

## **COVID-19 FAQs: (updated December, 2020)**

### **NEW: Are all GoA employees required to work from home?**

- Effective December 13, working from home is mandatory unless the employer determines that work requires a physical presence at the workplace for operational effectiveness.
- If you do need to occasionally come into the office (e.g., signing a document where an electronic signature is not acceptable, accepting deliveries, or using video conferencing technology that is only available in the office), you would then return to working from home when the task is complete. Please check with your supervisor if you have any questions.

### **NEW: What if I don't want to work from home?**

- We acknowledge that for some, working at home is not an ideal situation and may affect your productivity.
- These are unprecedented times and we all look forward to when we can return to our usual work arrangements, but for now, this is necessary.
- Please raise your concerns with your manager, who will confirm department direction and assess the reasons and the safety of working alone in the workplace.

### **Working Alone Guidelines**

**Overview:** The COVID-19 pandemic is affecting our ability to work in the usual way. Wherever possible, plans are being developed and implemented within each work area to allow for a greater number of employees to work from home while continuing to deliver critical services to Albertans. This also means that an increasing number of employees are finding themselves working alone either at home, in an alternate location, or in their usual worksite. Some employees may be working modified hours depending on their work location and depending on conversations and approval with supervisors.

Working alone covers a range of situations, from being the only worker at a work site, in an office building, on an office building floor, in a work area where the employee does not have contact with other employees or a supervisor, to working in a remote or isolated work site where assistance may not be readily available. These times are challenging and it is important to work together to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of everyone, through communication and support.

**What is Required:** Departments with employees who are working from home or off site must ensure that preventive measures are in place to eliminate or minimize hazards associated with these situations. This includes communicating regularly with the employee and ensuring their safety.

The employer is responsible for the health, safety and welfare of all their employees while working alone, off site, or from home. Managers should ensure appropriate measures as far as it is reasonably practicable are in place and available to eliminate or minimize the risks associated

with working in these situations. The following are key considerations/expectations for working safely, staying connected and maintaining productivity.

**Daily Check-ins and Managing Expectations:** Establish a communication procedure to ensure employees remain connected to their supervisors and colleagues, have meaningful work assigned, and are safe. This should be discussed in advance with an agreed upon form of communication- i.e.: daily team meetings in the morning, and scheduled check-ins with each employee using texts, emails, or phone.

Where possible, use available tools such as Skype or WebEx to connect virtually. This is a great way to feel connected to the team and others.

**Emergencies:** Employees should know where emergency supplies are located at home or if needed know they are to use external resources such as 911 for emergencies.  
**Communication:** Establish a check- in and check- out system and use devices such as cellphones to connect with supervisors, colleagues, family.

**Safety:** Stay alert in your surroundings and report anything suspicious to the appropriate source.

**Report:** Contact your supervisor immediately if you are injured while performing work from home or become ill.

**Risk Management/Insurance Liability:** Employees should have homeowner insurance (which includes "personal liability"). WCB coverage is provided to the employee working at home.

**NEW: How long will the work from home measures be in place?**

- The province wide measures taking effect on December 13 are in place for at least four weeks.

**NEW: What options are available to me in relation to working from home if my children are doing at-home schooling and I don't have alternative child care available?**

- If you have ongoing childcare concerns, please speak to your manager to discuss alternatives, which may include use of leave options such as personal leave, vacation, management supplement, banked over time, etc.
- Each situation is based on individual circumstances and the applicability/eligibility of different leave options and alternatives will need to be discussed with managers.

**NEW: Do GoA policies apply when I am working from home?**

- All existing GoA policies remain in effect regardless of where you are working.

**UPDATED: How do I know if I can work from home?**

- Effective December 13, working from home is mandatory unless the employer determines that work requires a physical presence at the workplace for operational effectiveness.
- If you are still in the workplace, you should talk to your manager to discuss arrangements and next steps.

- These temporary arrangements will be reviewed as needed to align with advice from public health officials.

**NEW: Will the ABTraceTogether application downloaded to my government issued device be able to track my close encounters using the app?**

- Participation in the ABTraceTogether application downloaded to government issued mobile devices is voluntary.
- The application will only be activated if an employee opens it and completes a series of steps to register.
- The application does not track your location.

**NEW: If I use this application, is my privacy protected?**

- Your privacy is protected
- The app does not use GPS or store any location data.
- Your close contact events are only stored on your phone for 21 days in an encrypted format.
- Your information will not be shared with AHS contact tracers without your permission.
- No-one from the Government of Alberta will see your information either, it is stored in an encrypted format.
- Alberta Health has worked closely with the Alberta Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner through the submission of a privacy impact assessment for the App, demonstrating compliance with Alberta's Health Information Act.

**NEW: Will I be able to remove this app after it downloads?**

- The ABTraceTogether app is a standard app that will now appear on all government-issued devices and cannot be removed.
- As Alberta is in a public health emergency, and conditions change quickly, it is important to ensure that staff can easily find the app if needed.
- Remember, it won't be activated unless you choose to register and complete the steps.

**NEW: What happens if I already have ABTraceTogether installed on my phone?**

- If you already have the app installed then there is no change or action required. You will not get a prompt to install or activate the app.