



**TE MARAE ORA**  
**MINISTRY OF HEALTH**  
**COOK ISLANDS**

**PERSONNEL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

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## **1. Recruitment and Selection**

## **1.1. Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO)**

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### **Policy Statement**

The Ministry is committed to developing an equal employment opportunities environment where diversity is sought and valued. To achieve this, the Ministry's EEO policy aims to:

- promote EEO practices as integral to good management
- ensure that everyone in the Ministry has the same chance to contribute to the success of the organisation, and to share in its benefits
- recruit people from the widest pool using a fair and equitable selection process
- remove all barriers within the organisation that may cause or perpetuate inequality or opportunity.

All Ministry employees will be treated fairly and equitably, regardless of factors such as disability, race, ethnic origin, age, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, ethical or religious beliefs, or family responsibilities.

The Ministry will use selection and appointment processes designed to ensure the person who can best demonstrate competence for the job is the person appointed.

Employees will be provided with equitable terms of employment, opportunities for development, training, promotion and rotation.

Employees will be fairly and equitably assessed through the process of the performance management review when identifying training and development needs.

Employees will not be subject to harassment of any type in the Ministry workplace, either by a Ministry employee or any other person associated with the Ministry.

### **Managers**

Managers are expected to comply with the Ministry's EEO policy and practices as part of their management accountability. In practical terms, this means any person with management responsibilities must integrate the principles into their own management practices and behaviours, thereby effectively role modelling the Ministry's policy and principles.

### **Employees**

Everyone who works for the Ministry is accountable for behaving in a manner consistent with the Ministry's EEO policy and principles.

### **Human Resources Division**

Human Resources will support managers and employees in the implementation of the EEO policy and principles. Human Resources is responsible for the development of selection, appointment, performance management and training and development processes that meet the Ministry's EEO policy and principles.

## 1.2. Recruiting to a Vacancy

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### Policy Statement

The objective of the selection process is to appoint the person who is best suited to do the job. This includes the Ministry's commitment to equal employment opportunity principles and a process of impartial selection.

In achieving this, the responsibilities of the Ministry are:

- to ensure that the position is clearly defined in terms of its place in the organisation, its relationship with other positions, its key accountabilities, and the competencies and performance standards expected. This sets the framework within which it is possible for the selection panel to determine merit.
- to advertise the vacancy (internally or externally) to generate a pool of suitably qualified applicants for the position
- to ensure that the appointment and process used to appoint is in accordance with the Ministry's principles and can withstand independent scrutiny
- to comply with all legislative requirements

### Principles

The Ministry of Health is committed to the good employer principles set out in the Public Service Act 2009. These principles create a framework for employment agreement provisions and must be considered throughout the recruitment process. Specifically, the Ministry must ensure the impartial selection of suitably qualified persons for appointment.

To achieve this, the key principles that guide the Ministry's recruitment and selection process are:

- **Fairness** - The processes of recruitment and selection will be managed and applied in ways that do not unfairly disadvantage or advantage any one person over another.
- **Equity** - An equitable process will ensure that the merits of each application will be recognised, acknowledged and given appropriate value. Equity recognizes that as a result of different life experiences and value systems, people will bring different talents and strengths to their applications.
- **Accessibility** - The process will be open to all people, cost effective, supported by sufficient information, and will encourage all suitable applications.
- **Quality** - The process will seek high quality outcomes for all parties. This will mean:
  - 1) For the Ministry
    - the appointment of best-suited people to positions in the Ministry
    - the promotion of the Ministry to the public as an organisation that values professionalism and excellence
  - 2) For Panel Members
    - the provision of guidelines to ensure that panel members are clear about their responsibilities to both the Ministry and all applicants
    - the provision of advice and assistance for interviews involving support groups
    - access to full information and support in preparing and making their appointment recommendation
  - 3) For Applicants
    - access to full information and support in preparing and making their application
    - the best possible opportunity to demonstrate their suitability for the position
    - protection of personal information
    - constructive feedback from the selection processes

- for internal applicants, the opportunity for the process to be part of an ongoing programme of coaching and career development.

### **Step One: Define the Role and Create a Job Description**

When a vacancy occurs it is usual for the manager to want to fill the vacancy as quickly as possible so that work outputs can be maintained. For the Ministry, the time during which a position is about to become vacant is a time which allows the organisation to examine the particular role of a position or group of positions and to analyze that role and look at its relevance to the current and future work of the section and the Ministry as a whole.

Job analysis is essentially a process of gathering together information about the job, the competencies required to do it, and the performance standards that will need to be met in order for the essential tasks to be adequately carried out.

Key source documents used in the job analysis process include:

- business plans/work programme
- the latest performance review material
- the latest job description
- the competencies required of the position

A manager should also consider gathering information from key people, such as: the current incumbent, peers, subordinates, other key stakeholders, possibly the Minister(s), and other organisations with similar positions.

The process of job analysis leads to the development of the job description for the role.

#### **The Job Description**

The job description should include:

- the purpose of the position
- if the position is fulltime or part-time, permanent, fixed term, or casual
- the relationship of the role to other positions
- its contribution to the overall goals of the Ministry
- the key accountabilities and key areas of focus
- selection criteria
- the competencies required of the person who could fill the position

### **Step Two: Advertise the Vacancy**

Recruitment is the process by which the Ministry gets a pool of suitably skilled applicants from which people may be selected for specific positions.

Recruitment campaigns can be highly resource-intensive because advertising a vacancy has the potential to generate many enquiries and applications from people who are not well-matched to the Ministry's needs. For some positions, where it is known that there is a limited pool of suitable people, a limited and highly focused recruitment campaign may be appropriate. However, against this desire for focus and restraint, where practicable all vacancies should be notified as widely as possible so that all suitable people can come to know of the opportunities as they arise.

#### **Internal advertising**

The Ministry is committed to the development of employees through training and development opportunities that prepare them for promotion.



In most situations, the most valuable source of applications for vacancies will come from existing employees. It is, therefore, essential that employees are made aware of the vacancies that become available. All vacancies must be advertised within the Ministry on email ([MOHAllstaff@health.gov.ck](mailto:MOHAllstaff@health.gov.ck)) and the Ministry website ([www.health.gov.ck](http://www.health.gov.ck)); and in the outer islands, on the Ministry notice boards.

**Managers wishing to advertise a vacancy must do so through Human Resources who will advise the necessary documentation required, such as job description and an advertisement.**

### **External Advertising**

The most frequently used method of external advertising is to advertise through the media. There is a range of media outlets which include:

- the daily newspaper
- website
- weekly or monthly specialist newspapers or magazines
- professional newsletters or bulletin boards
- professional associations
- specialist publications
- tertiary institutions

Human Resources provide a central service for all vacancy advertising and can assist with advice on advertising campaigns, advertising costs and publication deadlines.

### **Applicant Information**

It is important, for assessment purposes, that there is consistency in the quality and type of information that is gathered from applicants. The provision of detailed personal data which is focused on the key competencies for the position will help the selection panel make the first match between the applicants and the position to form an initial short list.

Applicants need to complete an application form and provide a current curriculum vitae and any other information they think relevant as their application to a vacant position.

## **Step Three: Make a Selection**

The aim of the selection process is to obtain sufficient information on the applicant's potential to successfully fill the position. There are many different methods for assessing the suitability of applicants for a position, but research suggests that an effective assessment process has the following elements:

- the content of the selection method relates strongly to the content of the job
- there is a structured approach to assessment which gives more reliable information
- there is a range of methods of assessment which gives better information than a single method.

The selection methods that are used will vary depending on the type of work to be done, the particular focus of the competencies and the seniority of the position. However, as a minimum the Ministry expects:

- short list from information provided by applicants
- panel interview
- reference checks
- consultation with current manager (for internal applicants)

Other selection methods may include work related tests, psychometric tests and work samples.

### **Procedural management protocol**

When all applications are received, the Human Resources division will prepare a report on the closure of the advertisement and submit all applications received to the Secretary of Health as the Employer of the Ministry as soon as possible. The Secretary will make a decision either for the HR division to shortlist the applications or appoint a Chairperson and the selection panel to conduct the short listing.

### **Shortlist applicants**

It is recommended that short listing be undertaken by the selection panel or the HR division. This enables the panel to see the calibre of all applicants and agree on who should be interviewed. This approach helps the manager select the most appropriate people to interview and reduces any personal bias. As a minimum, the recruiting manager, as Panel Chair, should be able to clearly state their short listing criteria to the rest of the panel and get their agreement to those criteria. A Panel Short List template is available and template letters for applicants who were not short listed are also provided.

### **Set up interviews**

Appointment of a selection panel is the responsibility of the recruiting manager in consultation with the HR division.

In the Ministry, a selection panel will normally be made up of at least three people and should:

- include the person to whom the appointee will work directly (the Panel Chair)
- where possible include a person external to the directorate to give a broader Ministry perspective
- have a gender mix
- have a community or target group representative where it is relevant in assisting to identify the best suited person.

Key skills for members of selection panels are:

- written and oral communication skills
- understanding of the role
- good judgement
- the ability to provide constructive feedback.

### **Interview**

The aim of the interview process is to provide the selection panel with sufficient information to enable them to make an assessment of whether the applicant:

- has the required knowledge, skills and experiences to perform the job
- will fit in with/adapt to the culture of the Ministry
- has development potential
- is the best person for the job.

It is also an opportunity for candidates to gather and clarify information about the job to help them make an informed decision, should they be the successful candidate.

### **Contacting Referees**

After the interviews are complete, it is usual to undertake referee checks. The Manager needs to keep a careful written record of the conversation. A reference checking template is available for managers.

The applicant must give specific permission for a referee to be contacted, usually provided on their CV, or at the time of their interview.

## **Step Four: Select the preferred candidate**

### **Selecting the preferred candidate**

The process of selecting the preferred candidate must be documented in the 'selection decision template' by the recruiting manager or the panel Chairperson in consultation with the HR division.

The 'selection decision template' records the selection and shortlist process undertaken, the members of the interview panel, the key selection criteria used to assess the applicants and how the panel selected the preferred candidate. This report provides the Secretary of Health with confirmation of the selection process undertaken by the panel.

The form must be signed by all members of the interview panel prior to submitting to the Secretary of Health for approval.

## **Step Five: Confirm the Appointment**

### **The preferred candidate**

The recruiting Manager has the final say in choosing the appointee, but before contacting the person, must discuss the appointment with Human Resources, in particular, aspects such as the salary and conditions of employment must be consulted on. These details should then be captured on the 'offer of employment request form' to be approved by the Secretary of Health **before** the manager contacts the preferred candidate.

Once the Secretary of health has approved the offer of employment, the preferred candidate should be contacted as soon as possible.

The manager should negotiate with the candidate:

- acceptance of the position
- salary (all salary offers must be cleared through Human Resources)
- start date
- conditions of employment (employment agreement).

If, as a result of the negotiating, the terms and conditions of employment are different to those approved by the Secretary of Health, the manager must make the necessary amendments to the offer of employment request form and once more seek the Secretary of Health's approval.

The offer of employment request form then goes to Human Resources who will draft the appointment letter and agreement, including any special requirements that have been negotiated.

### **Unsuccessful Candidates**

After the preferred candidate has accepted the position, the recruiting manager should inform the other candidates who were interviewed that their candidacy has been unsuccessful. This should be followed up in writing.

The Ministry expects all candidates who wish it, to be given constructive feedback on all parts of the assessment process that they participated in.

Feedback from the process signals to applicants that the Ministry has valued their application by giving it careful consideration. Feedback also lets applicants know that although they might not have been the successful applicant on this occasion, their future chances would be assisted by development in some key areas. This is particularly important

for internal applicants, for whom the assessment process will provide valuable career development information.

It is the responsibility of the panel chair to provide feedback to applicants. However, it is possible that applicants may prefer to go to other members of the panel (e.g. because of ethnicity or gender reasons).

Where a panel member is to give the feedback, it is the responsibility of the panel chair to ensure that the panel member is fully briefed on the feedback that is to be given, how it is to be given and to ensure that it happens. The applicant should be given the choice of receiving feedback in writing so that, where applicable, they can share the panel's feedback with a support group who attended the interview.

### **1.3. Probationary period for new employees**

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New employees will be on probation for three (3) months from their start date. Prior to the end of the probation period, the Manager will conduct a performance review of the employee's suitability and / or otherwise for the position. The outcome of the review will determine whether the employee is taken off probation, the probation period extended, or employment be terminated.

A final decision will be conveyed in writing to the employee by the Secretary of Health.

## **Templates for Recruitment and Selection**



## Guidelines for Shortlisting

- The focus of this process is to seek evidence as to whether adequate competency/experience is present.
- The short listing documentation is to be used with a copy of the full set of competencies which are listed at the end of the position description.
- The indicators serve as a guide to the types of evidence that suggest competency but they are not totally comprehensive.
- It is not necessary for the experiences described in a given section of the application to cover all the competency indicators but we would expect that at least the selection criteria in the position description have been addressed.
- We would expect that the examples provided will be relevant to the role of a manager in some way. However it is not necessary to use only work based examples in the application form to show evidence of competency.
- If you identify evidence outside the indicators of competency note this in the comments section.
- You may infer from someone's experience that there is presence of competency - e.g. do not mention knowledge of the health and disability sector but has held several roles in the disability sector. Please note the assumption made in the comments area.
- The final short listing recommendation of "decline, hold, and interview" needs to be supported by a quantifying of the rating points, and comments on unclear or missing information.
- While information is missing, it may not always be necessary to phone the applicant to get it, as the overall picture may suggest that the applicant would not be short listed anyway.
- As a general guide we expect that all short listed candidates will meet all of the "Essential" criteria.
- We also expect that they will meet most of the "Desirable" criteria as well.





## Short List Template



Position:  Directorate:  Applicant name:	<b>Rating scale</b> <i>0 = no or limited evidence, does not meet requirements</i> <i>U= unclear evidence, need more information</i> <i>1= yes, meets requirements</i>
--	--

Essential Criteria	Rating
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
Desirable Criteria	
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
<b>TOTAL</b>	
<b>Short list decision</b>	
Decline / hold / interview	

**Comments:**



## Decline letter – prior to interview

(Date)

(Name)  
(Address)

Dear (Name)

**(Position Title, Directorate)**

Thank you for your application for the above position. There was a good response to our advertisement, and I thank you for the time you put into your application and your interest in our work. I am writing to advise that your application has not been successful in this instance. This does not reflect your own abilities; rather the skills, knowledge and experience of the short listed candidates more closely match the requirements for the role.

I wish you well for the future and would like to take this opportunity to encourage you to apply for any other vacancies advertised by the Ministry which interest you.

Yours sincerely

(Name)  
(Title)  
(Directorate)



## Interview Timetable Template

Position:

Directorate:

Interview Date(s):

Panel Members:

[illegible]



## Decline letter – after interview

(Date)

(Name)  
(Address)

Dear (Name)

**(Position Title, Directorate)**

I am writing to thank you for the time and effort you have put into submitting your application and attending the interview and to confirm that your application has not been successful in this instance.

I wish you well for the future and would like to take this opportunity to encourage you to apply for any other vacancies advertised by the Ministry which interest you.

Yours sincerely

(Name)  
(Title)  
(Directorate)





## Behavioural Interview Template – This is a sample guide only

### Interview Guide

<b>Position &amp; Vacancy No.</b>		
<b>Work Role Grouping:</b>		
<b>Applicant Name:</b>		
<b>Panel Member Name: Other Panel Members:</b>		
<b>Date:</b>		

### Introduction:

- ☐ Thank you for applying for this position.
- ☐ The interview will include a number of structured questions to examine your strengths against the Key Competencies of this role. We will be asking for information in a particular manner - *describe a Situation or Task, the Actions you personally took, the Role you held, and what the Results were of what you did.*
- ☐ We will be taking notes to assist us so if we lose eye contact with you don't feel we are not listening.
- ☐ Be assured that all information and situations discussed in the interview will remain confidential to the panel.
- ☐ We will give you time at the end of the interview to ask any questions about this role or make additional comments, but are there any questions before we start?
- ☐ The Interview will take approximately 45 minutes – 1 hour.

