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Coronavirus disease (COVID-19): Government operations

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Coronavirus disease (COVID-19): Government operations

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Government operations during COVID-19

Due to the COVID-19 outbreak, many teams are turning their focus to supporting critical services, while a large proportion of public servants must now work remotely. These disruptive but understandable changes have affected how we deliver our services, and how quickly we deliver them.

The Government of Canada has begun to look at our policies and procedures to assess what needs to be adjusted in the short term to support the delivery of services.

In some cases, this could mean extending dates and deadlines. In other cases it could mean we temporarily change requirements to make it easier for departments and agencies to adjust quickly to the new reality we are facing.

Business continuity planning

The [*Policy on Government Security*](#) requires federal departments and agencies to establish business continuity plans. In response to COVID-19, some federal institutions have activated their business continuity plans, which outline how they will address a disruption and maintain an acceptable level of delivery of critical services or activities.

Plans consist of procedures to guide a department or agency to respond, recover, resume and restore a pre-defined level of (critical) service delivery following a disruption.

Your Departmental Chief Security Officer will have the most current information on your department's business continuity plan.

▼ Definition of a critical service

A “critical service” is one that, if disrupted, would result in a high or very high degree of injury to the health, safety, security or economic well-being of Canadians, or to the effective functioning of the Government of Canada. All departments are required to identify their respective critical services and

related supporting resources. For more information, please refer to the [Policy on Government Security](#).

It should be noted that, at the federal level, an “essential service” is used to determine which positions must continue to provide service during strike activity. Essential service agreements are agreed to with the bargaining agents. Other levels of government may use this term in different ways, such as when referring to activities required to respond to COVID-19.

Flexibility for COVID-19 related staffing measures

Second language qualifications

Effective immediately (and to [remain in place until September 30, 2020](#)), the Public Service Commission (PSC) has put in place [measures to create additional flexibility](#) to staff bilingual positions in response to the growing challenges departments and the PSC are facing when assessing candidates’ second language. These measures provide that:

- Deputy heads are exempted from using the PSC’s Second Language Evaluation (SLE) tests for appointments to any bilingual position
- hiring managers can conduct the language assessment themselves but have to respect the [guiding principles for alternate methods to second language evaluation tests](#) established by the PSC
- similar to a measure taken during the Deficit Reduction Exercise, the PSC is extending the validity period of SLE results that are more than 5 years old
- for all appointments over 12 months made using either of the 2 measures, appointees must confirm their official language proficiency through PSC SLE tests within 12 months of the appointment

Performance management and performance assessments

The deadlines for completing 2019-2020 employee performance reviews have been suspended.

Similarly, the administration of performance pay for both executives and non-executives, subject to any collective agreement or legislative requirements, is also suspended.

Specific adjustments to the process, deadlines, and guidance will be communicated in the coming weeks.

Changes to operations and policy amendments related to COVID-19

Every effort is being made to ensure accessibility to this information. If you require any information or document in an alternative format, please contact questions@tbs-sct.gc.ca.

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[Procurement: Contracting Policy Notice 2020-1: Response to COVID-19 \(Treasury Board Secretariat\)](#) 2020-03-23

[ATIP Implementation Notice 2020-01: Guidance on delays resulting from measures to mitigate the impact of novel Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) on federal workplaces](#) 2020-03-20

Who to contact for more information

If you have further questions regarding the impact of COVID-19 on dates and deadlines for government operations impacting your work, you should first speak to your manager. You may also email us at questions@tbs-sct.gc.ca.

Visit Canada.ca/coronavirus for the most up-to-date information about COVID-19 or contact the Government of Canada's information line at 1-833-784-4397.

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