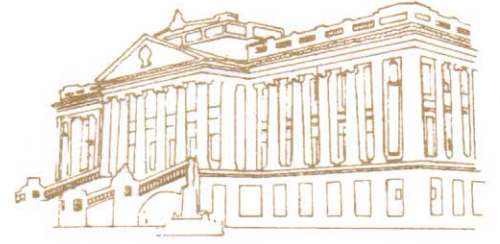




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சனாதிபதி அலுவலகம்  
PRESIDENTIAL SECRETARIAT



Circular No: PS/GPA/Circular/33/2020

29.10.2020

Secretaries to Ministries  
Secretaries to State Ministries  
Chief Secretaries of Provinces  
District Secretaries / Government Agents  
Heads of Departments  
Chairpersons of State Corporations / Statutory Boards / General Managers

**Remote work arrangements during the Global Coronavirus Pandemic**

01. The need for containing the prevailing wave of coronavirus spread has compelled the Government to restrict public movements particularly in the Western Province. In view of this situation, all public institutions in the Western Province and other major townships are required to adopt alternative work plans to deliver essential services and execute all other public services under remote working arrangements, using the experience gained during April – May 2020 under Work From Home (WFH) period.
02. Accordingly, Heads of all institutions are required to implement institution-specific WFH plans in accordance with the general guidelines outlined below. All line Ministry and State Ministry Secretaries and Heads of Institutions (HOI) are personally responsible and accountable to ensure steps are being taken to facilitate all activities coming under their purview to manage the pandemic effectively in the public interest.
  - a) Each HOI shall determine the type of work that can be performed remotely and the employees who will work from home and devise mechanism to deliver work material such as files as well as the necessary equipment to homes of employees on WFH with proper authorization.
  - b) Availability of employees for WFH needs to be between 8.30 am and 4.15 pm. This can be made flexible by the HOI depending on the work/service requirement unless curfew is declared.
  - c) HOI shall have the authority to re-assign the employees who are not on WFH plan to institutions or Task Forces that require additional human resources.

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- d) All HOIs shall, promote the use of alternative communication methods, such as SMS, e-mail, telephone, user friendly web applications such as WhatsApp, Skype and platforms already provided by ICTA such as 'Meet' and 'Slack'.
- e) Assistance may also be sought from Telecommunication service providers to seek call diversion facility to office telephone calls, to mobile phones of officer concerned.
- f) Every employee (including staff grade) is required to maintain a journal during the WFH period to record instructions obtained/decisions taken via modes other than letters, minutes and e-mails. Journal entries are to be considered as file minutes with proper authority from the HOI.
- g) All Chief Accounting Officers and Accounting Officers shall delegate authority as per the Financial Regulation 135 to the maximum extent possible in order to implement the WFH plan effectively.
- h) Every institution that delivers services directly to the general public is required to create an online platform (if not available already) with the assistance of their IT officers and ICTA, to entertain public requests/grievances without delay.
- i) Unless any medical evidence of proving Coronavirus symptoms has been forwarded to the institution, the persons following the guidance on self-isolation may be required by the HOD/HOI to work from home, depending on the nature of work to be delivered.
- j) Notwithstanding all the other provisions in this Circular, it shall be emphasized that no work should be carried out by an employee who has coronavirus symptoms, however mild. Wearing a mask and compliance to health requirements are mandatory at all times at work places.

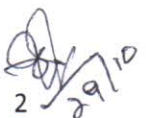
**03. The following specific guidelines will be applicable to the areas mentioned below, in addition to the general guidelines mentioned in paragraph 02 of this Circular.**

**A. Regional Administration**

- i. Considering that the majority of work executed in regional administration involve field-based activities, Head of each Department / Institution shall have the authority to re-assign those employees who normally handle office-based work, to field-based activities as and when necessary during the WFH period.

**B. Education and Higher Education**

- i. Ministry of Education shall work with the Telecommunication Regulatory Commission of Sri Lanka (TRCSL) to have specific bandwidths for an educational TV channel and a Radio channel for

  
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school children. The Ministry is to liaise with all electronic media as well to reserve specific air times for educational programmes approved by the Ministry of Education for school children.

- ii. Universities and Training Institutions, with the assistance of ICTA, may develop 'Digital Learning Management Systems' (DLMS), and launch distance learning programmes.

**C. Delivering Welfare Services**

- i. Secretary to the Ministry in charge of the subject of Home Affairs in collaboration of Secretaries to the Ministries in charge of public service and finance shall devise a mechanism to deliver welfare services without any disruption during the remote work arrangements period. This includes delivering services and payment of allowances etc to senior citizens, those suffering from chronic kidney and other diseases as well as differently-abled persons as well as those placed on home quarantine to their doorstep, and providing essential needs to Homes for the elderly and children.
- ii. The Ministry of Health has issued several operational manuals, guidelines and procedures to manage public life and healthcare to all. As the Ministry of Health requires support and cooperation of entire public service, HOI's are required to extend all assistance to ensure areas coming under the purview of respective HOI's are monitored regularly to comply with health guidelines.

**D. Statutory Bodies and Public Enterprises**

Chairpersons and Members of the Board of Directors shall take measures to conduct their Board meetings via video conferencing methodologies. The Minutes shall be recorded in soft version and circulated by email for further action.

**04. General Administration**

- i. Staff grade officers of all institutions, in addition to performing duties required by their respective HOIs during this period, may volunteer to assist the functioning of any other department or institution, especially in regional administration that is close to their place of residence, with proper approval from their respective HOIs. Non staff grade officers and other Government employees are also requested to assist the quarantine activities that are conducted in their respective areas of residence, to the extent possible.
- ii. Remote work arrangement periods will not be considered as public holidays. Whilst acknowledging that the key objective of this is to prevent