## Behavioural Interview Template – This is a sample guide only

Opening Questions for the Interview	<u>Look for :</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• They have a good understanding of the position.</li><li>• They have demonstrated sufficient technical experience</li><li>• They have considered the requirements of the job against their skills and background and believe they can do the job as a result</li><li>• Motivational fit</li></ul>
<p>1. <i>What is your general understanding of the requirements of the role? What aspects of the role appeal to you most? / Why did you apply?</i></p> <p>2. <i>Please outline your specialist, technical knowledge and skills in relation to the technical and specialist requirements of the role.</i></p>	
<p>3. <i>Specific areas of interest and/or concern</i> attained from their application (CV etc.) to discuss further / explore:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li></ul>	

## Behavioural Interview Template – This is a sample guide only

<b>Decision Making</b>			
<b>Definition:</b> Identifying and understanding issues, problems, and opportunities; comparing information from different sources to draw conclusions; using effective approaches for choosing a course of action or developing appropriate solutions; taking action that is consistent with available facts, constraints, and probable consequences.			
<b>Behavioural Indicators:</b> ( <u>Suggested Approach:</u> For clear evidence of an indicator, mark ✓. For partial evidence, mark ½. If no evidence, leave unmarked)			
<b>Things to look for:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Identifies issues, problems, and opportunities <input type="checkbox"/> Gathers, interprets information <input type="checkbox"/> Generates alternatives		<input type="checkbox"/> Chooses appropriate action <input type="checkbox"/> Commits to action <input type="checkbox"/> Involves others	
<b>Questions</b>	<b>Situation/Task</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Results</b>
<p>If we're lucky, sometimes we can identify a small problem and correct it before it becomes a major problem. Can you give me an example of a time when you identified a small problem before it became big?</p> <p>Describe the most complex problem you have recently been asked to solve. What did you do? What alternatives did you consider?</p> <p>Describe an occasion when you decided to involve others in making a decision. Why did you do so? To what extent did you use their contribution?</p>			
<i>Using your notes from the answers given to the interview questions, assess the evidence for the competency against the behavioural anchors and, using the following formula, indicate the score that applies below.     4 = all or close to all indicators met;   3 = most indicators met;   2 = some indicators met;   1 = little evidence indicated.</i>			
<b>Rating of applicant evidence for this competency:</b> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/>			

## Behavioural Interview Template – This is a sample guide only

<b>Closing Questions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Areas to probe from competency-based questions (e.g. contrary information from candidate, areas requiring further investigation)</li></ul> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Personal Areas for Development? Any Knowledge and/or skill gaps to undertake job as described?</li><li>2. Given that you now have a better appreciation for the role and what is involved, what areas do you see as the biggest challenges, say, in the next 12 months? Why?</li><li>3. What are the key points of relevance in your background / experience that distinguish you from others who have applied for this role?</li><li>4. Any other questions?</li></ol>	<b>Notes:</b>
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## Behavioural Interview Template – This is a sample guide only

### Panel Interview Summary Assessment

Position \_\_\_\_\_ Candidate: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Competency/Assessment Area	Score for Interviewer A	Score for Interviewer B	Score for Interviewer C	Consensus Group Score	Notes
Essential Criteria					
Desirable Criteria					
TOTAL					

## Behavioural Interview Template – This is a sample guide only

### Panel Comments:

Candidate strengths:

- 
- 

Areas to consider in the development of the candidates potential:

- 
- 

Motivational and team fit

- 
- 

### Panel recommendation:

Consider for Selection (Refer to Selection Decision Template):      **Yes**    /    **No**    /    **Maybe**

If 'Maybe', what is required to make the recommendation a 'Yes' or 'No' \_\_\_\_\_

Signed for and on behalf of the interviewers/interview panel: \_\_\_\_\_

***Now integrate this into the 'Selection Decision Template'***

## Reference Check Form



Name of candidate: \_\_\_\_\_

Position applied for: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Checked by: \_\_\_\_\_ (Signature)

### REFEREE:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Organisation: \_\_\_\_\_

### GENERAL:

1. What is the basis of your knowledge of the candidates work performance? (Also number of years known.)

2. What were the candidate's prime responsibilities?

3. In your opinion what are their major strengths?

4. Their major weaknesses?

5. Key Selection Criteria.

*Outline the key selection criteria for the position. Taking each one in turn, ask for the referee's comments – for example, evidence of their ability, suggestions for development.*

Key Selection criterion 1:

Key Selection criterion 2:

Key Selection criterion 3:

6. What do you feel the candidate needs to do for continued professional growth and development?
7. Would you re-employ the candidate? (If no why?)
8. Are you aware of any personal problems that might interfere with job performance?
9. Do you have any final comments?

**Thank you for your time and comments.**



## Selection Decision and Appointment Recommendation



Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Directorate: \_\_\_\_\_

Selection / Short-listing Process:

*i.e., forms of advertising and number of candidates interviewed*

Interview Panel:

Key Selection Criteria:

### Preferred candidate

Name:

Strengths:

Areas for Development:

Reference Check:

Overall:

Signed by panel chair: ..... Date:

Panel member:.....

Panel member:.....

Approved.....Date:  
(Secretary of Health)



## Offer of Employment Request Form

### Basic details:

Name of appointee:

Address/Contact:

Existing Ministry Employee: Y/N

Vacancy (dates advertised)

Start date:

End date:

Position title:

Reports to:

Directorate:

Director to sign agreement:

Section:

Output:

Position location:

Salary \$\_\_\_\_\_ per annum (*pro-rated for part-time hours*).

☐ Salary within remuneration range

Hours:

☐ 35hours

☐ Senior Level (i.e.: Director, Medical Doctor, Medical Officer in Charge, Head of Department, or Manager)

☐ Regular part-time hours (please specify the days, hours, and hours per day):

Annual Leave:

☐ 20 Days

### Variations Requested:

*If there are any **variations** to the standard Ministry Agreement please discuss these with Human Resources and note specifics here.*

Housing allowance \_\_\_\_\_

Use of vehicle Y / N

Use of Mobile phone Y / N

Petrol allowance Y / N

Reimbursement of professional fees \_\_\_\_\_

Relocation Expenses \_\_\_\_\_

Practising certificates, professional fees etc

### Approval:

**\*Before sending to HR – attach a copy of the job description, CV and signed application form. Please also include final interview notes and Selection Decision summary.**

Director's signature and confirmation of delegated financial authority supporting appointment:

*SIGNATURE:* \_\_\_\_\_

*PRINT NAME:* \_\_\_\_\_

Finance Manager

*SIGNATURE:* \_\_\_\_\_

*PRINT NAME:* \_\_\_\_\_

Director Funding and Planning

*SIGNATURE:* \_\_\_\_\_

*PRINT NAME:* \_\_\_\_\_

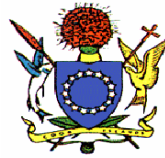
Secretary of Health approval (sign): \_\_\_\_\_

**HR/Payroll Use only:**

Position No/Band/Size: \_\_\_\_\_

Authorised for release by HR (*sign*) \_\_\_\_\_

# Employee Induction Policy



## A. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all new appointees are effectively introduced to the Ministry and their roles, to enable them to become productive as quickly as possible.

## B. Objectives

The Ministry of Health (MoH) will provide all new employees with a comprehensive induction / orientation program to the Ministry. This induction will include:

- Functions and Organization Structure of the Ministry;
- Employee position description;
- Key staff and management;
- Physical workplace;
- Terms and conditions of employment;

## C. Mandatory Responsibilities

All new appointees to MoH will undergo an induction process during the first two weeks following appointment. The induction will include terms and conditions and a thorough explanation of the role of the Ministry and each Directorate; and expectations of the position.

Where a new appointee is located in the outer islands the induction may be delegated to the Officer in Charge responsible for the appointee.

### **Secretary**

- Carry out an induction for any new Director in accordance with this policy.

### **Director or Delegated Manager**

- Carry out workplace induction in accordance with this policy for all new Managers.
- Complete the induction checklist and return to Human Resources Division.
- Delegating responsibility for completing induction of appointees in outer islands.

### **Human Resources Division**

- Initiating Induction checklist for all new staff upon their appointment.
- Maintaining Induction Records on the employee's personal file.

## D. Procedure

The formal induction process is to be completed within 2 weeks of appointment for every new appointee.

- a. The Induction checklist is to be prepared by Human Resources Division as part of the appointment process;
- b. Human Resources Division will carry out "Section One – Entitlements" of the Induction Form with each new employee on the first day of their duty where-ever possible.

NB: for outer island appointments this will be assigned to the Officer in Charge.

- c. Human Resources Division will submit the Induction Form to the Director or Divisional Manager for completion of:

- "Section Two – Job Description and Work Conditions"
- "Section Three – Performance Planning and monitoring"

- d. The Manager (or their delegate) will complete the induction process with the new appointee and complete the Induction Form.

- This includes providing a detailed explanation of each item and indicating on the form that the item has been completed.
  - When all items have been covered (can be done over several days) the form is to be signed by the Manager indicating that the Induction is complete.
- e. The induction form is returned to Human Resources Division within two weeks of appointment to be filed in the employee's personal file.

## Induction From

Employee Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Division/Directorate: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Appointment: \_\_\_\_\_

Task	When complete, initial and date
<b>Section One – Entitlements (to be done by HRD)</b>	
On receipt of request for employment form: prepare letter of offer and employment agreement and collate recruitment pack: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Job Description</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Personal Information form</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Statement of Confidentiality</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> RMD form</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> National Superannuation form</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Email access request</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Copy of Drivers License &amp; Passport (Current)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Application for Entry/Work permits (where applicable)</li> </ul>	
Letter of Offer and Employment agreement returned, signed and filed in employee file	
Complete Notice of Appointment (Copy to Finance and Office of the Public Service Commission)	
Complete ICT Request form for access to: network, email and Medtech (if applicable), and Staff ID card and submit to IT division	
Salary - discuss frequency of pay and how to access pay and leave details	
Advise rate of pay and when it is paid	
Confirm salary deductions	
Awareness of access to HR Policy	
Ministry Policies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Hours of work, lunch breaks etc</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Leave – including sick, annual, bereavement</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> No smoking policy</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Reiterate areas of HR Policy pertinent to Department</li> </ul>	
Attendance records and time-book	
Provide Induction Pack* and briefly describe all documents included (Organization structure, Health Strategy)	
Introduce New employee to Secretary of Health, Funding and Planning Staff – then handover employee to Divisional Manager	
Enter new employee details into HR Vizual database	
<b>Section Two – Job Requirements (to be done by Divisional Manager)</b>	
Arrange workspace and office furniture, including any special requirements, e.g. computer, telephone, stationery etc.	
Ensure workstation & PC set up	
Arrange business cards (if required)	
Explain and discuss job description / performance measures	
Introduce staff member to role of division and how their position contributes to the Divisional work-plan	
Introduce employee to other key staff members the employee will interact with	
Hours of work - Discuss start and finish times, lunch and tea breaks.	
Motor vehicle policy – sight drivers license	

<b>Tour of organization and facilities</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Work area</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Time book location &amp; accountability procedures</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Toilets</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Kitchen facilities</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Computer training room</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Photo-copy and fax and how equipment works</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Stationery supplies</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Storage and records</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Gym</li> </ul>	
<b>Health and Safety</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Discuss emergency procedures including location of:</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Fire extinguisher/s</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Emergency Exits and procedures</li> </ul>	
<b>Salary - discuss how to access leave details</b>	
<b>Ministry Policies</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Hours of work, lunch breaks etc</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Leave – including sick, annual, bereavement</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> No smoking policy</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Reiterate areas of HR Policy pertinent to Department</li> </ul>	
<b>Role expectations</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Provide an overview of the Directorate and work programme</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Discuss role expectation and work assignments</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Ensure employee understands of Code of Conduct, in particular – handling of official information using Ministry resources, including internet and email.</li> </ul>	
<b>Section Three – Performance Planning and Monitoring (Divisional Manager)</b>	
Discuss when performance will be reviewed	
Discuss how performance will be measured	
Discuss the performance review process	

I confirm the induction has been completed:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Divisional Manager

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date:

\_\_\_\_\_  
New Employee

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date:





## **2. Code of Conduct**

## **2.1. Policy Statement**

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This policy provides guidance on standards of conduct required across the public sector and complements the Public Service Code of Conduct and duty to act as a good employer, as legislated in the Public Service Act 2009.

### **Scope**

This policy applies to Heads of Public Sector Agencies and employees within the Cook Islands Public Sector.

## **2.2. Principles**

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The Public Service Act 2009 identifies the following values for public servants to adhere to:

Honesty, acting honestly, being truthful, and abiding by the laws of the Cook Islands;

Impartiality providing impartial advice, acting without fear or favour, and making decisions on their merits;

Service serving the people well through faithful service to the Government of the Cook Islands;

Respect treating the people, the Government of the Cook Islands, and colleagues with courtesy and respect;

Transparency taking actions and making decisions in an open way;

Accountability being able to explain the reason for actions taken, and taking responsibility for those actions;

Efficiency and effectiveness achieving good results for the Cook Islands in an economical way;

The duty to act as a good employer requires employers develop and implement personnel policies which ensure the fair and proper treatment of employees during employment, including the impartial recruitment of employees, employee capability development opportunities and good and safe working conditions.

Employers and employees must commit to:

- Acting as good ambassadors of the Cook Islands Government and Public Sector;
- Being honest and politically neutral;
- Maintaining high standards of ethical behaviour which support the agency's ethical standards;
- Not allowing conflicts of interest to influence decisions made in an official capacity and professional behaviour;
- Promote equal employment opportunities, prohibiting all forms of discrimination in recruitment practices, employment relations and agency opportunities

### **Legislation and Regulations**

The Public Service Act 2009, Employment Relations Act 2012, Ministry of Finance and Economic Management Act 1995-96, and Public Expenditure and Review Committee and Audit Act 1995-96, and other relevant legislation apply.

## Definitions

**Agency** means any department, instrument, or agent of the Government and includes a body corporate or organisation that is wholly owned or controlled by the Crown

**Complainant** is a natural person (individual) who raises a complaint about any breach or alleged breach of the code of conduct policy by persons who must comply with this policy

**Conflict of interest** is where an individuals' perceived or real objectivity is impaired and can lead to the individual making a decision or taking action in their official capacity to derive personal benefit or favour others

**Contractors** includes persons engaged under a written contract where the terms of employment and code of conduct are specified in the contract

**Department** means any ministry or department including any agency or instrument listed in the Public Service (Identification of Departments) Order 2008

**Discrimination** is the unjust differential treatment of people, based on grounds including race, ethnic origin, skin colour or appearance; opinion and belief; religion; gender or sexual preference; disability; age; health status; and maternity status; and family status

**Employee** means any person who is an employee of the Public Sector

**Employer** means the Head of a Public Sector Department or Crown Agency, Ministerial Support Office or other agency or their delegated authority

**Frivolous** means not having any serious purpose, value or merit

**Instant dismissal** means dismissal without notice. This can apply in circumstances where there is a serious breach of legislation, policy or an employment contract or agreement

**Natural Justice** requires a fair and transparent procedure to be followed, and that the decision-maker operate free from bias

**Political Neutrality in performance of duties** means performing duties faithfully and loyally and apolitically, regardless of one's personal political beliefs or affiliations

**Public Service Appeal Board** established under Article 76 of the Constitution is comprised of: the Chief Justice, a Public Service employee or former employee representative appointed by the Queen's Representative on advice from the Prime Minister, and a Public Service employee or former employee nominated by the public service or an organisation of public service employees to hold office for a period of three years

**Public Service Commissioner** means the Public Service Commissioner appointed under Article 73 of the Constitution and Section 5 of the Public Service Act 2009

**Public Sector** includes Public Service Departments, Island Governments, Crown Agencies, Offices of Parliament, Ministerial Support Offices, State Owned Enterprises and other agencies

**Racial discrimination** is discrimination on an ethnic or cultural basis, independent of whether these differences are described or identified as racial

**Sexual Harassment** means unsolicited/unwelcome/offensive verbal, written and/or physical conduct of a sexual nature directed at a person

**Vexatious** is an action without sufficient grounds, to cause annoyance to another individual

### **2.3. Procedures**

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Employers are responsible for administering this policy. The employer is responsible for ensuring all policies are easily accessible to employees however, the onus lies with the employee to read, understand, familiarise and comply with this and any other relevant government policies. Any person who breaches this policy may have committed an act of misconduct and may be subject to disciplinary action and/or dismissal.

### **2.4. Misconduct**

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Misconduct is defined as unacceptable behaviour, action, or inaction not of the level of serious misconduct in breach of this policy, or which negatively impacts on other employees or the Agency.

**Examples of misconduct may include but are not limited to the following actions:**

- Non-compliance with Public Sector policies, code of conduct and values;
- Failure to perform employment related tasks to specified standards;
- Failure to report to work without notification to the respective manager or supervisor;
- Failure to consistently report to work at the specified start time or after any break;
- Failure to complete the stipulated hours of work required for the position;
- Use of obscene or threatening language in the workplace;
- Harassing behaviour of a sexual, racial or discriminatory nature;
- Unprofessional behaviour in the workplace and publicly which brings the reputation of the department into disrepute;
- Engaging in activities that undermine the confidence of members of the public in the neutrality of the public sector;
- Personal attacks on the character of other employees, employers, members of parliament, other government stakeholders and members of the general public - in an official capacity;
- Publicly criticising government policies in an official capacity;
- Misuse of public-funded resources and assets such as offices and school halls, equipment and supplies (phones), communication (emails) and motor vehicles;
- Soliciting or accepting gifts, rewards or benefits in an official capacity which might actually or apparently compromise the integrity of the employee, department or the public sector;
- Smoking in restricted areas and/or failing to abide with the agency's no-smoking policy

### **2.5. Serious Misconduct**

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Serious misconduct involves serious wrongdoing whereby the actions of an individual are unlawful and/or of such significance as to make the continuation of the employment relationship untenable, or undermines the confidence and trust of parties in the employment relationship.

Persistent misconduct may be classified as serious misconduct. Serious misconduct may justify instant dismissal of the individual.

**Serious misconduct may include but is not limited to the following actions:**

- Serious breaches of legislation, specifically the Public Service Act 2009, Ministry of Finance and Economic Management Act 1995-96, and Public Expenditure and Review Committee and Audit Act 1995-1996;
- Serious breaches of Public Sector Policies, Code of Conduct and Values;
- Improper use or unauthorised disclosure of official or confidential information;

- Possession or consumption of illicit drugs on work premises
- Consumption of alcohol on work premises without the authority of management
- Arriving for work or being at work, under the influence of alcohol or illicit drugs
- Unauthorised possession of agency property or any other person's property
- Frequent unauthorised absence from work
- Serious or persistent harassing behaviour of a sexual, racial, religious or discriminatory nature
- Incurring liability for an agency outside approved authorisation parameters
- Any convicted offence involving dishonesty or serious offences
- Assault or violence in any form at work or in any work-related environment
- Impairing or harming, or threatening to impair or harm, directly or indirectly, any individual or agency or the property of an individual or agency
- Failure to carry out lawful instructions from one's employer, manager, or their delegated Authority
- Fraudulent practice which involves any act, or omission, or misrepresentation, that knowingly or recklessly misleads, or attempts to mislead, a party to obtain a financial or other benefit, or to avoid an obligation as determined by an investigation
- Corrupt practice which involves offering, giving, receiving or soliciting, directly or indirectly, anything of value to improperly influence the actions of another party as determined by an investigation
- Coercive practice which involves impairing or harming or threatening to impair or harm, directly or indirectly, any party or the property of the party to improperly influence their actions
- Collusive practice to achieve an improper purpose, including improperly influencing the actions of another party
- Intentional or reckless acts or omissions that lead to theft, waste or improper use of public sector assets
- Undeclared conflict of interest which leads to improper influence over a party's performance of official duties and responsibilities, contractual obligations, or compliance with applicable laws and regulations
- Obstructive practices which involve deliberately destroying, falsifying, altering, or concealing evidence material in an agency investigation; making false statements to materially impede an agency investigation; threatening, harassing, or intimidating any party to prevent it from disclosing its knowledge of matters relevant to an investigation, or from pursuing the investigation; or materially impeding the agency's contractual right to audit or access information
- Retaliation, detrimental act (direct or indirect), discrimination against, disadvantage or punishment of whistle blowers or witnesses during the course of employment, because of their actions or cooperation with an agency's investigation

Employers must take all reasonable steps to ensure that appropriate and sufficient protection is provided for: whistle blowers, witnesses or complainant who make disclosures under this policy.

