)

Thank you for your continued patience and support. Stay safe and healthy, and I will be in touch with you again tomorrow.

Best regards,

Raul Thomas  
ADG/BOS

**From:** Administrator  
**Sent:** 17 March 2020 20:56

**To:** Administrator <[administrator@who.int](mailto:administrator@who.int)>

**Subject:** COVID-19 : Important information to all Staff at headquarters - 17 March 2020

Dear Colleagues,

As the situation continues to evolve and new measures are being introduced by the Host Country and its neighbours, we would like to provide you with an update on the most recent developments.

### **Additional measures being introduced by the Swiss and French authorities**

You will find the latest decisions by the Swiss Federal authorities at the following link, in both [French](#) and [English](#).

In addition, we draw your attention to the [measures](#) being adopted in France in terms of border crossing and movement. To facilitate border crossings from France to Switzerland, all critical Staff residing in France will be provided with an attestation and further information will be communicated separately. Please keep in mind that several of the smaller border crossings between France and Switzerland have been closed, and a list can be found at this [link](#) (section DOUANE Ouest).

### **Access to Palais des Nations**

It has been communicated that as of Monday, 16 March, and until further notice, entrance to the Palais des Nations will be strictly reserved for persons who need to be on the premises to undertake official business and attend official meetings. Social and other non-work-related visits should be postponed. Therefore, only personnel (staff, contractors, consultants and interns), permanently accredited journalists and others, whose workplace or office is located at the Palais des Nations, and representatives from permanent missions, international organizations and nongovernmental organizations with annual accreditation coming to the Palais for official meetings are authorized to enter.

Consequently, all Staff Members needing to undertake official business and or attend official meetings at the Palais des Nations should present their Staff badge at the Pass & ID at Pregny pavilion and they will be issued with an eVisitor badge for entry.

### **IT connectivity**

As more WHO offices switch to teleworking, we are scaling up the capacity of our remote access systems to handle the higher than usual load. In the meantime, some of our Staff will have faced intermittent problems accessing Intranet, GSM and Shared Drives today. We are working to complete the upgrade tonight to resolve the issues.

With more people teleworking globally and meeting virtually, large providers of meeting and collaboration services such as Cisco, Microsoft, Zoom, etc. are also facing higher than usual usage. We may face occasional issues using these services while the providers scale up their infrastructure. We will keep monitoring these issues and keep you all informed on potential solutions and available alternatives.

### **Staff health Insurance (SHI)**

The SHI Team remains fully operational and continues to provide the following services:

- process claims received via SHI-Online and paper claims received from former Staff;
- make payments/reimbursements directly to health care providers and participants;
- issue letters of guarantee for hospitalizations;
- answer queries that you may have via email or telephone;
- issue attestations electronically, if not possible via SHI-online;
- facilitate SHI extensions, SMAs, LWOPs and answer questions with regards to SHI affiliations;  
and
- make deductions from UNJSFP for former Staff contributions.

Contact details and additional information is accessible at this [link](#).

### **Access to the WHO premises**

Please note that effective tomorrow, access to the premises will be through our two main entrances only (i.e. Main Building and D Building). Access through car park P15 will be reserved for emergency services (e.g. ambulance). At the same time, only the parking lots in front (and under) the Main Building will be available and a temporary suspension of the parking fees for the above-ground parking will be applied.

Starting tomorrow, Wednesday, 17 March, only Staff Members of the workforce that have been designated as critical in support of the COVID-19 emergency response will have direct access to WHO buildings. For Staff needing to access the premises on an ad-hoc basis, requests should be sent to [covid19-building-access@who.int](mailto:covid19-building-access@who.int), through their respective EXD/ADG as their badges will no longer be active.

Tomorrow's edition will include updated information on teleworking arrangements and support to Staff.

Best regards,

Raul Thomas  
ADG/BOS

**From:** Administrator

**Sent:** 14 March 2020 15:11

**To:** Administrator <[administrator@who.int](mailto:administrator@who.int)>

**Subject:** COVID-19 : Important information to all Staff at headquarters

Dear Colleagues,

As mentioned in the below message of 12 March 2020, we are providing an update on teleworking arrangements. Following a meeting of the UN Security Management Team earlier

today and extensive consultations of WHO senior management, it has been decided that, while WHO continues its business, we will do so using different modalities as per below:

- All staff/workforce not designated as critical will perform their functions through teleworking arrangements to the maximum extent possible.
- Staff/workforce performing critical functions are being advised through email and will receive guidance on next steps.

