

GOVERNMENT OF YUKON HUMAN RESOURCES DIRECTIVES IN RELATION TO COVID-19

Title: COVID-19 Directive 5 – Working Arrangements During COVID-19 - Issued by the Executive Committee pursuant to COVID-19 Directive 1

Effective: June 24, 2020 (amended August 4, 2021)

Note: This Directive replaces COVID-19 Work from Home Directive 2.

COVID-19 Directive 5 should be read in conjunction with GAM 3.12 Telework policy but **not** the accompanying Telework Guidelines. GAM 3.12 applies to persons who have a minimum of one year of service in their current position: that provision does **not** apply for the purposes of this Directive. Section 3 of GAM 3.12 also does **not** apply under this Directive.

1. Purpose

This Directive is intended to provide guidance for departments who continue to have employees working from home, in some capacity, until an updated GAM 3.12 remote work policy comes into effect.

2. Application

This Directive applies to all employees hired under the *Public Service Act*.

3. Background

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, many Yukon government employees have been working from home as a proactive public health measure. COVID-19 Directive 5 was originally issued in June 2020 to guide departments as employees gradually returned to the workplace.

A Path Forward: Next Steps was released in March 2021 to inform the lifting of public health restrictions in Yukon as vaccines became widely available to Yukoners. Under Directive 5 and accompanying supplementary guidance, employees could continue to work from home where such arrangements met operational needs and had the employer's approval.

As of August 4, 2021, public health restrictions relating to mandatory masks, border controls and physical distancing in bars and restaurants are lifted in Yukon. Directive 5 remains in force to support best practices for continued work-from-home arrangements, according to the parameters listed below, until a revised GAM 3.12 remote work policy comes into force.

4. Operating Assumptions

- a) Departments, workplaces and individual employees across the organization may have unique circumstances to consider, so workplaces across YG may approach working from home in different ways.
- b) Requests to work from home, either full or part-time, will be considered by the Government of Yukon on an ongoing basis as a flexible work arrangement for positions well suited to such arrangements, and where operational considerations permit.

- c) Most employees are working in the official workplace. Decisions relating to continued work-from-home arrangements or the ongoing return of employees to the official workplace are guided by operational requirements and individual workplace health and safety assessments.

5. Guiding Principles

The following overarching principles will guide the Yukon government's approach under this Directive:

- a) The Government of Yukon must implement and continue to demonstrate a high standard of health and safety practices in all of our workplaces, at all times.
- b) The public service is committed to the ongoing delivery of high quality services to Yukoners.
- c) Working from home has many benefits for employees, the Government of Yukon and ultimately all Yukoners.

6. Considerations for Continued Work from Home Arrangements

- a) The Government of Yukon continues to support work from home arrangements for employees whose positions are well suited to working from home.
- b) Ongoing work from home arrangements have potential benefits, including but not limited to:
 - i. reduced vehicle commuting time and the need for additional office space, which can reduce carbon emissions;
 - ii. improving the Government of Yukon's competitiveness as an employer, allowing the organization to better recruit and retain employees who are interested in remote work arrangements; and
 - iii. increasing employee satisfaction with their working arrangements, contributing to improved employee engagement and productivity.
- c) If a supervisor determines that an employee will continue to work from home, either full or part-time, a supervisor must:
 - i. review and discuss the [Working from Home Safe Work Practice](#) with the employee;
 - ii. ensure the employee completes the [Work at Home Health and Safety Checklist](#) and any identified hazards are mitigated;
 - iii. ensure the employee submits or updates a request in the remote work tracking system and approve that request;
 - iv. establish appropriate performance management protocols with the employee to ensure accountability and ongoing delivery of job related outcomes;
 - v. ensure the employee is aware of and abides by Yukon government's [guidance for protecting information while working remotely](#); and
 - vi. ensure the employee has access to the tools and technology required to perform their role in accordance with the [Working from Home Safe Work Practice](#).
- d) If the requirements in 6.c) have already been completed, supervisors are reminded to periodically review the above requirements with employees to ensure ongoing compliance.

- e) Supervisors are encouraged to contact the Public Service Commission's Organizational Development Branch for resources and tools on managing remote teams.

7. Employee Responsibility

We all have a responsibility to ensure the health and safety of our workplaces, whether at home or in the official workplace. For greater clarity:

- when working from home, employees must implement and adhere to the health and safety measures required by this Directive; and
- when working from the official workplace, employees must adhere to all of the health and safety measures of that workplace.

8. Deputy Minister Responsibility

Under this Directive, Deputy Ministers are responsible for the following:

- a) ensuring appropriate health and safety measures are implemented in all workplaces within their department;
- b) communicating the contents of this Directive widely within their department;
- c) responding to concerns and taking additional steps as necessary to ensure the ongoing health and safety of employees in all workplaces within their department; and
- d) ensuring all work from home arrangements are tracked, with regular status updates provided to the Public Service Commission.