## **2.6. Managing Misconduct and Serious Misconduct**

Employers are responsible for managing the process for receiving, investigating and dealing with misconduct and serious misconduct in accordance with the principles of this policy.

### **2.6.1 Receiving allegations:**

- Complainants must report alleged misconduct in writing within 14 working days of the circumstances or incident constituting misconduct or serious misconduct to the:
  - \* Head of Agency – where the allegation involves a public sector employee of that agency
  - \* Public Service Commissioner – where the allegation involves a head of agency.

Written complaints using the Public Sector Complaints Form must include details of:

- All individuals directly or indirectly involved in the incident;
- The location, date and time of the incident;
- A description of the incident with relevant supporting documentation or evidence;
- Any third parties involved;
- Where the complainant is unable to provide a written complaint after what they consider an unreasonable amount of time, they should refer it to the attention of the Public Service Commissioner.
- Complainants can remain anonymous, however, complaints confirmed to be vexatious, frivolous, or deceitful may be considered misconduct;
- Heads of Agencies or the Public Service Commissioner must acknowledge the complaint within three working days of receiving the complaint;
- An employer may suspend an employee on pay while an investigation is in progress;
- The period of the investigation, up until the communication of the investigation recommendations, must not exceed one month, unless the investigation involves complex or complicated issues.

#### **2.6.2 Investigations:**

Alleged breaches of this policy may be investigated to confirm whether they constitute misconduct or serious misconduct.

#### **2.6.3 Minimum criteria for an investigation to proceed:**

- The complaint must be made by a natural person
- The complaint must relate to the conduct of a public sector employer, employee or contractor (where applicable)
- The complainant has reasonable grounds to believe the alleged conduct has occurred
- There is a reasonable possibility that the conduct constitutes misconduct or serious misconduct
- The alleged conduct is sufficiently important to investigate
- The complainant has provided their contact details – which must be kept confidential

If the complaint does not meet all the above criteria, the complainant must be notified in writing within three working days of acknowledging the complaint. If the complaint meets all the above criteria, an investigation is instigated and the complainant, accused and all relevant parties are notified of a pending investigation within five working days of acknowledging the complaint.

#### **2.6.4 Investigation guidelines:**

- Alleged misconduct or serious misconduct may be investigated, based on its facts and particular circumstances;
- Individuals to be investigated must be advised of the alleged misconduct and given an opportunity to respond;
- Professional judgment must be exercised during all stages of the investigation and all aspects of the investigation must be recorded in writing and placed on the respective individual's personnel file;
- Every effort must be made to maintain the privacy of the complainant, the individual under investigation and witnesses;
- Individuals involved in investigations may be accompanied by an appointed representative at meetings.
- If allegations of misconduct or serious misconduct are not borne out, an employee that has been suspended should be reinstated to their former employment status

#### **2.6.5 Objectives of the investigation:**

- To collate information regarding the allegation as quickly as possible.

- To consider the information collected and draw reasonable, objective and impartial conclusions on the alleged conduct;
- To maintain procedural fairness and confidentiality in the treatment of witnesses and the accused;
- To make recommendations based on the conclusions drawn for remedial or appropriate action;
- Investigations must apply the principle of natural justice at all times during the investigation. This involves procedural fairness to ensure a fair decision is reached by an objective decision maker.

#### **2.6.6 Conducting the investigation:**

- All discussions, phone calls and interviews with witnesses and relevant parties must be recorded or documented;
- Persons under investigation or witnesses do not need legal representation during the investigation process;
- A investigation report must be completed containing: a detailed outline of the allegation/s; an account of all information received and rejected information, including the reasons for rejection; and recommendations arising from the conclusions.

#### **2.6.7 Dealing with misconduct or serious misconduct:**

If the employer or investigating body concludes misconduct or serious misconduct has occurred, the following remedies are available and must be communicated to the accused in writing within five working days of the conduct being confirmed as misconduct or serious misconduct:

#### **2.6.8 Disciplinary Action**

A warning may be issued in instances where behavioural changes are required and must be authorised by the employer:

- a first written warning (or verbal warning followed by a written warning); or
- a second and final written warning, stating any future breach or failure to perform required actions or standards may result in instant dismissal

The employer must include the following when issuing warnings:

- A clear description of the misconduct or serious misconduct
- Employee response to the misconduct or serious misconduct
- Outcome of investigations following the employee response, with relevant patterns of behaviour
- Prescribed remedial or corrective action to be taken
- Clear time frames for corrective action with consequences (if necessary) for not meeting corrective actions
- Confirmation in writing of outcomes after corrective actions have been completed

#### **2.6.9 Instant dismissal for serious misconduct**

- Employees may be dismissed without notice where serious misconduct is proven.

### **Appeals against Remedies**

Complainants may:

- Lodge an appeal to Public Service Commissioner if they dispute the findings or outcomes of the investigation by their employer;

The Commissioner will then investigate the complaint and issue recommendations; or

- Utilise the mediation process provided in the Employment Relations Act; or
- Lodge a complaint with the Office of the Ombudsman; or

- Lodge an appeal the recommendations of the employer or Public Service Commissioner with the Public Service Appeal Board, through the High Court of the Cook Islands.

Heads of Departments who wish to dispute the findings and outcome of the investigation by the Public Service Commissioner use the process specified in Schedule 3 of the Public Service Act 2009.

**Other Provisions**

All records relating to the administration of this policy must be kept for at least seven years and are only accessible by the employer and/or authorised staff. After the required seven year period, the department may destroy the documentation in adherence with government official information management policies.





### **3. Remuneration**

### 3.1. Policy Statement

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The performance of the Ministry is dependent on the quality and commitment of its workforce. The aim of this policy is to assist the Ministry in attracting, motivating and retaining competent staff, capable of meeting the needs of the Ministry.

This policy provides details on the Ministry's approach to remuneration and the requirements for any pay increases and performance payments.

For the purpose of this policy, 'Remuneration' is the pay that employees receive for their work at the Ministry. It includes base salary or wages, any benefits and one-off performance payments. It does not include items that are provided to employees that are required by the employee to perform their job, such as mobile phones, laptops and vehicles. These items are classified as 'tools of trade'. It also does not include reimbursements or reimbursing allowances.

### 3.2. Principles

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The Ministry's remuneration policy is based on the following principles

- Remunerated according to the job sizing remuneration band;
- Consistency;
- Equity and fairness;
- Rewarding excellent performance through the use of competence, skill, knowledge and experience;
- The Ministry's ability to pay.

### 3.3. Remuneration Structure

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Remuneration bands are used to guide and determine appropriate remuneration levels for positions. Each band is assigned a range, in dollar terms, and it is within this range that an individuals' remuneration is placed. The decision on which band a position is assigned is made through job evaluation; a process carried out by the Public Service Commission involving reviewing the position's job description and any other relevant information. This process ensures there are internal relativities between positions in the Ministry and with the external market.

All positions should be remunerated according to their salary band.

#### 3.3.1 GOVERNMENT REMUNERATION RANGES SALARY STRUCTURE AS AT 2014

Band	Current		
	Minimum	Mid-point / Proficient	Maximum
A	9125	10,271	11417
B	9,728	11,445	13161
C	11,160	13,130	15098
D	12,765	15,016	17269
E	14,655	17,241	19827
F	16,860	19,835	22811
G	19,381	22,801	26221
H	22,274	26,205	30135
I	25,712	30,249	34786
J	29,664	34,899	40134
K	34104	40,123	46141
L	39203	46,121	53040

M	45075	53,030	60984
N	51826	60974	69439
O	59600	70134	80637
P	69512	80652	92733

### 3.3.2 GOVERNMENT REMUNERATION RANGES SALARY STRUCTURE AS AT 2017

Band	Current		
	Minimum	Mid-point / Proficient	Maximum
A	12,775	14,053	15,330
B	13,414	14,755	16,097
C	14,084	17,253	20,422
D	16,901	19,944	22,986
E	19,437	22,935	26,434
F	22,352	27,816	34,646
G	26,822	31,114	36,478
H	30,846	35,781	41,950
I	34,573	41,149	48,243
J	41,148	47,732	55,962
K	47,732	55,369	64,915

### 3.4. Movement through the Remuneration range

The Performance Management process (PM) will be used to provide annual outcomes, which will be used to determine any movement through the remuneration bands or a performance payment.

There are 15 potential combinations of PM ratings based on what was to be accomplished (a 5 point scale) and how it was accomplished (a 3 point scale).

The performance level definitions for **what** was to be accomplished are as follows:

Grading	Description
1	Significantly beyond requirements/best practice/exceptional performance
2	Above requirements/consistently exceeds standard
3	Meets requirements/consistently meets or at times exceeds standard
4	Below requirements/mostly meets standard/developing toward standard
5	Significantly below requirements/rarely meets standard

The performance level definitions for **how** it was accomplished are as follows:

Grading	Description
A	Role model/clearly exemplary behaviour
B	Consistently meets or at times exceeds standards
C	Requires development/Does not meet standard

Performance Management (PM) outcomes will provide access to incremental movement through the remuneration range. Incremental salary increases will only be paid to staff achieving performance management outcomes of 2A or better.

### Exclusions

Staff on formal performance improvement plans will not be entitled to receive any remuneration increases until their performance improves to a level where they are no longer on formal performance counselling.

#### **Market based salary movements**

Periodic 'across the board' remuneration increases may be effected from time to time in order to reflect changes in the remuneration market generally.

### **3.5. Performance Payments**

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#### **Performance payment structure**

Staff performing at an exceptional level may receive a performance payment as either an incremental salary increase or lump sum payment.

Performance payments will be paid according to Performance Management (PM) outcomes and dependent on the Ministry budget and the discretion of the Secretary of Health.

#### **Staff at or above 'Maximum' salary**

Staff with a salary at or in excess of 'Maximum' who achieve a PM outcome of 2A may receive a lump sum performance payment in accordance with the performance payment scale.

#### **Staff at less than 'Maximum' salary**

Staff with a salary at less than 'Maximum' who achieve a PM outcome of 2A or better may receive an incremental salary increase in accordance with the performance payment scale.

#### **Management performance payments**

Performance payments to managers and above will be determined by the Secretary of Health in accordance with contract stipulations and the ability of the Ministry to pay.

#### **Exclusions**

Staff with a performance rating outcome less than 2A (i.e.: 2B, 2C, 3A, 3B, 3C, 4A-C or 5A-C) will not be entitled to a performance payment.

#### **Taxation**

All performance payments, whether paid as salary increments or lump sum payments, are subject to normal PAYE tax deduction.

### **3.6. Promotions**

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Where a staff member is promoted to a higher grade, they shall receive the 'Minimum' rate for the grade.

### **3.7. Market & Specialist Salaries**

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Given the relatively tight local labour market it is recognised that there will be occasions when it is necessary to offer select staff a salary level that is outside the range. Discretion will be reserved to pay either a particular position or a particular individual a market salary.

The market salary will take into account local salary levels, importance of skill retention to the Ministry, and skill availability in the market place to ensure that the Ministry retains sufficiently skilled staff to meet the health needs of people of the Cook Islands.

Certain positions within the Ministry require a high degree of specialist skill. These positions include but are not limited to medical officers with experience in specialist areas such as: paediatrics, anaesthetics, surgery, obstetrics and gynaecology. Due to the special nature of such work, these employees are hired by the Ministry pursuant to Section 31 of the Public Service Act

2009. This allows specialists to be remunerated at a level more appropriate to their skill level without being subject to public service bandings.

In addition the Ministry may also secure the services of other skilled specialists for short term or project based employment. These specialists will be hired on a contract basis and will be bound by specific terms of their employment agreement, including the Ministry Personnel policy.

### **3.8. Payment of Salary**

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Employees are paid by direct credit each fortnight from a Monday to a Friday, unless otherwise advised in individual employment agreements or by the Cook Islands Ministry of Finance and Economic Management.

Where timesheets are required, these must be completed accurately, signed, and then presented to the Manager for authorisation at the end of the pay period. **Refer to PAYROLL & EXOLVO SELF-SERVICE (ESS) POLICY.**

#### **Deduction from Wages**

The Ministry is entitled to make deductions from an employees pay on a reasonable basis for any previous overpayment, monies owed, or for time lost through un-authorised absence.

### **3.9. Higher Duties Allowance**

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Employees are expected to take on responsibilities of others for varying lengths of time. At times, Ministries will be faced with scenarios whereby employees are confirmed in acting appointments at a higher level of responsibility until such time as the appointment is advertised and confirmed. In some cases this process can be delayed.

Higher duties allowance is paid for a job for which a higher salary is paid.

For an employee who carries out an Acting role of a higher position, *a higher duties rate of \$5,000 per annum should be effected from the date of Acting duties commencing.*



#### **4. Hours of Work**

## **4.1. Policy Statement**

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The purpose of this policy is to:

- Clearly set out the expectations of the Ministry with regard to attendance of employees
- Maintain an appropriate balance between the needs of the work and the personal and family commitments of the individual

## **4.2. Attendance**

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Employees are employed on either standard hours, shift work or on senior level hours of work.

Fulltime hours of work are 35 hours per week or as otherwise set out in the Individual Employment Agreement. Senior level employees which include: the Secretary of Health, Directors, Medical Doctors, Head of Departments and Managers, do not have a specified maximum number of fulltime hours but are expected to work such hours as required to complete their duties, without additional compensation.

For employees on standard hours, normal working hours will fall between 8am and 4 pm, Monday to Friday or as otherwise set to meet business needs.

The standard fulltime hours include provision for a morning and an afternoon tea break of 15 minutes each per day. Lunchtime does not count as part of the hours of work but a full time employee must take at least half an hour and no more than 1 hour for lunch each day. The timing of this break may be set to meet business needs.

### **Shift patterns**

If an employee is employed on a shift work basis, they will be expected to undertake such shifts as are assigned to them via the roster. This is to ensure that hospital services are provided 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. The normal shifts are:

- 7am – 3pm
- 3pm – 11pm
- 11pm – 7am

but these may be subject change to meet business needs.

Where a staff member's shift pattern is changing, they will be advised of the change with as much notice as possible to ensure that they are able to make suitable arrangements. A staff member must obtain the advance permission of their manager to change or swap shifts.

### **Attendance**

Employees are expected to be at work for the required hours and may not leave their place of work during these hours except on official business or with the express permission of their manager. A breach of this requirement is a matter of potential misconduct.

## **4.3. Additional Hours of Work**

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Senior level employees are required to work those hours necessary to complete their duties. A senior level employee's remuneration fully compensates for this requirement.

For all other employees, there may be a requirement, from time to time, to work for longer periods or outside usual working hours.

Employees who are remunerated on an hourly rate of pay will be paid at that hourly rate for those hours that are worked, as specified and authorised on the individual's timesheet.

Salaried employees may reasonably be expected to work up to 10 additional hours in any given fortnight without specific compensation. Where additional hours exceed 10 hours in a fortnight, the following options will apply:

### **Time Off In Lieu (TOIL)**

Employers may approve time off in lieu for employees who work extra hours for additional work outside the normal working hours of the employee.

TOIL is paid on an hourly basis for each additional hour worked and must be taken within the next two pay periods of it being earned. TOIL must not accumulate to more than five days at any one time.

In exceptional circumstances where it is not practical to take TOIL within the stipulated timeframe, the employer may consider extending the period by which it must be used up within that respective fiscal year.

Where there is proven of no opportunity to use this leave prior to cessation of employment, any approved TOIL not used up must be paid out upon termination of employment from that Agency.

Time off in lieu or annual leave is accrued if an employee is required to work on a Cook Islands Public Holiday which falls within the official duty travel or professional development period.

Time off should be taken soon after returning from travel.

### **Overtime Payment**

Payments will only be approved if all the following criteria are met:

1. One off, exceptional circumstances created the need for the employee to work additional hours
2. The employer has either requested or agreed those additional hours will be worked and compensated for; and
3. The employee has worked more than 40 hours that fortnight; and
4. There is no opportunity to take time off in lieu

Time worked which meets the criteria above will be paid at the ordinary time rate.

Unauthorised absences shall not be counted as actual hours worked for the purposes of calculating overtime.





## **5. Leave**

## **5.1. Policy statement**

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This policy upholds good employer principles, promotes healthy and safe working conditions and work-life balance for Public Sector employees. It also provides a transparent framework for the approval and administration of leave and work absences.

### **Scope**

This policy applies to employers and employees of Public Service Departments, Island Governments, Crown Agencies and Ministerial Support Offices.

### **Exclusions:**

- Annual leave for primary and secondary school employees
- Casual employees who are only entitled to minimum terms and conditions provided in the Employment Relations Act 2012

## **5.2. Principles**

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The Public Service Act 2009 identifies the following values for public servants to adhere to:

Honesty acting honestly, being truthful, and abiding by the laws of the Cook Islands

Impartiality providing impartial advice, acting without fear or favour, and making decisions on their merits

Service serving the people well through faithful service to the Government of the Cook Islands

Respect treating the people, the Government of the Cook Islands, and colleagues with courtesy and respect

Transparency taking actions and making decisions in an open way

Accountability being able to explain the reason for actions taken, and taking responsibility for those actions

Efficiency and effectiveness achieving good results for the Cook Islands in an economical way

The duty to act as a good employer requires employers develop and implement personnel policies which ensure the fair and proper treatment of employees during employment, including the impartial recruitment of employees, employee capability development opportunities and good and safe working conditions.

### **Legislation and Regulations**

The Public Service Act 2009, Employment Relations Act 2012 and other relevant legislation.

