

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

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Date: March 19, 2020
To: Part II Schools and School Districts
From: George Daley, Deputy Minister
Copies: Craig Caldwell, Assistant Deputy Minister
Subject: Bulletin #2: Preventive Measures in the Workplace

I want to express my sincere thank you and appreciation for your professionalism, patience and understanding as we continue to work together to limit the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

The decision to only operate critical GNB programs and services comes with significant impacts not only on operations but on you as employees. It is an unprecedented time for us all, and your health and safety remain our priority.

We know that those among you still working on-site are feeling considerable anxiety about your health and safety, including whether your employer is taking the necessary precautions to provide a safe workplace.

Preventive Measures

We all have a role to play to keep our workplaces safe. This [WorksafeNB](#) site related to COVID-19 nicely summarizes the recommended personal and workplace hygiene measures.

In addition to the WorksafeNB guide, the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) has issued [twelve preventive measures](#) for workplaces (scroll down to the “Workplaces” section).

We are using these PHAC measures as a benchmark for our workplace safety response to COVID-19. We have created a [visual aid](#) (also available [here](#) if accessing outside the GNB intranet) listing the preventive measures, who in GNB is responsible for each, and the extent to which we have implemented the measures.

We want you to have this information as well, so you can be aware of best practices for workplace safety in our current circumstances and the extent to which GNB is applying them.

The responsibility for most of these measures resides at the corporate level. However, we draw your attention to measures #3 and #4 specifically since they require local action by managers and employees.

Please discuss with your manager how you and your colleagues can make the necessary modifications to your workplaces to enhance your own safety, such as:

- respecting the 2-metre separation guideline when in a room with others;
- avoid shaking hands;
- maximizing the use of phones and Skype instead of in-person meetings; and
- avoiding sharing phones, computers and other work tools where possible (If sharing some work tools cannot be avoided, clean them often.).

In addition, we all need to practice these personal hygiene habits:

- avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth;
- consistently use good hand hygiene measures, which include frequent handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available; and
- maintain good respiratory etiquette, such as covering your mouth and nose with your arm or sleeve when coughing and sneezing, disposing of any used tissues as soon as possible, and following with handwashing or use of alcohol-based hand sanitizers where soap and water are not available.

I recognize this is not easy at a time when we are extremely busy being “on task”. However, I know many among you will want to step up and champion this in your workplace on behalf of your colleagues.

Note: Certain worksites require different/more intensive measures due to the nature of the work. Management for those worksites will communicate additional measures required.

Self-isolation

I know there is confusion about self-isolation requirements. At the moment, the only instance for which self-isolation is automatically required is upon returning from an international destination. In all other instances, Public Health officials or your primary health care provider will advise you whether you need to self-isolate.

Public health officials will contact you directly if:

- you have been referred to them by Telecare (*please only call Telecare 811 if you have COVID-19 symptoms*); or
- if they have determined that you may have been in close contact with a presumptive or confirmed case.

If Public Health confirms you have had close contact with a presumptive case, they will advise you to self-isolate. Public Health does not advise contacts of a close contact to self-isolate.

Apart from Public Health officials, your primary health care provider (e.g. family doctor) may also require you to self-isolate.

As part of their management of presumptive or confirmed cases, Public Health will contact employers if they have reason to do so, i.e. if their inquiry reveals that a presumptive or confirmed case had close contact with others in the workplace. When they contact employers, Public Health officials will advise what measures should be taken in the workplace and what information should be provided to employees.

Privacy Protection

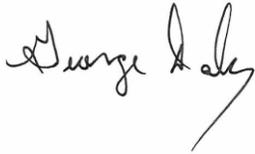
I also want to emphasize that privacy remains a concern and a right in these times. Protecting the public from potential harm during an outbreak does not outweigh individuals' right to privacy, including our coworkers.

Public Health officials, and GNB as an employer, is ensuring that:

- the privacy and confidentiality of every individual is respected at all time including during an outbreak;
- transparency and continuous communication will respect the “need to know” and the rule of minimum privacy principles;
- sufficient information will be disclosed to the public about new confirmed cases in a manner that will not permit the identification of affected individuals; and
- details about new cases will always be shared following the same standards: gender, age group, zone (region).

We keep monitoring the situation closely and will continue communicating any significant developments. Stay informed by checking GNB's coronavirus [website](#) regularly for up to date information.

As a reminder, you can find all these bulletins [here](#). If you are outside GNB's intranet network, you can find them [here](#).

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "George Daley". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

George Daley
Deputy Minister