It is important to remember that all staff, consultants and contractors are critical to a well-functioning WHO. However, in the context of COVID-19 emergency response, we define as critical those staff who perform functions that are essential to the emergency response as per the [BCP definition](#).

These measures are being put in place to ensure that we can adhere to good public health guidance as well as deliver on the mandate of the Organization. These measures take effect from Monday, 16 March and will be in effect until further notice as we review and monitor the evolving situation.

Best regards,

Raul Thomas  
ADG/BOS

**From:** Administrator

**Sent:** 12 March 2020 23:28

**To:** Administrator <[administrator@who.int](mailto:administrator@who.int)>

**Subject:** COVID-19 : Important information to all Staff at headquarters

Dear Colleagues,

In continuation of our regular updates on the measures we are putting in place to protect Staff at headquarters, please note:

- **A telecommuting scheme will go into effect as of tomorrow**

Staff with pre-existing medical conditions, staff over 65 and pregnant women should contact SHW for a consultation and guidance on teleworking arrangements. SHW recommendations for teleworking will be communicated to the first-level supervisor and implemented by HRT.

In addition, supervisors should grant flexibility to their staff in applying “core hours” and “flexi time” to avoid using public transport at peak times, if at all possible. For further guidance, see [III.6.3 Working hours](#) and [Flexible Working Hours in Headquarters](#).

Additional flexibility in teleworking arrangements is being discussed at the UN level in order to have a coherent approach across the UN system. Our next update will include further information in this regard.

As per our recently issued [FAQs](#), should schools be closed, staff should alert their supervisors since they will work from home, thus please remember to take your laptops and relevant equipment home.

- **Business Continuity Plan (BCP) Simulation Exercise for HQ Staff – 13 March 2020**

Tomorrow afternoon (Friday, 13 March), all staff at headquarters will participate in a BCP Simulation Exercise. The purpose of the Exercise is to test individual preparedness of staff members to work remotely, and the capacity of IT systems to support mass teleworking. During the test, you are expected to be able to perform your usual tasks remotely.

Headquarters staff are requested to leave the premises tomorrow at 13h00 and log-in to the system from their laptops, at a remote location, in order to test the BCP mechanisms. A group of staff will stay on campus in order to ensure full functioning of the system.

Further details about this exercise can be found at this [link](#).

- **What Consultants, interns and other non-staff need to know**

Further to the previous messages to staff, you can find more information relevant to consultants, interns and other non-staff at this [link](#). A specific guidance document for interns is also available [here](#).

For your information, the UN City Security Management Team (SMT) in Copenhagen has instructed non-essential staff in the UN City Building to apply alternative working arrangements. This is in response to a confirmed case detected in the UN City Campus (not affecting WHO staff) and the measure adopted by the Government of Denmark to contain the spread of the virus in the country. WHO/EURO activated its business continuity plan for COVID-19 response operations and staff receive daily updates on the situation. For information, we would like to, once again, confirm that we have no COVID-19 confirmed case at headquarters.

When you are in the office, please be aware of the following changes made to the **Cafeteria and food** services, including the **Bar a Café**. In particular, to reduce risks, all food service areas on the headquarters campus have adopted the following measures:

- SV Restaurant employees have been reminded of healthy hygiene practices/protocols and are wearing disposable gloves, which will be replaced on a regular basis.
- Self-service, including the salad bar, has been removed from all locations. The Restaurant employees are now handling and serving the plates, cutlery, glasses, serving

utensils, hot meals, sandwiches, salad boxes, cream, sugar etc., except for bottled beverage drinks which will remain on a self-service basis in some locations.

- Hot meals will only be served at the main cafeteria and the Red Ribbon cafeteria (D building). The four usual menus will be maintained (World, Be Healthy, Market and Tradition) plus the Pizzas. The Atlantide Cafeteria (M building) will not serve hot meals.

Some of these measures have, unfortunately, had an impact on convenience and speed of service, and we apologize for this. We are doing everything possible to respond to your needs in the best possible way, while taking these necessary precautionary measures.