### **Definitions**

**Agency** means any public service department, instrument, or agent of the Government and includes a body corporate or organisation that is wholly owned or controlled by the Crown

**Casual** employees have irregular working hours, or work intermittently, or are employed for short term work only

**Civil Duty** for the purposes of this policy means civic work performed by eligible employees. For example: jury service or summoned to select committees

**Disasters** cause serious disruption to a community, business or household's functions through significant human, material, economic, environmental impact and losses

**Employee** means any person who is an employee of the Public Sector

**Employer** means the Head of a Public Sector Department or Crown Agency, Ministerial Support Office or other agency or their delegated authority

**Employment Agreement** means a written agreement or contract of employment

**Full time employee** is an employee who works a minimum of 35 hours per week and has a reasonable expectation to work these hours each week

**Normal Place of Work** means the place or site where an employee is usually stationed to work

**Part Time** employees are employed for less than 35 hours per week, with regular hours of work each week and have a reasonable expectation of working these hours each week

**Per annum** means fiscal year 01 July to 30 June

**Public Service Commissioner** means the Public Service Commissioner appointed under Article 73 of the Constitution and Section 5 of the Public Service Act

**Special Leave** is a non statutory category of leave which employers can approve within the scope and terms of this policy

**Statutory Leave** is legislated leave such as: annual leave; sick leave; maternity leave; and paternity leave identified in the Employment Relations Act

**Time-Off-In-Lieu (TOIL)** means approved time off from work equivalent to extra or additional hours worked.

### 5.3. Procedures

Employers are responsible for administering this policy. The employer is responsible for ensuring all policies are easily accessible to employees however, the onus lies with the employee to read, understand, familiarise and comply with this and any other relevant government policies. Any person who breaches this policy may have committed an act of misconduct and may be subject to disciplinary action and/or dismissal.

#### **Employers:**

- Must approve all leave taken and can approve leave taken retrospectively
- Must ensure leave is taken according to an employee's entitlement and accrued benefits
- Must decide on leave applications and notify employees as soon as practicable
- May put an employee on leave without pay, if he/ she is absent without notice or reason
- Must ensure employee absences do not negatively impact on the departments work
- Must maintain effective workforce planning and rostering
- Must maintain anticipated leave calendars to improve personnel leave management
- Must provide for employees to access their leave balances
- Must ensure supporting documentation for approved leave is retained for audit purposes
- Should actively encourage and allow employees to take accrued annual leave periodically
- Must be aware of their obligations under the Employment Relations Act

**Employees:**

- Are encouraged to take leave for their own well-being
- Are responsible for monitoring their leave balances
- Must ensure leave taken has been correctly recorded
- Are entitled to payment of accrued annual leave upon termination of their employment
- Can apply to take annual leave which has accrued after three months of continuous service during the first year of employment

**Applications and Approval**

Leave applications should identify the:

- Type of leave being requested
- Amount of leave (days)
- Dates inclusive of when leave commences and ends

**Annual leave** applications should be submitted for approval as soon as practical or at least two weeks before the planned annual leave, particularly for continuous periods of three or more working days. Shorter approval periods are permissible for less than three working days.

**Sick leave** is primarily reserved for the employee or a member of their immediate family, when unwell. Applications must be made as soon as practicable. Employees must make every effort to contact their employer, as failure to do so may result in the employee being placed on annual leave or leave without pay.

Employees must provide an appropriate medical certificate when applying for sick leave exceeding two consecutive days. Sick leave is only recorded for working days the employee is absent from work.

Employers may request a medical certificate and medical examination (at their cost) if they require a second opinion, to consider approving an employee's sick leave application. All sick leave benefits must be exhausted before compassionate leave can be applied for in circumstances where sick leave would otherwise be appropriate. In instances where a regular pattern on the use of sick leave has been established, the employer may require an employee to undergo an examination by a Registered Medical Practitioner of the employer's choice (at the employer's cost). Where the employee is found to be unfit to perform the current duties required, then alternate duties should be arranged for the employee if appropriate. If the employee is unable to undertake any form of duties, then they may be placed on sick leave or leave without pay as appropriate, until cleared to return to work.

**Maternity/Paternity leave** applications should be requested as soon as practical or at least one month before the expected date of delivery. Confirmation of the expected date of delivery from the maternity care provider is required.

In the event of a legal adoption, an application should be made as soon as possible with documentation verifying the employee's intention to adopt.

**All other leave** applications should be made as soon as practical.

**5.4. Annual Leave**

Annual Leave is paid time off from work primarily for rest and recreation. Full time employees are entitled to a maximum 20 days per annum accrued on a pro-rata basis - based on hours worked or during periods of paid leave. Employers and employees are strongly advised against accruing leave balances beyond 30 days.

Part time employees are entitled to leave accrued on a pro-rata basis - based on hours worked in comparison to hours of work in proportion to the 20 days per year accrual of full time employees and in accordance with the provisions of the Employment Relations Act. Employers and employees must agree on times for leave to be taken. If a leave application is denied, then both parties must agree on an appropriate time when the leave may be taken.

Employees should not commit to holiday plans until annual leave has been approved.

Approving advanced annual leave (entitlements not yet accrued) is discouraged to minimise financial risk and liability to the agency and government.

An employee's accrued annual leave will not be paid out unless the employee ceases employment with the agency.

### **5.5. Sick Leave**

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Sick leave is for the employee or a member of their immediate family and may cover instances where an employee or a member of their immediate family:

- Is ill or injured
- Is required to travel overseas for medical examination
- Visits a traditional medical practitioner for healing or
- Must be quarantined or isolated

Immediate family includes the employee's spouse or children.

Full time employees can accrue up to 10 working days paid sick leave per annum - based on hours worked and during periods of paid leave. They can use the annual entitlement in one instance. Part-time employees can accrue sick leave on a pro-rata basis in proportion to full time employees.

Employers and employees are strongly advised against accruing leave balances beyond 40 days.

Where an employee is transferred or employed by another department within the Public Service, accrued sick leave may be transferred to the new employing department.

Accrued sick leave is not paid out upon termination of employment.

Where an employee falls sick during a period of annual leave, the employer may approve the period of sickness to be taken as sick leave. This does not apply where sickness occurs while taking annual leave immediately before ceasing work. A medical certificate is required for absences of more than two consecutive days, for the ill, injured or quarantined person.

### **5.6. Maternity Leave**

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Female employees having a baby or legally adopting a new-born baby are entitled to a maximum of 12 weeks maternity leave - taken as six weeks on full pay or 12 weeks on half pay.

The option for 12 weeks on half pay must be agreed to by the employer.

An employee may apply to take maternity leave effective two weeks prior to the expected date of delivery.

An employee who experiences a miscarriage or still birth during the second trimester may apply for up to four weeks maternity leave on full pay.

An employee who experiences a miscarriage or still birth during the third trimester may apply for up to six weeks maternity leave on full pay.

If an employee has used all maternity leave and wishes to take extended leave the employee may apply for compassionate leave.

During the period of maternity leave the employee's position will be covered on a temporary basis so the incumbent can return to the position usually held by that employee prior to taking maternity leave or to an equivalent position, on conditions equivalent to those which would have applied to the employee prior to taking maternity leave.

### **5.7. Paternity Leave**

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Paternity leave provides fathers the opportunity to bond with the new born baby and support the mother of the new born or adopted baby.

Male employees may apply for up to five days paternity leave on full pay.

If an employee has used all his paternity leave and wishes to take extended leave he can apply for compassionate leave.

### **5.8. Public Holidays**

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The following statutory holidays are provided in the Public Holidays Amendment Act 2013.

- Christmas Day 25 December
- Boxing Day 26 December
- New Years Day 1 January
- The Day Following New Years Day 2 January
- Good Friday (end of March or early April) As published
- Easter Monday (end of March or early April) As published
- ANZAC Day 25 April
- The Sovereign's (Queens) Birthday (June) As published
- Ra o Te Ui Ariki (July) First Friday
- Constitution Day 4 August
- Cook Islands Gospel Day 26 October

If a public holiday (other than ANZAC day) falls on a weekend, then this holiday will be observed on the following Monday, and if applicable Tuesday.

Employees are entitled to payment on public holidays where the employee would otherwise be expected to work.

Employees approved to work on a public holiday should:

- Have an extra day added to their annual leave entitlement or
- Receive time off in lieu for the time worked on the public holiday
- Receive the equivalent time off in lieu or annual leave for the time worked on the public holiday while on overseas official travel duty or professional development leave

With the exception of departments providing essential public services, employers may close departments during the festive period between Christmas Day and New Years Day. Employees are encouraged to take annual leave during this period.

### **5.9. Special Leave**

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Special leave is not an entitlement. An employer may approve special leave for:

- Bereavement
- Constitution Celebrations

- Inter-island sports
- National representation
- Civil Duty
- Island Government employees stranded on Rarotonga

\*Capped special leave is up to a cumulative total of 10 days per annum.

To approve special leave the employer will consider:

- The type of leave applied for;
- The employees work programme and performance;
- Previous absences from work and length of service;
- Ability to cover the position with existing resources (employees and budget); and
- The overall impact of the absence on the delivery of the department's services

#### **5.10. Bereavement**

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An employer may approve bereavement leave to enable employees to fulfill obligations and/or pay respects to a deceased person of close association. A person of close association can include a: spouse/partner; child; brother/sister including in-law; parent including in-law; grandparent; and grandchild.

#### **5.11. Constitution Celebrations**

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An employer may approve special leave to allow employees to participate in the Constitutional Celebrations and the Constitutional Float Parade. The leave must be applied for as soon as practicable. Employees required to travel to participate in the Celebrations can be given special consideration for travelling times to/from their respective island.

#### **5.12. Inter-Islands Sports**

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An employer may approve special leave to enable an employee to participate in inter-island sports events such as the Manea and Purapura Games. Spectators do not qualify.

#### **5.13. National Representation**

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An employer can approve special leave to an employee selected to represent the Cook Islands in events such as sports, cultural, or religious events.

#### **5.14. Civil Duty**

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Employers may approve leave for employees to perform civic duties.

For example:

- Juror, witness or Justice of the Peace in court proceedings;
- Member on Court Tribunals;
- Appearances at Parliamentary Committee sittings, Commissions of Inquiry etc...

Employees should advise their employer as soon as possible, if they are summoned for civil duty. Section 9 of the Juries Act allows an employer on behalf of the employee to seek exemption from jury duty, where an employee is providing an essential service and cannot be absent from work. Employees must return to work when they are not required to perform their civil duty.

#### **5.15. Island Government Employees stranded on Rarotonga**

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Island Government employees stranded on Rarotonga as a result of transportation (shipping/airline) delays to the Pa Enua - outside their control, should contact their employer to apply for special leave or arrange to report to work on Rarotonga.

### **5.16. Official Duty Travel**

An employer can approve Official Duty travel leave for employees required to travel in their official capacity to meetings or conferences as a Cook Islands Government representative. One day leave is permitted for recuperation for travellers returning home after more than 24 hours of continuous travel, without a minimum layover of one day in transit. This leave is only applicable if the arrival date falls on a working day. Half day leave may be taken if arriving home on a very early morning or very late night flight. This leave is only applicable if arrival is on a working day, and must be taken on the morning of arrival, otherwise it is foregone. This leave does not apply if the travel was interrupted with a stopover in transit for personal reasons when returning home.

Time off in lieu or annual leave is accrued if an employee is required to work on a Cook Islands Public Holiday which falls within the official duty travel period. Time off should be taken soon after returning from travel.

### **5.17. Professional Development**

An employer can approve professional development leave for employees to attend job related workshops, conferences, or work attachments designed to develop employee capability.

Professional development can take place in-country or overseas and should be identified in the employee's professional development/training plan.

Employers of Pa Enua employees may approve up to six months leave at any one time, on a biannual basis - to enable employees to gain overseas work experience and improve the future livelihood of their families.

Employers will consider:

- The employee's position and performance
- Confirmation from overseas employer(s) or recruiting department of the terms and conditions of employment, including duration and return travel arrangements
- Impact on the services delivered by the Island Administration in the employee's absence
- Alternative arrangements to maintain normal daily operations on the island if work commitments require the employment of additional labour
- Contingency plan in the event that the employee does not return to work on the island

### **5.18. In-country Study Leave**

Employers may approve up to one day (per instance) in-country study and examination leave for work related studies undertaken by employees. Half a day for study and half a day to complete the exam. This leave only applies to final examinations.

### **5.19. Overseas Study Leave**

Employers can approve overseas study leave for work related studies linked to the employee's professional development plan. The study may be funded privately by the Cook Islands Government, a development partner, or any other sponsor. Employees should be bonded to return and work in the Cook Islands for a period equal to the time they were away on study.

Employers must provide employees a job for an equivalent or greater position to return to at the completion of their study.

Employers must consider the following before approving overseas study leave:

- The costs and benefits of the training to both the employee and the Agency



- The employee's work performance
- The employer's ability to pay
- Impact of the employee's absence on the Agency's service delivery

## **5.20. Compassionate Leave**

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Compassionate leave applications can be made if employees require more leave than accrued leave benefits provided in this policy. Alternatively, employees may apply for leave without pay.

An employer may approve leave on compassionate grounds of up to a maximum of 30 working days leave per year.

Employers may consider compassionate leave for:

- Additional sick leave beyond accrued benefits
- Additional maternity/paternity leave beyond accrued benefits
- Additional bereavement leave
- Disaster response

Disaster response allows employees to prepare for a disaster before the disaster, or respond after a disaster. Disaster response leave may also be applicable where an employee resides in an area struck by a disaster and has suffered personal loss.

## **5.21. Leave Without Pay**

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Employees do not have an automatic right to leave without pay. Employers may approve leave without pay prior to the leave being taken, or place employees on leave without pay.

Employers may place an employee on leave without pay for:

- failing to turn up to work without notice
- failure to apply for leave as soon as practicable
- departing work earlier than required

In approving leave without pay the employer will consider:

- The reason for the leave or absence
- Ability to cover the position and impact on the department
- Work performance
- Previous time taken off
- Length of service and
- Other employees on leave at the requested time

Placement back into the employee's usual position is expected upon return from a period of approved leave without pay, except where an employer suspends an employee on leave without pay pending the outcome of an investigation, which leads to disciplinary action or dismissal.

Annual leave or sick leave is not accrued while an employee is on leave without pay for a continuous period in excess of five days.

## **Other provisions**

All records relating to the administration of this policy must be kept for at least seven years and are only accessible by the employer and/or authorised staff. After the required seven year period, the department may destroy the documentation in adherence with government official information management policies.



## Leave Application Form

NAME (Block letters)		Employee No:
DIVISION:		

**\*\* Leave DURATION** for full-time staff to be specified in **DAYS** and for part-time staff in **HOURS**

LEAVE TYPE	LEAVE REASON	** DURATION DAYS/HOURS	START DATE (first day absent)	START AM/PM	END DATE (last day absent)	END AM/PM
ANNUAL	N/A					
BEREAVEMENT	N/A					
SICK						
MATERNITY						
PATERNITY	N/A					
OTHER						

### OTHER CODE OTHER DESCRIPTION

**JURY** Jury Service  
**STUDY** Study  
**TOIL** Time Off In Lieu  
**SPECIAL** With or Without Pay - specify the reason  
 (e.g. Representation, compassionate)  
**OTHER** With or Without Pay - specify the reason

#### Notes:

If you are applying to take **Annual Leave** or **Sick Leave in advance**, by signing this form you agree that there will be a recovery from your final pay should you cease employment with the Ministry before the leave becomes due.

person "acting" whilst  
absent on leave:

address and contact phone  
number whilst on leave:

Employee's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Supported/Not Supported

Manager's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Name (block letters): \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Approved/Declined

Director's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Name (block letters): \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

For Payroll Use Only	
Employee No.	
Period Action	
Prepared By	
Checked By	



## **6. Performance Management**

## 6.1 Policy Statement

The Performance Management policy is designed to provide effective work focus, development opportunities and feedback, and recognition and reward to staff to help them enhance their performance levels and consequently those of the Ministry.

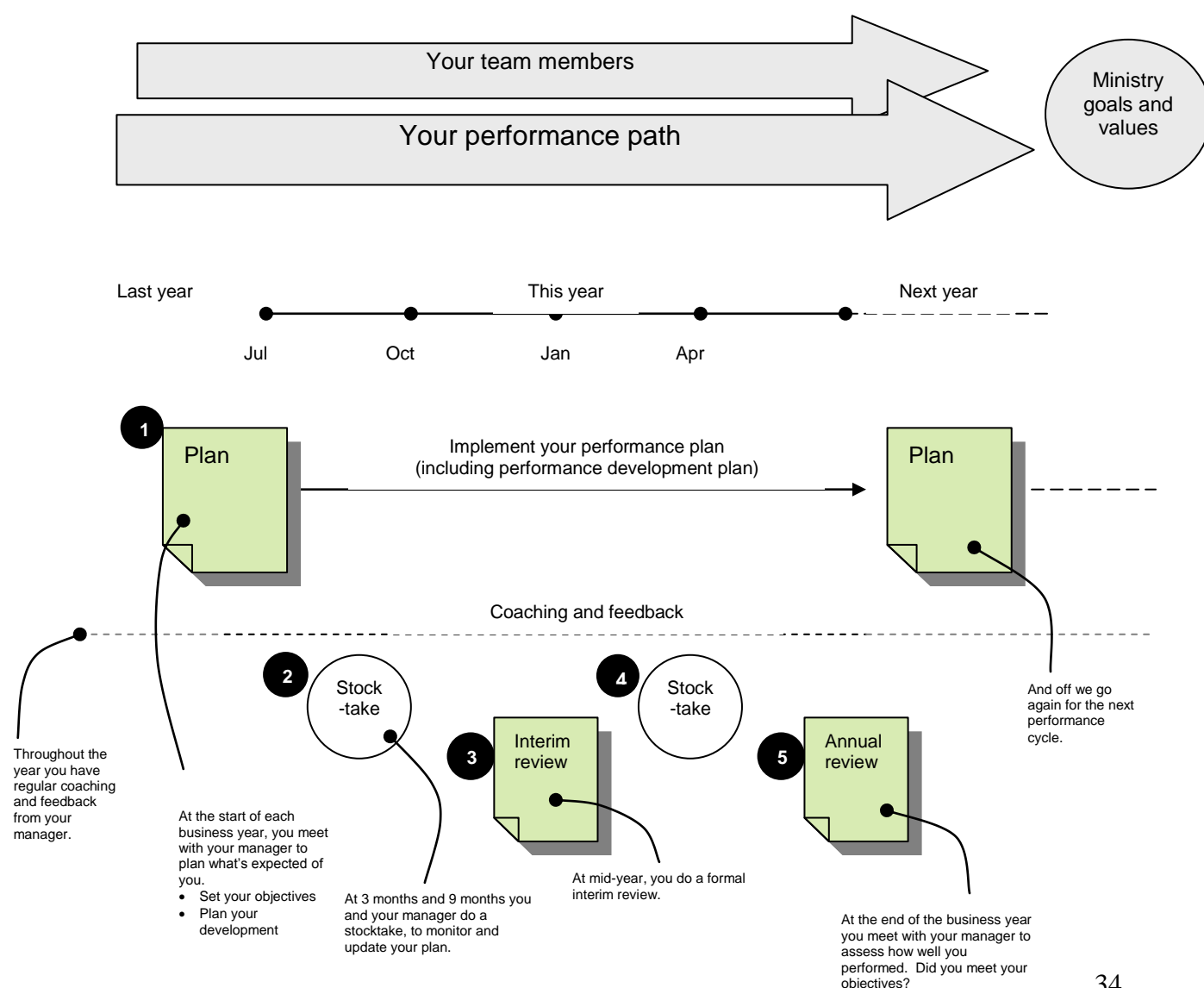
## 6.2 Principles

The Ministry of Health is committed to operating a fair, consistent and equitable performance management system guided by the following principles:

- Performance standards will be easily understood and non-discriminatory
- Performance standards will not be arbitrarily changed during their effective term
- Performance standards will be adjusted for a period of authorised absence
- All relevant issues will be taken into account when performance standards are established

## 6.3 Performance Management Cycle Overview

The performance management cycle is a one that ensures that the contribution of each individual staff member supports the Ministry's overall goals and values. The Ministry's performance management cycle is from 1 July to 30 June.



