



Our Ref: 390855

April 27, 2020

SENT BY EMAIL

*Crown Agency CEOs
Employers' Association CEOs
Deputy Ministers Responsible*

Dear Colleague:

I am writing today to provide updated direction further to my memo of March 20, 2020.

As you will recall, in March Government issued direction to public sector employers regarding employment continuity. This direction, which requested employers to maintain employment and compensation continuity until the end of April 2020, has helped to ensure stability for the delivery of public services and for our workforce during the initial weeks of the COVID-19 pandemic.

As Government and employers look to the coming months of public service delivery that has been shaped by our shared response to the pandemic, it's important to recognize that circumstances will affect employers in different ways. Some employers are able to maintain full operations, while others have had operations temporarily impacted due to modified service delivery or the reduction of revenue sources. Accordingly, this updated direction provides principles that will help guide employers in their decision-making processes regarding staffing while at the same time reflecting the need for flexibility and differentiation.

Over the past weeks, PSEC Secretariat staff have consulted with ministries, employers' associations, Crown Corporations and research universities. Your feedback has played an integral role in the development of the principles approved by the Minister of Finance.

We recognize that everyone is making decisions in a rapidly changing environment and that this can be challenging. In that context, the principles below encourage employers to consider several key factors in their decision-making regarding staffing, including service delivery, fiscal stability, and business continuity with an eye to contemplating the resumption of operations consistent with the Provincial Health Officer's guidelines.

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Ministry of Finance	Public Sector Employers' Council Secretariat	Mailing Address: PO Box 9400 Stn Prov Govt Victoria BC V8W 9V1	Location Address: 210 – 880 Douglas St Victoria BC V8W 2B7 778.698.8549
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1. **Protect public services** by maximising the productive use of workers and resources. Where possible, maintain business continuity in anticipation of the resumption of safe operations when the Provincial Health Officer’s guidelines allow.
2. **Operate within existing short and long-term financial parameters** in partnership and consultation with funding ministries.
3. **Ensure workplaces are compliant with the Provincial Health Officer’s guidance and WorkSafeBC requirements** so that employees can safely be at their place of work and support a resumption of normal operations.
4. **Work with unions, bargaining agents, and other employers** to identify opportunities including job sharing, and redeployment opportunities. Encourage underutilized employees to access leave provisions and/or federal income support initiatives.
5. If business continuity cannot be maintained and reduced staffing levels are temporarily required, **consider staffing plans that allow a for a continued relationship with employees and a resumption of safe operations** when the Provincial Health Officer’s guidelines allow.
6. **Ensure a ‘no surprises’ approach to staffing level changes** by coordinating staffing plans with your employers’ association, funding/line Ministry, and the PSEC Secretariat.

No end date is provided with these staffing principles, as we know the impact of the pandemic will be long-lasting and employers will need to be agile as they adapt to the “new normal”. As updated information is available on redeployment opportunities, policy changes, and other items of interest, we will continue to provide it to you through normal channels.

Over the past six weeks, we have seen unparalleled collaboration, information sharing, and commitment from employers across the provincial public sector. It has undoubtedly been one of the most challenging periods in all our careers, and we can be proud of what has been accomplished. I want to thank each of you for your organization’s contributions to the development of these staffing principles.

Should you have any questions, please contact me at Christina.Zacharuk@gov.bc.ca or Chris Rathbone, Assistant Deputy Minister, at Chris.Rathbone@gov.bc.ca. Additionally, we will schedule conference calls to provide an opportunity for you to ask questions.

Sincerely,

Christina Zacharuk
 President & CEO
 Public Sector Employers’ Council Secretariat

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