Please remember that we will have a [virtual staff seminar](#) tomorrow, 13 March at 11:30 to further discuss these items and to answer any questions.

We hope to 'see' you there.

Best regards,

Raul

**From:** Administrator

**Sent:** 11 March 2020 11:56

**Subject:** COVID-19 : Important information to all Staff at headquarters

Dear Colleagues,

In the context of the COVID-19 situation, we have been working to ensure that robust measures are put in place in order to protect Staff as well as the working environment here at headquarters.

Further to below correspondence that was shared with Staff concerning COVID-19, this note serves to provide additional information and relevant documentation on the package of measures we have put (or are putting) in place to ensure that we all have a safe place to work.

As a reminder, we have issued the following guidance to date.

- Administrative Guidelines – responding to questions on, for example, how absences due to school closure will be handled.
- COVID-19 Business Continuity Plan – provides information on how the Organization will continue to respond to the outbreak as well as perform its other functions should access to the office be restricted.
- FAQs.
- Meeting and Duty Travel decision making guidance.
- Interim Guidance for WHO Personnel returning from COVID-19 Affected areas.

In addition to the above, we are providing the following new guidance documents:

- [Standard Operating Procedures](#) on actions to be taken if an individual falls ill on our premises;

- Measures being adopted to [protect our work environment](#);
- [IT Checklist](#) on working from home;
- Meeting management information documents for [participants](#) and [organizers](#); and
- [Updated Meeting and Travel guidelines](#).

For ease of reference, key points to note as outlined in the new guidelines include:

1. We are eliminating meetings with external participants through 15 April 2020. This decision will be reviewed on a weekly basis and updated based on a situation analysis.
2. Internal meetings should follow the guidelines on meeting management (e.g. social distancing).
3. Only essential duty travel is to be undertaken, as described in the updated meeting and travel guidelines.
4. We are strengthening infection prevention and control measures – as part of our multilayered approach;
  - self-monitoring by staff of their health status (e.g. temperature, cough) before coming to work
  - installing of thermoscanners in our two main entrances (i.e. Main entrance and D-Building)
  - establishment of isolation areas.
5. We are restricting visitor access to the premises.
6. We are also ensuring that access/exit through P-15 to be now limited to emergency response staff.
7. Testing of Business Continuity Plan – actual date and time to be communicated separately.

To support these changes in our ways of working, steps have been taken to increase our bandwidth to accommodate the expected increase in virtual meetings. In addition, guidelines and information clinics are available to support staff. In order for the Organization to fully implement virtual solutions, additional support in setting up virtual meetings and relevant training will be provided.

Given the recent increase in COVID-19 cases and revised guidelines by Swiss authorities, we recommend that anyone with pre-existing medical conditions immediately contacts SHW to discuss whether work from home should be recommended. Medical evidence, which will remain fully confidential, will need to be subsequently provided in support of these measures. The recommended duration of teleworking will be determined on the basis of the evolving epidemiological situation and risk in the community. Additional general guidance on teleworking arrangements will be issued in the next update.

We would like to remind all Staff that anyone who has symptoms (or feels they may have been exposed to someone who has contracted COVID-19) should stay at home, contact their physician (if in Switzerland) or the emergency hotline 15 (in France) for guidance, and inform SHW.

You can contact SHW for medical advice on COVID-19 at: [covid19-shw-hotline@who.int](mailto:covid19-shw-hotline@who.int)

Finally, we recognize that there are a lot of rumors and fear that emerge in such situations, and we understand the uncertainty that this context generates. As Dr Tedros has said, fear travels faster than the virus. Thus, it is essential that we, as WHO staff, lead by example and demonstrate to our families, friends and colleagues that action based on facts, vigilance, and solidarity will help to defeat this virus.

Please note, as of this email, there have not been any confirmed COVID-19 cases in our campus. It is also important to note that our protocol dictates disinfection of an area where somebody has been sick, for any reason. This happened earlier today in the D-Building and it is part of the normal procedures, which were followed by the external contractors who provide cleaning services.

Let us stick together as we help lead the world in stopping this virus.