## Step 1 – Performance Plan

A performance plan is an understanding that is reached between the manager and staff member about performance for a defined period. It sets out the key objectives of the role and defines the competencies for performing effectively in the role. A performance plan provides the basis for discussions between the manager and staff member about performance during the year.

A performance agreement should be completed for every member of ongoing staff within the first two months of beginning a new position and annually thereafter.

A performance agreement contains **Objectives**, **Competencies**, and a **Personal Development Plan**.

### Objectives

Objectives identify what the staff member must do to accomplish or contribute to the Ministry's objectives each year as provided for in the health strategy and annual business plan. They also identify the criteria for measuring a staff member's performance. All job descriptions include the position's objectives which will feed into the performance plans of new employees.

Objectives need to be based on the business plans of the Ministry, Directorate or Section. They also need, where appropriate, to take customer expectations into account.

The focus of the objectives in a performance plan should be on significant outcomes rather than detail. No more than 5 objectives is good practice.

Objectives should be **S.M.A.R.T.**

Specific	The objective is a clear statement of what is to be achieved. An objective should be concrete and use action-oriented words.
Measurable	This part may be all or some of the following indicators: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Quality - How well</li><li>• Quantity - How many / much</li><li>• Cost - How much</li><li>• Timeliness – When completed / target turn around – see below.</li></ul> A reliable system of measurement should be in place and agreed by staff member and manager.
Achievable	An objective should be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Achievable with a reasonable amount of effort and application</li><li>• Feasible</li><li>• Appropriately defined in scope.</li></ul>
Relevant	A relevant objective is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Something the person can make an impact on</li><li>• Important to the organisation</li><li>• Results focussed – relating to outputs or outcomes.</li></ul>
Time-bound	An objective needs a target date / timescale <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A plan will have interim steps and a way to monitor progress</li></ul>

Plans should also include materials and resources needed and critical assumptions relevant to successful achievement of the objective when appropriate.

### **Competencies**

Think of the word competency as composite term for:

- Knowledge or 'know-how'
- Skills or 'can-do'
- Attitude or 'will-do'.

So, a competency is a set of knowledge, skills and attitudes that are required for effective performance in a role. While objectives focus on the 'what', competencies focus on 'how'.

Competencies help the staff member and their manager define what behaviours will contribute to the staff member achieving their objectives. They also may help distinguish between awarding performance ratings.

The core competencies for all Ministry staff are:

- Concern for Quality
- Customer Focus
- Leadership
- Understanding the business
- Living the Ministry of Health (MOH) Values of: Respect, People focused, Equity, Quality, Integrity, and Accountability

There could well be Management, Specialist and Technical Competencies that apply to the position. These should be identified in the job descriptions.

### **Setting competencies in performance plans**

A manager's key task is to identify the competencies that are critical for effective performance in a particular role/position. This is not at all dissimilar to identifying key selection criteria when you are recruiting for a position.

1. Refer to the job description for this position for what has been written under Key Objectives and selection criteria. Include core competencies
2. Identify which competencies are critical for this position.
3. Identify any other technical competencies that are critical for effective performance in this position.
4. Review the list and work out the most critical 3 to 5 competencies – no more!

This set is the manager's basis for moving into the Personal Development Plan (PDP) process, where the manager considers which competencies are most critical for the staff member to develop over the next 12-month time frame.

### **Personal Development Plan (PDP)**

The PDP is a key part of the performance management process.

The PDP process is designed to bring staff members together with their manager to identify the competencies that are most critical for them to develop over a 12-month time frame in order for the staff member to achieve the agreed objectives for the coming year.

The process is as follows:

1. Review the objectives set for the coming year and the competencies required to achieve those objectives.
2. Identify the priorities for development. Take into account the:
  - individual's current level of ability
  - importance of the competency for the current role and to meet the business priorities for the next 12 months
  - importance of the competency for the individual's next potential career move.
3. Identify the development actions against the competencies.
4. The staff member and manager meet to discuss and agree development needs and actions.
5. The staff member and the manager implement agreed actions.

Where the development need is perceived as best met through a formal training and development programme, the staff member should work with their manager and the human resources team to identify a suitable programme.

### **Recording the Personal Development Plan**

The PDP actions are recorded in the performance plan to show both parties agreement to the plan and so it is readily accessible.

### **Continuous step – coaching and feedback**

Performance management is on-going and includes a range of management approaches:

- Informal conversations,
- Formal individual meetings and
- Group or team meetings.

One management practice that should form part of every performance management process is regular manager/staff member catch-up meetings to provide ongoing coaching and feedback.

Coaching is one of the major ways a manager will support a staff member's performance.

Coaching is a staff member:

- having regular and focused discussions with their manager about their performance and development - checking progress against longer term goals
- receiving on-going support from their manager
- receiving feedback
- identifying any gaps and/or barriers to achieving goals and addressing these
- recognising their contribution to helping the Ministry of Health achieve its results

The Coaching preparation worksheet will help staff plan to prepare for their coaching sessions.

Both staff member and manager should refer to the annual performance plan for their catch-up meetings to review progress in meeting objectives and demonstrating the required competencies. This keeps the performance plan alive and relevant during the performance year. The staff member and manager should record notes from their meetings on the coaching tracker, holding these with the performance plan as review notes. This will mean that the end of year performance review can be an effective summary of the whole year's achievements rather than those that are freshest in the memory at the end of the year. It

should also help both manager and staff member to rely on evidence for the end of year review rather than more subjective judgements.

For staff to get the most out of their coaching sessions, they need to invest time in:

- Monitoring and recording their progress towards their achievement or their objectives
- Preparing for their performance discussions and coaching session by identifying what is going well, what is not and what solutions they have thought of
- Actively seeking feedback and direction
- Being open and honest with their manager and raising any concerns
- Sharing ideas

### **Giving Feedback**

Good feedback is:

- Timely and constructive
- Specific
- Honest
- Relevant to the objectives and competencies
- Evidence-based and fair
- Supports an employee in meeting their objectives
- Makes expectations for future performance clear
- Provides coaching and development opportunities
- Gets an employee to accept personal responsibility for their performance.

## **Step 2 - Stocktake**

The catch-up / coaching sessions in October and April will be a “stocktake”. This means the manager and staff member will informally review the staff member’s overall progress against objectives. If required, the Performance Plan objectives and/or personal development plan can be updated.

Employees should be encouraged to complete the stocktake worksheet and keep it with their coaching records.

### **Preparing for a stocktake/review**

These questions can help staff members prepare for their stocktake/review. As the staff member reads each question, he/she should think about their performance, progress and plans for future growth. By reviewing these questions also, managers can be prepared for potential topics of discussion.

*How am I going?*

- What were my specific achievements during this period? (collect supporting data)
- Which objectives am I falling short of meeting?
- Which objectives have I met, am I on target for?

*How is it for me?*

- What is working well?
- Is this an environment that encourages me to do my best?
- What support do I need from my manager / other team members?
- Am I making the best use of my abilities? How could I become more efficient?

*What could be different?*

- Do I need more experience or training in any aspect of my current job? How could I set it up?



- What objectives require modification/deletion for the next review/stocktake? Are any additional objectives needed?
- What frustrates me and what do I see as getting in the way of my performance?

### Step 3 - Interim Review

The interim review is a formal assessment of the staff member's progress against performance objectives half way through the year. It enables the manager and staff member to formally agree any changes that are needed in the performance objectives. If any gaps are identified, the staff member will have the chance to remedy these before their final review in June.

Following the interim review the staff member's performance plan, including their personal development plan can be updated.

*Note: the only staff eligible for a salary review at this point are those who were rated 'under achieved' in the previous performance year and are now 'achieving'. Any salary change commences from 1 January.*

### Step 4 – Second Stocktake

The process in step 2 is followed once more. Staff should be reminded to use the preparation questions to ensure they are getting the most out of their stocktake session and to complete their stocktake worksheet at the end.

### Step 5 - Annual review

The end of year performance review sums up performance and development feedback over the year. Through the performance review process a manager and staff member:

- Identify and document performance by comparing actual performance with expectations (covering outputs/key result areas, key competencies, and the Ministry's values)
- Complete the process for the past review period and set the scene for the next one
- Formally document the results of the review for future reference and confirm the overall evaluation of performance
- Assess development needs for the next performance period and prepare a personal development plan.

### Principles

When planning for the performance review discussion, the manager should consider the following principles:

- No surprises - the annual performance review is a summary of the performance feedback a staff member has received during the year. It is not the time to raise concerns for the first time. Having already had the stocktakes and interim review should see this achieved.
- Careful preparation - bring a draft review to the meeting, supported with specific performance examples from the year. Staff should also be encouraged to complete the 'preparing for your annual review' prior to the performance review meeting.
- Evidence gathering - both managers and staff members need to gather relevant data for the performance review. This could take the form of:
  - Records of signed off and completed projects
  - Specific examples of work performance giving context, action and outcome

- Reports from other managers (e.g. other senior staff who provide instruction / direction through the course of their work)
- Names of referees who can corroborate performance information
- Coaching and stocktake worksheets, providing documented performance feedback that has been given during the year.
- Suitable environment – ensure that there is a private meeting room, with no interruptions. Sitting behind a desk does not assist free and frank discussion
- Proper scheduling - schedule the meeting well in advance so that the staff member has time to prepare. Allow sufficient time for the meeting - typically one or two hours.
- Two-way participation - both staff member and manager need to contribute to the discussion. A manager can encourage a staff member to contribute by inviting them to talk about their achievements, asking open-ended questions (that can't be answered "yes" or "no"). It is important that the staff member and manager work towards a shared understanding. A manager can do this by reflecting back to check the staff member understands the real issue.
- Linking individual performance to team's achievements - The manager should show the person how their work contributes to larger goals and achievements.
- End on a positive note - the staff member needs to go away feeling good about what they are capable of achieving.

For the Ministry, performance reviews allow the measurement of its human resource and assist with succession planning.

## 6.4 Reporting lines

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### **Where an employee change teams during the year**

If an employee has had a change of manager three months or more into the performance year, then their assessment should include that 3-month period as well as the following 9-month period.

If it happens less than three months into the performance year, just an assessment of performance on the remaining period (e.g., ten months) should occur.

Where an employee changes role after six months or more into the performance year, the manager should complete a full review of their performance before they take up their new role.

### **Dual or multiple reporting lines**

Where the employee is reporting to two or more managers throughout the year, at the start of the performance year the employee will need to:

- a. Identify who their primary manager is
- b. Agree with their primary manager how their performance will be assessed.

## 6.5 Preparing for Performance Meetings – Information for staff

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### Introduction

While managers have overall responsibility for the performance management process, staff are responsible for:

- Drafting performance objectives/key result areas for the year.
- Identifying their development needs.
- Reporting their performance through a self-assessment.
- Participating in the performance discussion with their manager

### Preparing for your Performance Plan discussion with your manager

- Review the relevant organisational planning documents including Health Strategy and unit work plan.
- Establish up to 8 suggested objectives for the year which fall inside your area of work, align with the Ministry's Strategy and your area's work plan. Depending on your job, some of these may be "Business As Usual" objectives while others may be new projects.
- Remember that your objectives should be SMART  
**Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Timebound**
- Think about the competencies you will need to demonstrate and/or develop to achieve your proposed objectives.
- Be prepared for these objectives to change after discussion with your manager.

### Preparing your Performance Development Plan

- Remember that training funding in the Ministry is available to help staff to enhance their knowledge and skills especially where these will contribute to the Ministry's goals and outputs.
- Think about:
  - Your manager's feedback about your performance last year
  - Barriers that prevented you achieving your objectives last year
  - Likely skills, knowledge and experience gaps which could prevent you from achieving your agreed objectives for the year to come
  - Your career aspirations, within or outside the Ministry
  - Skills gaps within your team.
- Use the Request for Development form to take note of your options for your performance planning meeting. Remember to include:
  - The costs of the training
  - Whether additional staffing will be needed to cover any absence as a result of your study.
- Discuss your training plan with your manager. Be clear about your development needs and whether they relate to your current role or to your career aspirations.
- Bear in mind that your manager
  - has to consider the training needs of all their staff, so cannot always approve all training requests
  - your manager may have a different perspective on your training needs.

### Preparing for Coaching and feedback

- Use the Coaching preparation worksheet to prepare for their coaching sessions.
- Refer to your coaching tracker to see if things are on track from the last coaching session.

**For you to get the most out of your coaching sessions, you need to invest time in:**

- Monitoring and recording your progress towards your achievement or objectives

- Preparing for your performance discussions and coaching session by identifying what is going well, what is not and what solutions they have thought of
- Actively seeking feedback and direction
- Being open and honest with your manager and raising any concerns
- Sharing ideas

### **Preparing for Stocktakes**

- Refer to your performance plan and complete the stocktake worksheet, using the questions below to help you. As you answer each question, think about your performance, progress and plans for future growth.

#### *How am I going?*

- What were my specific achievements during this period? (collect supporting data)
- Which objectives am I falling short of meeting?
- Which objectives have I met, am I on target for?

#### *How is it for me?*

- What is working well?
- Is this an environment that encourages me to do my best?
- What support do I need from my manager / other team members?
- Am I making the best use of my abilities? How could I become more efficient?

#### *What could be different?*

- Do I need more experience or training in any aspect of my current job? How could I set it up?
- What objectives require modification/deletion for the next review/stocktake? Are any additional objectives needed?
- What frustrates me and what do I see as getting in the way of my performance?

### **Preparing for your Interim review**

- Use the tools for your coaching and stocktake sessions
- You may want to consider raising with your manager any specific development you feel you require. Complete a development request form in preparation

### **Preparing for your Performance Review**

- Review your Performance Plan for the year.
- Think about your achievements over the review period and consider how these align with your Performance Plan. Review any coaching, stocktake and interim review notes that have been made through the year – these may help you to remember your achievements in the earlier part of the performance year.
- Decide if you wish another manager to contribute feedback on your performance. If so, you will need to tell your manager that you wish this person to provide information for your performance review.
- Make brief notes on your achievements, showing how they align with the objectives identified in your Performance Plan and demonstrate your competency development over the year.
- Highlight any additional achievements outside your agreed objectives.
- Consider any barriers that prevented you achieving your objectives – this will be particularly useful when preparing your next Personal Development Plan.

## Performance Plan and Review

Staff member \_\_\_\_\_ Position \_\_\_\_\_ Unit/Directorate \_\_\_\_\_ To \_\_\_\_\_  
Performance Period

### Part one: Key Objectives (KO)

(KO)	Definition	Key Measures	Weighting	Action / Support needed	Target Date
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					

### Part two: Key Capabilities (KC)

KC	Definition and Target Level	Action/Support needed
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		

## Performance Plan and Review

### Part three: Training and Development Plan

Area to Development	Activity to be taken	Support needed	Timeframe

### Performance Agreement Sign-Off

	Sign-off (Signed by and date)
Signed by Staff Member	
Signed by Manager	
Signed by Director	

## Performance Plan and Review

### Part Four: Annual Performance Review

#### A: Achievement of Objectives

(KO)	Performance against measure	Comments	Rating
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
Overall Comments and rating on achievement of objectives			

#### B. Performance of Key Capabilities

(KC)	Performance against target level	Comments	Rating
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			

## Performance Plan and Review

Overall Comments and rating on performance of capabilities		
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### C. Comment on overall performance

Staff Member Comment:	
Manager Comment:	
Overall Rating (e.g., 3B)	

### D. Personal Training and Development Plan

Staff member and Reviewer comments:
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### Performance Review sign off

	Sign-off (Signed by and date)
Signed by Staff Member	
Signed by Manager	
Signed by Director	



*Used by a staff member to plan for coaching session and to record the outcome*

Staff member \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

	My notes	Actions agreed/follow up
<b>Successes</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- things that have gone well this month</li><li>- how I have demonstrated the Ministry values</li></ul>		
<b>Challenges</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- blocks to my effectiveness</li><li>- potential risks</li><li>- areas needing actions</li><li>- things I want to achieve</li></ul>		
<b>Options for meeting challenges</b>		
<b>Areas to cover in coaching</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- successes to highlight</li><li>- questions</li><li>- options for improvement</li></ul>		

## Coaching Tracker

Completed by a manager as a record and evidence of coaching throughout the year

\_\_\_\_\_  
Staff member

\_\_\_\_\_  
Manager

Date of session	Topics	Agreed actions	Initials <i>Manager and staff member initial at each session</i>	Outcome <i>Review outcome of previous session</i>
July	Performance plan			
August				
September				
October	Stocktake			
November				
December				
January	Interim review			
February				
March				
April	Stocktake			
May				
June	Annual review			

Sign this at the end of the performance year

\_\_\_\_\_  
Staff member

\_\_\_\_\_  
Manager

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

*Used by a staff member and manager to review overall performance against objectives in October and April Stocktakes, and at formal review of performance meeting after six months*

The Manager and staff member complete this form together

\_\_\_\_\_  
Staff Member

\_\_\_\_\_  
Role/Unit

Stocktake / Interim Review (circle applicable)

Objectives	Progress: how you're going	Areas to focus on, or change to objective	Actions needed	Target date
KO 1				
KO2				
KO3				
KO4				
KO5				
C1				
C2				
C3				
C4				
C5				

Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
Staff member

\_\_\_\_\_  
Manager

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## Request for Training / Development

*Used by a staff member when preparing for training and development and review of performance training and development plan*

<b>Type of training / development requested</b>	
<i>Include details of training provider and the linkages to your work</i>	
<b>Skills and /or Competencies to be developed</b>	<b>Desired outcomes</b>
<b>Costs</b>	
<b>Details of previous training and development</b>	

## 6.6 Managing Performance Improvement

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The purpose of this policy is to give structure for motivating a staff member to improve performance where there are performance issues. The process for managing a staff member's performance must be based on a performance assessment that is fair, well documented and well communicated. The employee must have been:

- given a definite statement from the manager, of the performance expectations
- provided with the resources and training to do their job.

