

Public Administration Circular : 02/2021(V)

My No : EST-6/03/LEA/3381
Ministry of Public Services,
Provincial Councils and Local Government
Independence Square
Colombo 07.

01.10.2021

Secretaries to Ministries
Secretaries to State Ministries
Chief Secretaries of Provinces
Heads of Departments
District Secretaries/Government Agents
Divisional Secretaries
Heads of State Corporations, Statutory Boards

Maintaining the Public Service under Normalcy

Taking into account that more than 50% of the people of the country and the majority of government officers have been vaccinated at present and, the officers engaged in essential services have made a tremendous contribution to the maintenance of the public service from the emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic to date, other government institutions also need to be successfully functioned to achieve the expected development goals of the government. Therefore, taking into consideration the set of guidelines issued by the Health Sector regarding the reopening of the country by easing the Covid-19 related travel restrictions and the continuation of the public service under new normalcy and, the matters mentioned in the letter of the Secretary to the President dated 28.09.2021 in this regard, the following provisions should be followed in summoning officers to government institutions with immediate effect.

02. In the process of reopening the country, action should be taken to identify and call employees, who are vital for maintaining the essential services provided by government offices without disruption, for duty and, the authority to call employees for duty in that manner is vested in the Secretaries of Ministries/ Heads of Departments/ Heads of Institutions.

03. The above provisions are not applicable to the staff officers who are entitled to official vehicles/ receiving transport allowances or provided with transport facilities by pool vehicles and, they are required to report for duty as usual.

04. All the other public officers except those who are called for duty in the above manner are bound to perform their duties online and, even the officers who are called for duty should perform their duties online on days they are not called for duty.

05. In addition to summoning the group of employees who can make decisions in government offices and are essential for the delivery of services, the responsibility to facilitate other officers to provide services online and the power to attach employees temporarily to provide service in other workplaces in case of emergency are vested in the relevant Secretaries of Ministries/ Heads of Departments/ Heads of Institutions.

06. When calling officers for duty to government institutions in the above manner, steps should be taken not to call pregnant officers, breastfeeding mothers and officers with particular illnesses. Such officers should be called for duty only in urgent situations and, in such cases, they should be provided with special facilities and allowed a special time to arrive at the workplace and depart.

07. It is sufficient to maintain only a register of arrival and departure of officers reporting for duty.

08. Secretary of the Ministry of Health and Director General of Health Services will provide instructions on how to call officers belonging to the health sector for duty.

09. Heads of Institutions are responsible for delivering services preventing the infection of Covid-19 virus to the institutional staff and to the service recipients by following health instructions and, the Heads of Institutions/ Divisions should take action in strict compliance with all the health guidelines paying attention to the following including the compulsory wearing of face masks and maintaining social distancing.

- i. All workplaces in the organization, especially, public places such as counters, dining rooms, office canteens, restrooms and shared spaces should be cleaned daily and several times a day as required and kept hygienic by sanitizing.
- ii. Information on health and hygienic guidelines to be followed by employees and service recipients should be displayed.
- iii. Facilities should be provided to follow hygienic practices such as taking body temperature and hand washing before entering the office premises where the employees/ service recipients regularly visit.
- iv. Suitable supervisory officers should be vested with the responsibility to check health care guidelines regularly to manage congestion caused by the gathering of people, who come to receive services, in limited spaces.
- v. Efforts should be made whenever possible to fulfill the relevant service requirements of the service recipients as soon as possible through methods such as e-mail, SMS and telephone instead of coming to the offices to obtain services.
- vi. Even when the attendance of service recipients is required, action should be taken to improve methods in which dates and times can be allocated to them in advance to minimize large-scale attendance at once.

- vii. The use of other modern technologies instead of notes and coins in money transactions should be encouraged and, action should be taken to introduce such methods.
- viii. The health condition of the officers working in the office should be closely monitored.
- ix. Employees should be divided into groups if necessary and, the activities of the members of those groups should be performed in a way that they are limited only to the group to a certain extent and, action should be taken to minimize movement / gathering between divisions whenever possible.
- x. Action should be taken to prevent drivers of the officers, who obtain the transport facilities, from gathering in their rest areas, dining rooms, vehicles etc. and, attention should be paid to ensure that the health instructions are followed by them.
- xi. If there are officers who have not been vaccinated, they should be encouraged to get vaccinated and, officers should be informed to submit their vaccination cards when requested by the authorities.
- xii. Temporary transport facilities should be provided for employees by pool vehicles whenever possible. (For a period of one or two months)
- xiii. Transport methods adopted by officers personally and by voluntarily being organized as teams should be encouraged.
- xiv. When employees, who provide security and cleaning services, are called for duty in offices, they should be properly grouped, informed and supervised.
- xv. A Committee on Covid-19 Control should be established to control the spread of the Covid-19 virus in the organization and, a formal monitoring process should be formulated thereby.
- xvi. Offering snacks and tea during meetings should be temporarily suspended due to health concerns.

10. Group gatherings through physical discussions, seminars, meetings, etc., should be minimized and, it should be advised to use Zoom, Teams or similar technologies instead. It should be encouraged to adopt such practices as much as possible, focusing on the financial and time management that can be done through the use of such technological strategies for the management of public expenditure, even after the pandemic situation has been eliminated.

11. In case where a certain public officer has been directed for quarantine process due to the prevailing situation and further such direction has been made not as a punishment for violation of the rules of the quarantine imposed by the Government, the period of quarantine should be considered as a period of leave with full pay as per the provisions of sub section 12:9, chapter XII of the Establishments Code.

12. In accordance with the circular provisions effective prior to the issuance of this Circular, instructions will be issued in the future on the application of leave obtained by public officers during the period in which they have been called for service, for confirmation in service, promotions and retirement.

13. Public transport services will be properly operated by the relevant authorities in accordance with the health guidelines enabling the officers to report for duty without interruption.

14. The provisions of this Circular shall not be an impediment to the duties of institutions already providing emergency and essential services.

15. Accordingly, action should be taken considering that the provisions stipulated in other paragraphs of the Public Administration Circular 02/2021(III) dated 30.07.2021 except in paragraphs 03 and 04 of the same and the provisions stipulated in Public Administration Circular 02/2021(IV) dated 06.08.2021 have been revised in the above manner.

Sgd/ J.J. Rathnasiri
Secretary
Ministry of Public Services,
Provincial Councils and Local Government