Best regards,

Raul

**From:** Administrator  
**Sent:** 04 March 2020 20:05  
**Subject:** COVID-19 : Important information to all staff at HQ

Dear Colleagues,

Further to the message below, a guidance document outlining the Decision-making process for holding meetings and undertaking duty travel in the context of COVID-19 can be found at:  
<http://intranet.who.int/homes/gmg/documents/who%20meeting%20management%20covid-19.pdf?dt=20200304180257802>.

Best regards,

ADG BOS

**From:** Administrator  
**Sent:** 03 March 2020 10:55  
**To:** internalcommunications <[internalcommunications@who.int](mailto:internalcommunications@who.int)>  
**Subject:** COVID-19 : Important information to all staff at HQ

Dear Colleagues,

Over the past week, there has been an increase in the spread in the number of countries with confirmed cases of COVID-19 . This has been the case for some countries bordering Switzerland, and most recently, locally here in Switzerland. The Swiss Federal Council has consequently banned all large-scale events involving more than 1000 people until at least 15 march 2020 with the cantons being responsible for enforcing the ban ( <https://www.admin.ch/gov/en/start/documentation/media-releases/media-releases-federal-council.msg-id-78289.html> ). In addition, we are aware that many staff have been receiving information from schools and their communities about COVID-19 which are not always necessarily in line with any official guidance but still do impact staff in a number of ways.

Many of you may be understandably concerned. To address some of the issues that are arising, this message is to provide information to all colleagues in WHO about the plans that WHO may adopt, as necessary, during the COVID-19 outbreak. To facilitate the search for answers, we have provided a FAQ to summarize the main questions we have heard and which are contained in the attached documents.

- [WHO Administrative Guidelines on the COVID-19](#) – provides information on administrative policies that will be applied in certain circumstances – i.e. what do I do if my child is not allowed to come to school because he has a cold?
- [World Health Organization Business Continuity Plan during COVID-19](#) at HQ – describes actions that are being or will be taken if a certain scenario – limited access to WHO/HQ offices - presents itself.
- [Frequently Asked Questions](#) – summary of questions that we have heard from staff
- [WHO interim guidance for WHO personnel returning from a location/situation presenting reasonable risk of exposure to novel coronavirus \(COVID-2019\)](#) – how the organization manages the risk of staff returning from these areas as well as what staff should and should not do.

The WHO campus remains open, and normal working operations are in place while we monitor the situation closely. The WHO management team will remain in close communication with you over the coming days as we work to coordinate decisions that affect WHO staff and work activities.

As WHO colleagues, please remember to follow the guidance we give to the rest of the world about COVID-19, while you are at work and home:

**How can I prevent from getting infected with COVID-19? Practice hand hygiene, respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette at all times.**

- Wash hands for 40–60 seconds - wet hands and apply soap; rub all surfaces; rinse hands and dry thoroughly with a single use towel; use towel to turn off faucet.
- When using an alcohol-based hand rub, rub hands for 20–30 seconds - apply enough product to cover all areas of the hands; rub all surfaces until dry.
- Cover nose and mouth with a disposable towel or elbow when coughing/sneezing. Dispose of used towels in a closed bin and wash hands as above.

**What to do if you think you may have COVID-19?**

- If you are experiencing fever, cough and difficulty breathing, seek medical care immediately.
- Before you go to a doctor's office or emergency room, call ahead first and tell them about any recent travel and your symptoms and follow their advice.
- Call or email Staff Health & Wellbeing Services in HQ at [shws@who.int](mailto:shws@who.int); +41 22 791 3040, and inform your Manager.
- Do not go to work while sick and minimize contact with others to prevent the spread of infection until cleared medically.

If you have additional questions about the WHO office and COVID-19, please write to [covid19-admin-hotline@who.int](mailto:covid19-admin-hotline@who.int)

For local information, the Switzerland Federal Office of Public Health FOPH has set up a multilingual hotline for questions about Covid-19. The number, which operates 24 hours a day, is **+41 58 463 00 00**. In addition, a hotline has been made available by the Geneva cantonal authorities (**0 800 909 400**), operating every day from 10 am to 10 pm.

As far as the French authorities are concerned, the number to call for information is **0 800 130 000**. In case of fever, cough and respiratory issues you can call the emergency number **15**.

We will communicate with you on a regular basis about the situation as it evolves and update materials as new information becomes available. Please check your email for updates.

Thank you

ADG BOS

*French version will follow.*