Before any formal disciplinary action is taken an employee must have been:

- given a definite statement of where performance is failing to meet expectations
- told where performance improvement is required
- given a reasonable opportunity to improve.

Where poor performance continues and more serious disciplinary measures are contemplated the principles of the disciplinary process shall apply.

### Principles

All management and staff need to be familiar with the procedures of managing poor performance and that:

- the Ministry's values of being highly professional, internally consistent, and totally coherent are the foundations by which poor performance will be managed,
- every instance of alleged poor performance will be judged on its merits,
- the employee must be advised of the specific matter(s) causing concern and be given an opportunity to provide any reason or explanation,
- the objective of dealing with any issue of non performance is the long term return of the staff member to full productivity.

### Poor Performance Defined

Poor performance involves failure on the part of the staff member, over a reasonable period of time, to achieve or maintain acceptable standards of work performance.

### The Manager's Role

When dealing with an employee who is allegedly exhibiting unacceptable behaviour, or who allegedly is not meeting the agreed performance standards of the Ministry, it is the role of the manager to:

- ensure that the procedure conducted is fair,
- ensure that any issue or problem is clearly defined and any potential instance of misconduct/poor performance is appropriately investigated in a timely way.
- make the employee aware of the alleged poor performance and inform them of what they need to do to correct it.

The manager has to

- ensure performance feedback is regularly given to the employee. *Performance feedback is not a one-off event at time of performance review but should occur frequently throughout the year.*
- ensure that the procedure for dealing with poor performance is fair; any issue or problem is clearly defined and any potential instance of poor performance is appropriately investigated in a timely way

- ensure the employee is aware of the alleged poor performance and inform them of what they need to do to correct it.

### **Checklist**

- when first aware of issue, act (early intervention is easier)
- gather objective evidence
- meet and discuss
- seek explanation
- if appropriate, offer professional support e.g. workplace support, mentoring
- provide opportunity to consider evidence
- develop performance improvement plan and time frame
- instigate plan
- monitor regularly

## **6.7 Performance Improvement Process**

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Where there is a perceived issue of poor performance, the manager will provide the employee with any evidence of poor performance, seek an explanation from the individual and establish a performance improvement plan in an effort to get the staff member back to an acceptable level of performance.

An opportunity to improve must be reasonable and in some instances additional training may need to be given to the employee to help overcome any inadequacies in work performance.

### **First steps**

The following steps need to be undertaken to ensure that poor performance is addressed.

1. When a manager first becomes aware of an issue of poor performance, evidence must be gathered to present to the staff member.
2. The manager should arrange to meet and discuss the performance related issues with the staff member.
3. The manager should present the employee with the concerns they have about the alleged poor performance and seek an explanation from the employee. Where it is possible that personal issues have been affecting the individual's ability to do their work, it may also be appropriate for the manager to offer assistance from Workplace Support.

After providing the staff member with an opportunity to consider the manager's evidence of poor performance and the issues from the preliminary meeting, the manager and the staff member may then need to develop a performance improvement plan.

### **Performance meeting and developing a performance improvement plan**

The desired outcome from this meeting is the establishment of a performance improvement plan that clearly states:

- the performance objectives the employee is expected to meet
- the assistance and resources the manager will provide to assist the employee in improving performance (e.g., counselling, coaching, feedback, equipment and staff)
- the monitoring process - regular review of the employee's performance against the agreed objectives

- the time frame in which gives the employee a reasonable time to improve
- that failure to improve will result in the disciplinary process being commenced
- at the expiry of the agreed time frame, the manager will review the staff member's performance against the agreed objectives, and meet with the staff member to discuss progress

### **Once the plan is in place**

If there has been a significant improvement in performance, the manager should consider whether there has been enough improvement to cease the performance monitoring process.

Where there has been some improvement, but the staff member still needs to improve their performance levels to return to an acceptable standard, the manager should continue with the performance improvement plan and monitoring process. The manager should make the individual aware that if at any stage the manager considers there has been insufficient progress made, the employee may be issued with a warning following a disciplinary process.

### **No improvement?**

If there has been no improvement in the staff member's performance and/or the manager considers that performance is unlikely to improve without commencing the disciplinary process, the manager should consider whether:

- the performance plan was fair and understood by the staff member
- the staff member had an opportunity to refute or explain the lack of achievement
- the staff member's explanation was listened to and considered
- the staff member was provided with an adequate timeframe in which to improve
- the manager has provided appropriate support and assistance.

If the staff member's performance is still at an unacceptable level, the manager should commence the disciplinary process.

### **Disciplinary process**

If the staff member's performance remains at an unacceptable level despite assistance to improve, the manager should commence the disciplinary process.

It is at this stage that the manager should hold a further meeting with the staff member to discuss the continued poor performance. The manager should reiterate the discussions held at the time the performance improvement plan was established, and outline the agreed corrective action required of the staff member and how they have not met their obligations with regard to this. The staff member should have the opportunity to have support and/or representation at this meeting to explain their position.

If the decision is made to issue a first warning, this will be formally and clearly issued by the manager verbally and confirmed in writing.

The warning will record the outcome of the meetings held, the explanations given for the continued poor performance and detail the corrective action required by the staff member to improve. It should also outline the consequence of continued or further instances of poor performance resulting in misconduct and the requirement to follow the principles and procedures for managing misconduct.

The manager needs to determine the most appropriate penalty (i.e. level of warning) after considering all the facts and the discussions held with the staff member about their continued poor performance.

## Performance Improvement Plan

Staff member \_\_\_\_\_

Manager \_\_\_\_\_

Unit/Directorate \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Objective:

The purpose of this Performance Improvement Plan is to provide you with an opportunity to raise your performance to the level required of you by specifying major areas of unsatisfactory performance and a programme to meet these expectations.

### Background:

*Outline issue and actions to date.*

*For example: I have spoken to you on a number of occasions in regard to your communication style when interacting with others, in that it does not meet the Ministry's communication competency standards. I have advised you of several tools to assist you with this such as email, copying in myself and other staff members, and that you can communicate your messages through me as your Manager.*

### Performance gaps:

As discussed, your current performance does not meet the Ministry's standards in the following specific areas:

*List the specific areas where performance falls short of the expected standard - define the expected standard*

For example

#### 1. Communication/interaction with others

*You have specific responsibilities which are outlined in the terms and conditions of your employment agreement and in the Ministry's Code of Conduct. You are expected to treat your colleagues, clients and any people with whom you have official dealings with dignity and respect. You are expected to:*

- help keep the workplace free from confrontational, abusive or harassing behaviour, including sexual and/or racial harassment;*
- avoid behaviour that might endanger or cause distress to other employees or otherwise disrupt the workplace*

### Action plan to achieving the required performance standard:

	Area for improvement (from list above)	Performance standard required	Agreed actions	Target date	Support from Manager	Outcome (complete at review of plan)
1	<i>For example</i> Communication / Interaction with others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Listens and asks questions to test understanding</li><li>– Facilitates an appropriate communication process</li><li>– Treat colleagues with dignity and respect</li><li>– Avoid behaviour that might endanger or cause distress to other employees or otherwise disrupt the workplace</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Go through your Team Manager to communicate</li><li>– Copy colleagues into emails</li><li>– Provide an agenda for meetings scheduled</li></ul>	Within 4 weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– I will provide any support and assistance I can.</li><li>– I will provide timely feedback</li></ul>	
2		–	–		–	



## Performance Improvement Plan

This plan will commence on **<date>** and we will regularly discuss your progress throughout the period in which this plan operates.

Review meetings will be held weekly on **<day>**. These meetings will normally only involve you and your Manager and will focus on progress in the implementation of the plan. However should you wish to bring a support person to any meeting you are more than welcome.

A formal review meeting will be in **X** weeks/months the week of **<date>**.

If your performance is still unsatisfactory at this point it may be necessary to move into a formal disciplinary process, which could result in disciplinary action.

---

### Acknowledgment

I acknowledge the terms of this performance improvement plan and I am clear with regards to the expectations set for me and the support available as set out in the action plan matrix above.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signed by (staff member)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

### Manager's confirmation of agreed plan

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signed by (manager)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



## **7. Career Development and Training**

## 7.1 Policy Statement

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The Ministry recognises that its staff are key resources within the organisation and is committed to providing all employees the training opportunities necessary to ensure that they gain the necessary skills, knowledge and experience to do their jobs to the best of their ability as well as to improve their opportunities for career advancement.

Every staff member will be including in the annual performance management cycle to determine personal development over the next period with a view to career planning (*refer to the Performance Management section for more details*)

## 7.2 Principles

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Management has a major responsibility for the training and development of their staff.

Training and Development are separate in that training is job specific and is designed to maximise the person's skills to do the immediate job to the best of their ability, so it is 'job-centred'.

Development is broader and consists of activities designed to develop the person's longer term potential in the organisation, including development for positions beyond the current job. It is the planned personal growth of an individual so that they can develop and better contribute to the organisation.

The guiding principles that support training and development include:

- Training is the joint responsibility of the manager and staff member;
- Training and development will support the strategic direction of the Ministry and the business plan of the Directorate;
- Managers will monitor and maintain budget provisions for staff training and development;
- Each Training and Development plan will be linked to the Performance Management process;
- Training and Development is an on-going process;
- Clearly defined outcomes will be identified in the development of the Training and Development plan;
- Training and Development will involve a broad range of approaches such as courses, coaching, mentoring, reading, secondment;
- Training which has been undertaken will be evaluated for its application into the workplace.

## 7.3 Training and Development Options

---

The Ministry is committed to continuous learning and recognises that training and development that is relevant to the work of the Ministry is an important aspect of capability development.

The Ministry supports training and development options for employees that will:

- Develop and improve the performance of the employee and their contribution to the Ministry's work;
- Enhance the employee's career prospects in the Ministry;
- Help to retain high quality staff
- Focus on application of knowledge and skills back in the workplace

The training needs of employees can be captured through a number of processes such as, development plans - completed at time of Performance Review (annually); Secondment and job rotation, Conferences and Seminars, University Study, Fellowships and Mentoring. Managers can also address training needs by ensuring on-the job provisions are in place.

## **7.4 Assistance Available**

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Training and Development assistance is available to ongoing full-time or part-time employees. The assistance may include:

- Paid or unpaid leave to attend seminars, training courses, lectures, exams etc
- Funding a training course or reimbursement of tuition and exam fees on the successful completion of the study

The level of assistance provided to employees will be considered on a case by case basis; however, the following guidelines have been developed to ensure there is consistency in the assistance provided. Approval for any study assistance will be at the discretion of the Secretary of Health.

### **Within the Cook Islands**

Where an employee wishes to undertake training or study that is relevant to their position, to increase their skills, or enhance their career, assistance with course fees will be considered on the basis set out below provided the employee completes the training or study to a satisfactory level. A satisfactory level will be agreed between the manager and the employee prior to the study or training programme commencing and will be based on the grading structure, e.g. where a study programme uses an 'A' – 'E' scale, a 'C+' or better would be considered satisfactory.

- *For employees earning less than \$15,000 per annum for a full-time position, up to 100% of course fees will be considered*
- *For employees earning \$15,000 or more per annum for a full time position, up to 50% of course fees will be considered*

### **Overseas**

Employees who attend overseas training to gain a recognised qualification endorsed by the Ministry may be released to attend the training for its duration. Where the Ministry is funding part or all of that overseas training, the employee will be bonded by contract to work for the Ministry of Health on the successful completion of the training for the period of time that he/she is away. Should the employee not return to the Ministry as required, he/she will be required to reimburse the Ministry the funding spent on his/her training. Exceptions to this can only be approved by the Secretary of Health.

The Ministry will not support an employee's participation or attendance at any training course, conference, seminar or attachment not fully funded by the host/sponsoring organisation. Employees who wish to attend these courses will take annual or unpaid leave. The Ministry will not provide for per-diem or incidental costs. Exceptions to this can only be approved by the Secretary of Health.

### **Long term study (over 6 months)**

Ministry of Health employees who receive a sponsored scholarship to complete a Post Graduate qualification applicable to their role in the Ministry for duration of six months or more:

1. Will be eligible for return economy airfares to place of study paid for by the sponsor;

2. Will be eligible for a living allowance for duration of study paid for by the sponsor;
3. Will receive a “study allowance” of \$10,000 for the duration of the employee’s study. The allowance will be paid in fortnightly instalments. The study allowance is the Ministry’s contribution to the student’s sponsorship award.
4. The study allowance will cease after 5 working days following the end of semester.  
Example: For students receiving a “study allowance” from the Ministry, once the second semester is completed in each study year until the completion of studies, **the study allowance will continue up to 5 days only after semester 2.** Thereafter, the allowance will cease i.e. 6<sup>th</sup> day onwards. It is the student’s prerogative to leave Fiji within the 5 days after semester 2 or if they wish to remain in Fiji for longer, they will not receive a study allowance. The Ministry will obtain the University calendar for implementation of this decision.
5. Will not be entitled to superannuation and leave entitlements;  
During the training period the staff member will **not** receive their salary, except when working in the Ministry during any study breaks. Exceptions to this can only be approved by the Secretary of Health. **During the training period, service is interrupted and superannuation and leave entitlements will cease.**  
  
***Advice received from PSC:** The basic salary is an incentive by the Ministry to get the staff to come back to MOH at the end of their study. Regardless of that, they are still on leave and they are not entitled to any privileges until they resume work again, even when they come back for the holidays and work. Until they finish their study and back at work, then all the entitlements will start again for them.*  
  
This therefore ensures that any employee who is away on training for a period of over six months will not be entitled to accumulate leave during the time they are away from work.
6. Be required to notify the Ministry of Health prior to the end of either semester of their travel arrangements back to Rarotonga.
7. If a student returns to Rarotonga and works during the study break, a contract of employment will be signed for that period only.
8. For students who have completed studies and have graduated, a contract of employment will be negotiated and signed for their employment within the Ministry of Health.

These decisions are made as current remuneration arrangements are not sustainable for the Ministry.

## 7.5 The Process

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Training and Development is managed by the relevant manager of the section with the support of Human Resources.

### **The Managers Role**

Managers are expected to encourage, support and promote training for all staff.

All employee development activities should:

- Be assessed in relation to the specific skills and knowledge requirements of the employees position;
- Be directed towards improving the work of the Ministry;
- Be related to the employee's agreed performance and development plan;

Factors considered when assessing applications include:

- Managers endorsement for employee training and development, supported by consistent satisfactory performance by the employee in their current role
- Ability for the Ministry, in particular the service area, to accommodate the absence of staff in training, ensuring the level of service is not impacted negatively
- The Ministry's ability to secure funding for the training in alignment with its priorities for training and development
- Previous training awards and development opportunities completed, particularly those supported by the Ministry

Each application will be considered on its merits on an individual basis.

Employees should discuss their training and development needs with their manager during performance appraisals to ensure planned opportunities support the development path of the employee to meet the Ministry objectives.

#### **Successful completion of studies (University accredited)**

Employees who successfully complete University under-graduate and post-graduate studies aligned to their role within the Ministry of Health and whose studies were fully paid for by organizations other than the Ministry of Health shall be considered for a one-off bonus.

University accredited qualification

up to \$1,000

This entitlement excludes employees who received reimbursements from the Ministry of Health for papers taken and completed towards their under-graduate and post-graduate qualification.

This entitlement also excludes students who received a WHO scholarship and received a salary (either full or basic) while attending University.

All payments will be subject to the discretion and approval of the Head of Ministry.

If the qualification attained changes the breadth of responsibility of the employee, the Secretary of Health may consider an increment to the salary (e.g. Registered Nurse qualifies as a Midwife). However if the employee returns to the same role and responsibility prior to their departure for study, they will be entitled to a one-off bonus only. (Dentist completing PG Diploma in Dental studies)

## **7.6 Bonding**

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Bonding is a process by which the Ministry seeks to protect its investment when developing employees. It secures the skills and knowledge acquired by the employee upon completion of the study.

Employees who undertake external training for higher qualifications under the auspices of the Ministry of Health are bonded on their return to the Ministry for the period of time that he/she is away to complete their training and education. Employees who leave the Ministry during the bonded period will be required to repay costs incurred by the Ministry.



## **8. Use of Ministry Resources**

## **8.1 Policy Statement**

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The Ministry provides resources to assist employees in their work. These include stationery, postage, photocopying, computers, telephones, faxes and vehicles. The Code of Conduct is clear that use of these resources must be responsible and any personal use kept to a minimum and with the appropriate authority.

The purpose of this policy is to provide further guidelines on acceptable use of Ministry telephones, including mobile phones; computers, including Internet and email use; and Ministry vehicles.

## **8.2 Telephone Usage**

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Telephones are provided to enable staff members to perform their duties and to conduct the business of the Ministry. Where there is a direct business need, a mobile phone will be provided by the Ministry. The Ministry will organise the appropriate mobile phone plan and meet the rental costs of the phone. The Ministry shall meet the cost of all work-related calls, but the employee shall pay for all personal calls. The Ministry may modify the plan or replace the phone from time to time.

The use of Ministry desk phones for toll calls is permitted for business purposes. However, staff should give consideration to whether it is the most effective and efficient method of communication or if there is an alternative method of communication (e.g. email or fax) just as efficient and more cost effective.

