

Office Notice 09/2020

Attendance Arrangements – COVID-19 Delay Phase

Ireland is now in the delay phase of managing the Covid 19 public health incident.

Reflecting this, DPER issued further guidance for all Civil Servants on the 16th March 2020 and periodically updated since, covering a number of issues including working arrangements at this time, see

https://www.cso.ie/en/media/csoie/staffnews/FAQS_for_Public_Service_Employers_during_COVID19_2020.03.15.pdf

Staff should contact AlertHR@cso.ie if they are awaiting a Covid 19 test or have tested positive.

Based on these guidelines, Special Leave with Pay only applies to those in receipt of medical advice to self-isolate in relation to Covid 19. All other staff are considered to be at work whether remotely or on-site unless on another form of leave such as annual leave, sick leave etc.

Normal notification procedures for non – Covid 19 Sick Absence and the process for annual leave and other forms of leave continues to apply.

Staff working from home must maintain regular contact with their line managers in relation to suitable work and must communicate with line managers daily. Separate instructions in this regard will issue to line managers shortly.

There may also be a requirement to redeploy staff to essential services during the crisis. HR are working with the Public Appointments Service to facilitate this. Staff who are currently working remotely may be recalled to respond to any needs arising.

All flexitime arrangements are suspended at this time. Balances as at March 13th, 2020 will be maintained.

Staff will receive attendance credits as per their individual working patterns. This is a temporary measure. The intention is to resume flexitime once the current issues resolve.

Please see FAQs below for details on Flexible Working Hours during this time.

Working from Home

Staff working from home are not required to clock in/out. but are required to keep a record of working time as per the Organisation of Working Time Act, start times, end times and breaks. This record should be submitted to your line manager on an agreed regular basis.

The Act states that breaks should be as follows;

Up to 4 Hours and 30 minutes worked – a minimum break of 15 minutes

6 hours worked or more – a minimum break of 30 mins

Staff remote working should note the FAQs issued by the Health & Safety Authority at https://www.hsa.ie/eng/news_events_media/news/news_and_articles/fag%E2%80%99s_f_or_employers_and_employees_in_relation_to_home-working_on_a_temporary_basis_covid-19_.html

Staff should also refer Health and Safety Information for Remote Workers at Appendix A.

Line Managers must engage regularly with staff who are working from home regarding work allocations etc.

Staff working from home must provide contact details to line managers including personal mobile and email contacts.

The Covid 19 situation is changing every day and CSO HR will amend this notice as required.

It is extremely important that staff continue to check the Staff News section of the CSO website on a regular basis, <https://www.cso.ie/en/staffnews/>, which will be updated regularly.

Additional Flexitime Information and Frequently Asked Questions:

Q. Is the suspension of flexi time a temporary measure?

A. Yes. The suspension will remain until normal working arrangements can resume.

Q. What will happen to my current hours?

A. Your current balance as at close of business 13th March will be held until we return to normal working arrangements.

Q. Will the clock be kept updated?

A. Whether you are working on a **shift basis, working from home or attending the office**, the following should be noted:

You will be credited with the appropriate time as per your working pattern.

Q. Can I avail of flexi leave?

A. No, during the period of these working arrangements, flexi leave is not permitted.

If you have any queries, please contact us by logging a call on HR Services if on site or if working remotely by email to Personnel@cso.ie HR Division

Appendix A

Health and Safety Information for Home Workers

The Office wants to ensure the safety, health and welfare at work of staff working from home. It is important that when making changes to the normal working environment that we all ensure that our working conditions are appropriate.

If you are working from home, please consider the following:

- Ensure you can access your workspace easily and safely to allow you to work without twisting, bending or sitting/standing awkwardly
- Ensure your workspace is sufficient to accommodate your equipment and/or other materials needed
- Ensure your workspace is free of clutter
- Ensure electrical sockets, plugs and cords etc. are in good condition
- Ensure your floor surrounding your workspace is clear and dry
- Ensure that you have adequate light, heat and ventilation to allow you to work comfortably

While working from home, staff must

- Cooperate with their management and follow their instructions
- Follow procedures that have been put in place
- You will need to be available for regular updates via phone, web or email
- You will be able to contact your manager via email and/or mobile phone (if your immediate line manager is not available, you can contact their manager)
- You are encouraged to maintain contact with your colleagues and manager
- Ensure you take regular breaks and change your seating position

Wellbeing and morale:

- You will need to ensure that your work is organised in such a way that you take regular breaks and can separate your work life and daily life
- Managers and staff should consider the suitability of working from home to ensure that work tasks and working conditions do not adversely affect the health of staff
- Adequate breaks from work and movement away from your workspace during the day are essential
- Do not blur the lines between working hours and family life. It is important to switch off from work at the end of the day
- Regular contact with others should be maintained