



Project: Law in the Time of Corona

A guide by: The Law Association of Trinidad & Tobago

Employee Management:

Work-from-home



While law offices and legal services are deemed as 'essential' businesses during the 'stay-at-home' orders pursuant to the Public Health Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) Regulations, it must be noted that in order to prevent the spread of the virus, social distancing must be implemented in such offices.

It is therefore incumbent on employers and Office managers to put measures in place to limit staff presence through rostering and/or implementing work-from-home arrangements.

Managing Employees

A COVID-19 practicing guide

1

Always bear in mind the parental and guardianship duties of employees

With schools being closed and unlikely to re-open until September 2020, there may be employees who are now faced with the challenge of no alternative childcare, or of supervising online schooling while being required to work. Employers should also be mindful to avoid discrimination against female employees who often are perceived to have more childcare responsibilities than men.

2

HR policies

Employers should treat employees with compassion and set-up policies and procedures to manage human resource issues and adapt to the unique challenges.

The work-from-home policy should address how to supervise staff, communicate with them and monitor performance and output. Regular communication with employees can help combat isolation and stress.

Employers and employees should be in agreement on the medium for communication, such as, WhatsApp, Skype, Zoom or Microsoft Teams so

3

Working remotely

Some employers may be able to allocate computers, tablets or mobile devices for staff to work remotely. Others may need a 'bring your own device' policy where the employees use their own machines. Issues such as confidentiality and security must be addressed in all arrangements.

Employers should also consider computer virus protection and other security measures and whether a designated member of staff will be available by telephone to help with IT issues.

4

Software support

Where specific software is required to carry-on the business of the office, such as accounting, case management and document assembly software, provisions should be made for infrastructural and software support to facilitate this. Employees may need to be granted email access, mobile access or remote server access where applicable.

Employees may also need to be able to electronically sign documents and even access file creation software such as Adobe Acrobat or Microsoft Word. Employers should ensure that they have the appropriate licences to facilitate same.



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BACKGROUND

The Law Association of Trinidad and Tobago is committed to assisting all legal professionals as far as reasonably practicable. This brochure is produced by our Information Technology Committee and is one of a series containing guidance which we hope will assist legal professionals in continuing business operations during the Pandemic period.

We hope it will be useful to you. If you have any questions, comments and/or suggestions on how to improve the information contained in this brochure, please feel free to contact the IT Committee at:
admin@lawassociationtt.com

5

Keep employees informed

Employers may need to specify any changes to hours of work. Will the employee need to be available for work during strict office hours or work a specified set number of hours per day?

6

Salary and benefits

Salary and benefits should obviously remain the same during a period of home working although changes to expenses may be appropriate if normal travel expenses and allowances are no longer needed.

7

Self-isolation

Employees who are advised to self-isolate due to potential contact or who have tested positive for COVID-19 may require arrangements outside of regular sick-leave or vacation entitlement.

8

Direct deposit salary payments

Where employees are usually paid by cash or cheque, employers may consider direct deposit into the employee's bank account, where staff members are working from home.

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