Private local phone calls should be made during breaks. Private toll calls will require a calling card or personal cell phone. In an emergency situation, please check with your manager.

Those employees who do not have a Ministry mobile phone and who make business calls on their personal mobile phone on an intermittent basis may submit an expense claim for the cost of those calls. No portion of the monthly rental or other cost may be recovered through the expense claim. If an employee is making frequent use of their personal mobile phone for work purposes, the Ministry will review the need to provide that person with a mobile phone.

Mobile phone invoices are to be reviewed and approved by the appropriate delegated authority.

## **8.3 Computer Usage**

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The Ministry provides employees with computers, Internet access and email services as required for the performance and fulfilment of job responsibilities.

The Internet connections, e-mail, and new network system of the Ministry is primarily for business use. Occasional and reasonable personal use is permitted, provided that this does not interfere with the performance of work duties and responsibilities.

Users must understand that any connection to the Internet offers an opportunity for non-authorised users to view or access Ministry information. Therefore, it is important that all connections to be secure, controlled, and monitored.

To this end, Ministry users should have no expectation of privacy while using Ministry-owned or Ministry-leased equipment. Information passing through or stored on Ministry equipment can and will be monitored. Users should also understand that the Ministry maintains the



right to monitor and review stored files, Internet use and e-mail communications sent or received by users as necessary.

### **Prohibited use**

Where staff have been authorised to utilise Ministry computers for personal use, including email and Internet, staff must be very clear on what is acceptable to the Ministry. The following provides a guideline, but is not all-encompassing.

### **Staff must NOT:**

- Install any software without prior consent of the IT department;
- Use online gaming programmes;
- Access the accounts of others with the intent to read, browse, modify, copy or delete files and directories without specific authorisation;
- Engage in any activity that is intended to circumvent computer security controls;
- Maliciously attempt to harm or destroy equipment and software;
- Use the system in any way that is disruptive, offensive to others or harmful to morale;
- Display or store any material on the workstation or network that is considered inappropriate;
- Transmit any material classed as inappropriate or that may be construed as harassment of others.
- Duplicate any licensed software or related documentation unless expressly authorised to do so by agreement with the licensor;
- Disable the virus software on computer equipment under any circumstances;
- Copy copyrighted material

All desktop software will be purchased through and registered by the Ministry.

### **Internet use**

Internet access, where authorised, is provided as a business tool and should be used accordingly. Users shall not use Ministry network services to view, download, save, receive, publish or send material related to or including:

- Offensive content of any kind;
- Opinions or material that is critical of staff;
- Promoting discrimination of any kind;
- Threatening or violent behaviour;
- Illegal activities;
- Gambling;
- Online streaming sports or entertainment sites;
- Material protected under copyright laws;

### **Email use and standards**

Email has become a commonly used method of communicating both internally and externally. The standard of our email presentation says a lot about the organisation we are and our employees. Please apply the same standards and presentation to this medium as you would a written letter.

All email transmissions sent or received are the property of the Ministry and the Ministry retains the right to review and monitor any internal or external transmissions sent or received over its electronic communications facilities, for good cause.

Staff shall not transmit email messages that are un-businesslike, discourteous, or uncivil. They should be written with the expectation that the message may be made public at some time.

## **Responsibilities**

Ministry users are responsible for:

- Honouring acceptable use policies of networks accessed through the Ministry's Internet and e-mail services;
- Abiding by existing local and national telecommunications and networking laws and regulations;
- Following copyright laws regarding protected commercial software or intellectual property;
- Minimising unnecessary network traffic that may interfere with the ability of others to make effective use of the Ministry's network resources;

## **Violations**

Violation of the above guidelines is considered a breach of the Code of Conduct and may result in disciplinary action.

## **8.4 Vehicle Usage**

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Ministry vehicles are allocated for business purposes.

Apart from the vehicles custodian's rostered days off, if the vehicle custodian is out of town for an extended period, unless otherwise advised, arrangements should be made for the vehicle to be left with an appropriate person within the Ministry as 'caretaker' so that the vehicle is available for other Ministry use.

### **Drivers Licences**

Drivers of Ministry vehicles must be in possession of the appropriate current driving licence. Any endorsements or cancellation must be advised to the Manager.

### **Insurance**

The Ministry will maintain insurance cover for Ministry vehicles. Any accident, damage, or insurance claim involving the vehicle must be reported to the Manager without delay. Necessary documentation for any claim is to be completed by the driver involved. An incident which is related to alcohol may not be covered by insurance. In the event of an accident damaging the vehicle while it is being driven on personal business, the staff member will be responsible for meeting repair costs not covered by, or in excess of the insurance policy.

### **Drivers**

Only the staff members to whom the vehicle has been permanently allocated may drive the Ministry vehicle on a 'reasonable basis'. Reasonable basis means limited personal use, such as between home and work. Other members of staff may drive Ministry vehicles as determined and authorised from time to time. They then become responsible under these conditions as if the vehicle had been allocated to them.

### **Traffic regulations and offences**

Drivers are required to comply with traffic regulations at all times. The driver concerned will meet any penalties incurred for which they are responsible.

### **Servicing and Maintenance**

The staff member allocated the vehicle is responsible for ensuring that:

- The vehicle is regularly serviced and maintained
- No damage occurs through neglect
- A current warrant of fitness and registration sticker are displayed
- The vehicle is kept in a clean and tidy condition

**Fuel**

See MOH Finance policy

**Safe driving**

When driving Ministry vehicles, or driving on company business, employees must comply with traffic regulations, be conscious of road safety and demonstrate safe driving and other good road safety habits. The following actions in a Ministry vehicle may be viewed as serious misconduct for which disciplinary action may be a consequence:

- Failing to stop after a crash
- Incurring a traffic offence
- Any actions which warrant suspension of a licence

**General**

- Additional equipment may not be fitted on, or inside, the vehicle without authority of your manager
- The use of mobile phones when driving is not recommended
- It is recommended that seatbelts are worn at all times
- It is recommended that helmets are worn on motorbikes at all times
- Please do not carry hitchhikers while on Ministry business
- Drive to the conditions
- Unattended Ministry vehicles should be locked at all times.



## **9. Health and Safety**

## 9.1 Policy Statement

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The Ministry of Health is committed to providing a safe working environment. The Ministry believes that safety and the well being of all staff, as well as visitors to any of our worksites, is an integral and vital part of the successful operation of our organization. It is important to the Ministry that everyone goes home safely.

The Ministry of Health aims to:

- Establish and maintain safe working conditions;
- Actively promote safe working practices;
- Promote individual responsibility towards safety in all areas;
- Encourage each staff member to recognize and accept their responsibility for the safety of themselves, their fellow staff and anyone else at any of our worksites.

The Ministry will take a proactive approach to managing hazards, preventing injuries, promoting health and well-being, and supporting rehabilitation in the event that someone is injured.

## 9.2 Health and Safety Practices

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- It is essential that our staff wear safety equipment and clothing as required. The Ministry will provide all training, safety and protective equipment and clothing necessary, unless any of our staff voluntarily wish to provide their own safety clothing, with our agreement.
- A work related accident to any of our staff must be reported to a manager as soon as practicable on the day on which the accident occurs.
- As outlined in the sick leave policy, the Ministry must be notified as soon as practicable on the first day of absence caused by workplace injury. Where possible, the injured staff member will indicate the nature of the injury and the expected period of absence. It is a condition of employment that when requested, staff must provide a medical certificate that proves their injury, and indicates when they may be able to return to work.
- Whenever a staff member is absent as a result of an accident, that staff member shall return to work to undertake such alternative duties or other rehabilitation (either on a full or part time basis) as are available. Any return to work MUST BE accompanied by a medical clearance.
- Where alternative duties are provided to a staff member as part of rehabilitation, those conditions of employment that relate to the alternative duties, including pay rates, shall apply.
- Where a staff member has contracted or been exposed to (or believed to have contracted or been exposed to) a contagious illness or disease; or has any illness, incapacity, or condition which in the Ministry's view may cause them to be a hazard to themselves, other staff or visitors, the following provisions will apply:

- the Ministry shall have the right to require the staff member concerned to obtain a medical certificate from a medical practitioner nominated by the Ministry, stating whether or not it is safe for them to be at work;
- the cost of obtaining that medical certificate will be met by the Ministry;
- if the staff member is certified as being unsafe for work, they shall be placed on leave until they are medically cleared to return to work.
- Generally, the period of leave shall be without pay, unless the staff member has sick leave or annual leave owing, which may be used as the staff member determines; or unless the Ministry reaches some alternative arrangement with that staff member.
- The Ministry will provide all its employees free Medical, Dental and Optic care on island. This treatment covers basic treatment and care. This benefit does not extend to the employees family (immediate or extended) and does not cover cosmetic or out of the ordinary treatment that requires specialist treatment.

### 9.3 Individual Staff Safety

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An important condition of employment requires all staff to take an active personal interest in their own safety and that of fellow staff members and visitors. The Ministry especially requires staff to follow all safety rules and practices, including documented health and safety manuals, employee manuals, operations manuals and safe operations plans.

**Every employee of the organization is expected to share in the commitment to health and safety.**

Every manager and supervisor has a responsibility for the health and safety of those employees working under their direction.

Each employee is expected to play a vital and responsible role in maintaining a safe and health workplace through:

- identifying hazards, including workplace stress you may be suffering from, in a timely and appropriate manner
- eliminating, isolating or minimizing hazards
- monitoring workplace health and safety and bring deficiencies to the attention of your manager, including reporting any pain or discomfort you may personally be experiencing
- complying with all health and safety policies, requirements and instructions

Failure to do this is may be regarded as misconduct.

### 9.4 Hazards, Accidents and Incidents

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#### **Hazards**

A hazard is an activity, situation or substance that is an actual or potential source of harm, with harm being an illness, injury, or both.

#### **Notifying Hazards**

Whenever any staff member identifies a new hazard or a potential hazard in the workplace, they must ensure they report their finding to their manager immediately. This may be through verbal or written communication.

Everyone in the organisation must understand how important this condition of employment is viewed and that failure to do so may result in disciplinary action.

### **Accidents and incidents**

An accident is an event that did result in injury or ill health of a person or persons, or damage or loss to property, plant, equipment, or materials.

An Incident, or “near miss”, is an event which could have resulted in injury or ill health of a person or persons, or damage or loss to property, plant, equipment, or materials.

### **Notifying accidents or incidents**

Every accident or incident must be recorded. This requires every employee to report injuries or damage and near misses as soon as possible to their manager.

The reason for gathering information on hazards, accidents and incidents is so this information can be utilized to working towards preventing all such occurrences. Staff should note that unless a considerable degree of negligence is identified, it is not intended that the reporting of such hazards, accidents and incidents will result in any disciplinary action against a staff member. The Ministry appreciates that despite our best endeavors and those of our staff, from time to time accidents and incidents do occur.

## **9.5 Alcohol**

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The Ministry has a simple policy for all staff, with particular emphasis on staff responsible for patients and/or who are required to use a vehicle or machinery in their work: “ten hours between the bottle and throttle”. As this policy will be strictly enforced as per the Code of Conduct, please discuss with your manager if you need clarification.

## **9.6 Smoking**

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Smoking is a risk to health and property. The Ministry’s policy on smoking in the workplace is that smoking is not allowed on Ministry premises (unless in an authorised smoking area), in public view, in any Ministry car park, or in any of the Ministry company vehicles.

All visitors, contractors and deliverers are required to abide by the smoke-free policy. Staff members are expected to inform visitors of the policy. However, in employees’ efforts to persuade people to comply with this policy, they are not expected to enter into any confrontation that may put their personal safety at risk.

### **Support for staff who want to stop smoking**

Many smokers may be thinking about quitting. The Ministry understands that staff may need support in order to give up smoking and understands the importance of supporting people in their efforts to give up smoking.

## 9.7 Fire

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Please help prevent fires by:

- complying with our non smoking policy
- ensuring that any faulty electrical equipment is reported promptly to your manager
- maintaining good housekeeping practices in the buildings, keeping all exits clear
- knowing where your nearest fire extinguisher is
- knowing where the fire alarm boxes are situated
- knowing the evacuation policy

### **Fire emergency procedure**

1. Stay calm
2. check for danger
3. assess the fire
4. if you feel confident that you can put the fire out, use the fire extinguisher provided.
5. IF THE THOUGHT CROSSES YOUR MIND THAT IT COULD BE A 999 EMERGENCY – IT IS!!!
6. one person calls emergency services. State clearly the nature of the incident, and site address. That person then moves to a safe, visible point to await and guide the emergency services on arrival.
7. another person activates the evacuation alarm.
8. follow the evacuation procedures.

## 9.8 Security of Building, Staff and Goods

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- The last person to leave at night is responsible for checking all doors and windows are secured.
- For security, staff members rostered last are to move their vehicles close to the building prior to darkness, and prior to the other staff leaving the premises.
- Security breaches must be reported to your manager
- Key holders have a special responsibility for security. Keys must not be loaned or duplicated for unauthorised people. Lost or mislaid keys must be reported to the Ministry.

### **General Security**

- No materials, tools or equipment of any description may be borrowed or removed from the premises without the prior consent of the Ministry
- No Ministry property to be taken off the work premises without the permission of management
- Confidential material to be kept secure
- Each person must take responsibility for their security of their own office / work space / vehicle

Please make sure that your personal belongings are secured and not in public view.





## **10.Leaving the Ministry**

## 10.1 Resigning from the Ministry

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It is essential that adequate and reasonable notice be given where an employee intends to resign from their employment.

It is the responsibility of the **employee** to tender their resignation in writing to their manager, one month prior to the effective date, unless otherwise stipulated in their contract.

Failure to meet these requirements may result in the manager refusing to accept the resignation. The notice of resignation should include the date on which the employee is expecting to complete their last day of duty. If an employee leaves the Ministry they will be 'paid out' for their annual leave.

It is the responsibility of the **manager** to send any notice of resignation or termination to HR, as soon as practicable to ensure that the required administrative action can be completed. The manager is responsible for signing off notice of termination or resignation, clearly stating the last day of employment.

Please note:

- A person's last day at work is their finishing date.
- Annual leave is not to be approved past an employee's last day at work.
- Any annual leave not taken prior to the employee's last day at work will be included in their final pay.

On the last day of work the employee will deliver to their manager all records, equipment, keys, laptop computers, cell phones, vehicle and any other property belonging to the Ministry. The employee must also settle any outstanding monies owing to the Ministry.

### **Exit interview**

Where possible, an exit interview will be conducted. The employee may choose whether his/her supervisor, manager, or human resources manager conduct the interview.

### **Certificate of service**

The Ministry will provide a certificate of service at the request of an employee to the human resources manager. No written reference will be provided. You may, however, ask your supervisor or manager to act as a verbal referee for you, from a personal perspective.

## 10.2 Retirement

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Retirement is defined as the situation where an employee permanently withdraws from the regular paid workforce.

For Ministry employees, retirement is optional at the age of 60. The timing of retirement between 60 and 65 is a matter of individual choice for the staff member.

It is the Ministry's policy that staff has the option to retire at the age of 60. Staff will have the option to continue employment with the Ministry until the age of 65 years.

In recognition of service to the Ministry, employees who retire will receive a gratuity payment and any unused annual leave entitlement (calculated pro-rata).

1. For employees who retire after 20 years service will receive: 2 weeks gratuity payment (equivalent to 1 fortnights pay)
2. For employees who retire after 30 years service will receive: 3 weeks gratuity payment (equivalent to 1.5 fortnights pay)
3. For employees who retire after 40+ years service: 4 weeks gratuity payment (equivalent to 2 fortnights pay)

Should a staff member wish to continue in employment beyond the age of 65 years, an application will need to be presented to the Secretary of Health. All applications and resulting discussions will be approached with sensitivity and confidentiality by the Ministry. Staff members should not be pressured to consider options that they do not consider to be in their own interest. However, staff should understand the position of the Ministry in terms of this Policy.

Where a request to continue working beyond the age of 65 years is received, the Secretary of Health will approve the request if it is considered to be in the best interests of the Ministry, taking into account issues such as:

- The strategic direction and operational needs of the Ministry;
- The skills mix required for the foreseeable future;
- Succession and workforce planning;
- Administrative and support needs of the Ministry;
- Sustainable funding requirements.

Where a request is agreed to it will be for a fixed term of one year. An annual review will be held to ensure the satisfactory performance of the employee.

### 10.3 Superannuation

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The rights and benefits for members of superannuation schemes are primarily the responsibility of the staff member. Human Resources will attempt to assist staff with regards to questions relating to superannuation benefits and entitlements. However, information related to benefits that are available upon retirement and/or impact of any possible agreed changes of employment must be obtained by the staff member/superannuation recipient from the superannuation provider.



## 11.Relocation

### 11.1 Policy Statement

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The Ministry is responsible for ensuring accessibility to quality health services across the Cook Islands. This policy is designed for new recruits and existing employees required to be transferred or relocated to their place of work for a period of more than 15 days. (overseas to Rarotonga or Rarotonga to the Outer Islands)

### 11.2 Eligibility

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All employees of the Ministry who are required to be relocated or transferred to their permanent place of work or to provide cover for a period more than 15 days.

### 11.3 Expenses

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Employees transferred to another Health location at the Ministry's request will be eligible for relocation expenses as provided.

### 11.4 Relocation Allowance entitlement for training, locum cover or employment

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Relocation entitlements (16 days to 60 days (2 months))	
<b>National</b>	
Rarotonga to Outer Islands	Return airfares for employee and 1 child under the age of 3 years
	A one off payment of \$750 relocation allowance
Accommodation	Paid directly to supplier unless using health premises
<b>On return</b>	
Outer Islands to Rarotonga	Return airfares for employee and 1 child under the age of 3 years

Relocation entitlements (61 days to 120 days (4 months))	
<b>National</b>	
Rarotonga to Outer Islands	Return airfares for employee and 1 child under the age of 3 years
	A one off payment of \$750 relocation allowance
	Sea freight up to 100kgs or one pallet to place of relocation
Accommodation	Paid directly to supplier unless using health premises
<b>On return</b>	
Outer Islands to Rarotonga	Return airfares for employee and 1 child under the age of 3 years

Relocation entitlements (over 121 days)	
<b>National</b>	

Rarotonga to Outer Islands	Return airfares for employee, spouse and 2 children under the age of 12 years
	A one off payment of \$750 relocation allowance
	Sea freight up to 100kgs or one pallet to place of relocation
Accommodation	Paid directly to supplier unless using health premises
<b>On return</b>	
Outer Islands to Rarotonga	Return airfares for employee, spouse and 2 children under the age of 12 years
	Sea freight up to 100kgs or one pallet to place of relocation

<b>Relocation entitlements</b>	
<b>International</b>	
Overseas to Rarotonga	Return economy airfares for employee, spouse and 2 children under the age of 12 years
	Unaccompanied luggage entitlement (air cargo) of up to 100kgs to and from place of recruitment.

For travel less than 15 days, the per-diem policy will be followed.



## **12. Entertainment Allowances**

## 12.1 Policy Statement

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It is the Ministry of Health's policy to reimburse employees for expenses incurred in business entertainment in accordance with the following guidelines:

## 12.2 Guidelines

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- \* Usually entertainment of business associates will be conducted by the Head of Ministry. On the occasion where circumstances justify business entertainment by Divisional Heads, prior approval of the Head of Ministry must be obtained.
- \* Entertainment expenses will be reimbursed only for business meals or in cases where entertainment is directly related to, or associated with, the Ministry of Health business. Since it is difficult to establish precise guidelines concerning business and personal entertainment, the Head of Ministry must therefore rely on the judgement and good faith of Divisional Heads in this area. Expenses for entertainment of a personal nature are not eligible for reimbursement.
- \* Requests for reimbursement of entertainment expenses must be approved by the appropriate Head of Ministry and submitted to finance on an expense claim. Such claims should contain a detailed itemisation of expenses, the date, place and business reason for the entertainment, in addition to the names of those present including relationships to the Ministry of Health.
- \* Reimbursement of entertainment of Ministry of Health employees must have approval of the Head of Ministry in advance.
- \* All business dinners have a budget up to NO MORE than seventy dollars per person (NZD70pp) and twenty five dollars per person (NZD25pp) for lunches. The allowances stated are inclusive of beverages (soft drinks, water and juice). Consumption of spirits and beer is prohibited.





### **13.Conflict of Interest**

### 13.1 Policy Statement

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This policy applies to all staff members of the MOH except the Secretary (who is covered under the policies of the Public Service Commission) including probationary and permanent staff members, contracted workers and casual appointees.

It provides guidance on:-

- (i) Identifying, and
- (ii) Managing conflict of interest.

It requires all staff members to notify their immediate manager about any conflict of interest (real or apparent) that arises in the course of their employment.

### 13.2 Purpose

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- A. To implement Section 22 of the Public Service Act 2009 (the “Act”), in particular paragraph 6 of Schedule 4 of the Act, which provides that all staff members of MOH must behave with honesty and integrity in the course of their employment.
- B. To safeguard the integrity and reputation of the MOH and its staff by fostering the proper and unbiased conduct of its activities.
- C. To educate and make the MOH staff aware of situations that would generate conflict of interest, to provide means for the staff to disclose and manage conflicts of interest, to promote the best interests of patients and staff.

### 13.3 Policy

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- A. A “conflict of interest” involves a real or apparent conflict between an MOH staff member’s official duties and responsibilities, and their private interests that could, or could be seen to, influence the decisions the employee is taking or the advice the employee is giving. A conflict of interest depends on the situation and not the character of the individual staff member.

### 13.4 Types of Private Interest which may give rise to conflict with official duties

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- A. The types of private interests and activities that could come into conflict with official duties will depend on the work that is to be done and the issues being dealt with, but could include:-
  - (i) Political affiliations and activities; or
  - (ii) Family, personal and social activities; or
  - (iii) Financial interests, including shareholding, directorships or other commercial and business interest; or
  - (iv) Membership of or affiliations with community groups and NGOs;
  - (v) Secondary employment outside the MOH, including unpaid and voluntary work; or
  - (vi) Moving from the MOH to outside employment in a similar field.

It is not always necessary, and it may not be possible, for MOH staff members to divest themselves of private interests that involve or could involve a conflict of interest. They must, however, be disclosed and effectively managed.

### 13.5 **Disclosing and Management of a Conflict of Interest or apparent conflict of interest**

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- A. All staff members of the MOH are responsible for identifying and disclosing conflicts, or potential conflicts of interest as they arise. All staff members must raise the matter with their immediate manager, or in the case of an executive member, with the SOH, immediately the issue becomes apparent.

#### **DETERMINING CONFLICT OF INTERESTS**

- B. It is the responsibility of the manager (or in the case of an executive member, the SOH) to decide whether there is, or could be, a conflict of interest. If they decide that there is an actual conflict, the manager, may: (for example)
- (i) Restrict the staff member's involvement in or access to a particular matter; or
  - (ii) Re-schedule the staff member's duties or re-assign the staff member to other duties; or
  - (iii) Request if practical that the staff member divest his/her interest; or
  - (iv) Take some other appropriate action to resolve the situation.

#### **RECORDING THE CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

- C. Managers must ensure that the decision making process is well documented and must record in writing:-
- (i) That the conflict has been declared;
  - (ii) How the conflict was resolved.

A report must be forwarded to the SOH no later than 7 days after the conflict of interest was declared by any staff member. A copy of the report shall be filed in the staff member's personnel file by the Manager Human Resources.

- D. It is good practice if the SOH considers himself/herself to be in a situation that may be a conflict of interest, he/or she shall declare in writing his/or her interest and at his/her discretion may delegate his/her authority in writing to any Director to act on his/her behalf in any given situation, provided such delegation of authority is permitted by law.

#### **E. CONFLICT WITH PERSONAL INTEREST**

In carrying out their duties, staff members must not allow themselves to be improperly influenced by family, personal, or other relationships.

In the case of a personal relationship within the MOH, it may, depending on the circumstances, be desirable for one party to move to another work area. While it is not wrong for couples or other family members to be working together in the MOH, it is inappropriate for one to have line responsibility over the other.

#### **Selection Panels**

An example of where personal or other interests may conflict with official duties is where a staff member on a selection panel has a personal relationship with an interviewee.

In the MOH environment and our small country, members of selection panels will often know one or more applicants. However, if a member of the selection panel has a relationship with an applicant that might give rise to a conflict of interest, this should be declared to the Chair and other selection panel members (or to other selection panel members if the Chair is making the declaration). A decision should then be made as to whether the selection panel member should stand aside from the selection process.

Similar considerations also apply to tender assessment panels, Executive Meetings, patient referral processes etc

### **Conflict with financial interest**

Financial interests include such things as directorships, shareholdings, real estate or trusts, which have the potential to conflict with official duties. Examples of this type of conflict are where:

- (i) A staff member may be assessing tenders from companies in which they or a relative have an interest;
- (ii) A staff member uses MOH information for their own personal commercial interest, for example renting out their house to locums or expatriate staff members without advising their tenants of other houses that are available for rental;
- (iii) A staff member contracts a personal friend or family member to do certain work for the MOH without advertising the work to the public at large;
- (iv) A staff member undertakes a work performance appraisal for a subordinate staff member who is a member of his/or her immediate family.

## **13.6 Violation**

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A If the SOH determines that there has been a violation of this policy by a staff member, he/she may at his/her discretion meet with the Executives to agree upon an appropriate resolution of the conflict and/or may determine appropriate resolution of conflict by himself/herself or may institute disciplinary actions under the Human Resources Personnel Policy and Procedures Manual ("HR/PP Manual").

### **B Reporting**

- (i) Suspected violations of this policy should be reported to the SOH. Such reports may be made confidentially or anonymously, although if more information is given, it is easier to investigate a report. The employment of a staff member that raises a suspected violation SHALL not be jeopardized.



#### **14.Rates of per-diem**

#### 14.1 Policy Statement

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This policy applies to all permanent staff members of the Ministry of Health.

#### 14.2 Purpose

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1. To ensure that the required human resources are adequately funded once removed from his/her permanent station of work whether on Rarotonga or Outer Islands and made available in another locality or island or country to do or provide the necessary services or obtain the necessary training, up-skilling or promotion of the Ministry;
2. Be cost efficient; and
3. Provide clear guidelines for the payment of per diems.

#### 14.3 Per diem rates

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##### Daily Accommodation Allowance (up to 15 days)

	Executives	Staff
Outer Islands to Rarotonga	\$ 0	\$ 50 (private stay)
Rarotonga to Outer Islands	\$ 60 (private stay)	\$ 50 (private stay)
New Zealand	Paid directly to supplier	Paid directly to supplier
Australia	Paid directly to supplier	Paid directly to supplier
Pacific Islands	Paid directly to supplier	Paid directly to supplier
Asia/Europe/South Africa/USA	Paid directly to supplier	Paid directly to supplier

##### Daily Per Diem (up to 15 days)

	Executives	Staff
Outer Islands to Rarotonga	\$ 0	\$ 50
Rarotonga to Outer Islands	\$ 60	\$ 50
New Zealand	\$ 145	\$ 120
Australia	\$ 145	\$ 120
Pacific Islands	\$ 145	\$ 120
Asia/Europe/South Africa/USA	\$ 145	\$ 120

##### For travel overseas, the daily per diem rate for Executives comprise

Breakfast	\$ 15
Lunch	\$ 25
Dinner	\$ 40
Incidentals	\$ 65 (this covers for transport, communication, personal expenses etc.)
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$145</b>

##### For travel overseas, the daily per diem rate for staff comprises:

Breakfast	\$ 15
Lunch	\$ 25
Dinner	\$ 40

Incidentals     \$ 40 (this covers for transport, communication, personal expenses etc.)  
**Total            \$120**

Accommodation will be paid directly to the supplier unless the employee opts to stay privately.  
The daily per-diem will be paid in the currency of the country travelling to.

For travel over 15 days, the relocation allowance policy will be followed.

#### 14.4 Exceptions

The Ministry will not support an employee's participation or attendance at any training course, conference, seminar or attachment not fully funded by the host/sponsoring organisation. Employees who wish to attend these courses will take annual or unpaid leave. The Ministry will not provide for per-diem or incidental costs.

Exceptions to this can only be approved by the Secretary of Health provided a letter confirming what costs are covered is presented to the Secretary of Health to enable a decision to be made.

#### Comparison of MOH, MFEM and PSC per diem rates paid

	Ministry of Health	Ministry of Finance	Public Service Commission
<b>Domestic</b>			
Executives	\$60	\$50	\$60
Staff	\$50	\$40	\$50
<b>International</b>			
Executives	\$145	\$125	\$145
Staff	\$120	\$100	\$120

Daily Professional Fees for Locum Cover and Health Specialist Visits	
Locum cover	\$ 350 (\$200 fee, \$150 incidentals) – airfares paid separately <b>does not apply to local staff</b>
<b>Health Specialists (Professional fees)</b>	
Consultant	\$ 500 - 250*
Nurse Specialist	\$ 250 - 200*
Technician	\$ 200 - 150*
Perdiem	\$300 (meals and accommodation)
Vehicle and airfares	Paid to supplier

\* Payment or amount of payment is at the discretion of the Head of Ministry (HSV program)

**Patient Escort Allowances**  
**This is covered under the Patient Referral POBOC**

<b>International</b>	
Per diem allowance	\$ 150
<b>National (Outer Islands to Rarotonga)</b>	
Per diem allowance	\$ 50





## **15. Medical Officers remuneration review**

## 15.1 Policy Statement

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This policy applies to Medical officers employed on a permanent basis with the Ministry of Health.

## 15.2 Purpose

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The following policy establishes a salary scale that will:

1. Provide a clear pathway for medical staff;
2. Provide incentives to improve skills and training;
3. Provides support for clinical staff to undertake regular continuing professional education;

## 15.3 Principles

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The remuneration is based on the following principles:

1. The salary package is an all inclusive amount that includes all allowances and overtime.
2. No staff will receive any less on an annual basis than they receive now;
3. The proposal includes the ability to “map” existing staff onto the framework and provides clear guidelines for new appointees;
4. The scales will apply to local and overseas staff;
5. The policy comes into effect from 01 December 2010.

### **Background:**

The health workforce and in particular the medical workforce is a key and critical component in the Cook Islands health system.

The capacity and capability of the workforce is dependent upon the ability to recruit and retain highly skilled, well trained clinical staff who can provide clinical leadership within the health services in the Cook Islands. The investment in training clinical staff over a minimum period of 7 years and the high level of responsibility including clinical and legal accountability requires a different strategy than that which is applied to other public servants.

A key component of the ability to recruit and retain key staff is the ability of the Ministry of Health Cook Islands to be able to compete regionally with salary scales, ongoing education and quality services.

Historically the salary scales of medical officers have been closely related to length of service, have no clearly specified criteria for each level and have not recognized ongoing training or skill development.

Accordingly, remuneration steps for Medical Officers have been unresolved for some time, despite a number of attempts to remunerate doctors according to their qualification. The Ministry's policy must be consistent with the PSC Job sizing band whereby all public servants must be paid within the “minimum band” allocated to a position.

The adjustment is to increase doctors' salaries based on both years of satisfactory performance, and attainment of relevant post-graduate qualifications. These proposed adjustments are in line with the PSC job sizing bands.

**MBBS Graduate with or without registration:**

1. For an MBBS graduate without registration (internship) \$34,000 p.a. starting salary
2. For an MBBS graduate with registration (complete internship) \$39,203 p.a. starting salary

Salary increments will be based on the following:

**For a Medical Officer:**

1. After 2 years of satisfactory performance on performance reviews (rating of 1A to 2A), remuneration increases by 1 step – increment of \$3,500 added to salary
2. University Post Graduate Diploma in a relevant specialty medical field plus satisfactory performance on performance review (rating of 1A to 2A), remuneration increases by 2 steps – increment of \$7,000 added to salary
3. University Post Graduate Masters qualification in a relevant specialty medical field, plus satisfactory performance on performance review remuneration increases by 3 steps – increment of \$11,500 added to salary.

**For a Consultant:**

1. After 2 years of satisfactory performance on performance review (rating of 1A to 2A), remuneration increases by 1 step – increment of \$4,000 added to salary
2. University Post Graduate Diploma in relevant specialty medical field plus satisfactory performance on performance review (rating of 1A to 2A), remuneration increases by 2 steps – increment of \$8,000 added to salary
3. University Post Graduate Masters qualification in a relevant specialty medical field, plus satisfactory performance on performance review remuneration increases by 3 steps – increment of \$12,000 added to salary.

**To illustrate:**

<b>Medical Officer (Band L)</b>	<b>Every 2 years</b>	<b>Salary</b>	<b>Consultants (Band M)</b>	<b>Every 2 years</b>	<b>Salary</b>
Starting salary		39,203	Starting salary		45,075
Step 1	3,500	42,703	Step 1	4,000	49,075
Step 2	3,500	46,203	Step 2	4,000	53,075
Step 3	3,500	49,703	Step 3	4,000	57,075
Step 4	3,500	53,203			

**Points to consider:**

1. A medical officer who reaches the maximum (Step 4) may be eligible to apply for a Consultant position;

2. The increases in remuneration are based on 2 year intervals and satisfactory performance appraisals each year;
3. Even if no relevant postgraduate diploma or masters qualification is obtained, an officer can still progress to the top of the band based on satisfactory performance over a number of years;
4. Only satisfactory performers will be eligible for increments in salary;



## **16.Travel Policy**

## **16.1 Policy Statement**

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It is recognised that public and state servants when travelling Overseas or to the Outer Islands in the performance of their duties are entitled not to be out of pocket.

It is also recognised that there are levels of seniority of employees within the services and accordingly there is a standard for Public and State servants; and a standard for Heads of Ministries and Crown Agencies.

## **16.2 Policy**

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Government recognises the official travel Overseas and to the Outer Islands of Heads of Ministries and Crown Agencies, Public and State servants for the purposes of representing the interests of Government as discharged by the various Ministries, Agencies, departments and offices of their employment.

In general, employees of Government, when travelling, are entitled not to be out of pocket in the discharge of their obligations under this policy.

## **16.3 Travel Approval**

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Heads of Ministries and Crown Agencies are to approve all staff travel in consultation with their portfolio Minister. For Heads of Ministries they must have the approval of their portfolio Minister and advise the Public Service Commissioner. Heads of Crown Agencies must have the approval of their portfolio Minister and advise the Chairman of their Board.

It is intended that Cabinet should not be overloaded with the task of considering every travel.

## **16.4 Approval of representation/presentations**

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All country presentations for staff travelling overseas must be approved by the Secretary of Health or Executives (in an executive meeting). Feedback and travel reports are to be submitted no later than 10 days after returning together with reports and materials from the workshop / conference / meeting. This is to ensure that the Ministry is aware of regional and global commitments.

## **16.5 Per Diem Allowances**

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The Secretary of Health will be paid the per diem allowances used by the Pacific Forum Secretariat for attendance at the World Health Assembly. These rates are based on those that are applied within the United Nations system. The Allowance includes accommodation, meals and incidentals. These allowances are NOT accountable. For all other staff, they are paid the per diem allowances of the Ministry of Health.

It is recognised that there are times HOMs/HCA's may have to be accommodated with Ministers on certain travels in which case the accommodation may cost more and therefore must be met under this policy.

## **16.6 Class of Travel**

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For travel of Heads of Ministries and Crown Agencies, flights in excess of five (5) hours on a single sector, business class is permissible. Travel accompanying a Minister irrespective of flight time, business class is permissible.

#### **16.7 Credit Cards**

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A credit card system for Heads of Ministries and Crown Agencies is considered desirable.

While the system has merits and advantages, it is also recognised that there are disadvantages. However it's mainly in the area of managing the system. Past experience have cause for concern, but it is well to note that most hotels, if not all, require credit cards for charges otherwise cash deposit is required. At times cash payment is not possible.

#### **16.8 Transport Allowance**

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Allowance for transport is permissible and is to be pre-approved by the Secretary of Health. This allowance is not part or included on the per diem allowance. This allowance is accountable and paid at the discretion of the Secretary of Health.

#### **16.9 Outer Islands Travel Allowance**

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Refer to HR Policy section 14.

#### **16.10 Travel Return Form**

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A form to account for the travel is in Schedule 1.

**Schedule 1**

**TRAVEL RETURN FORM**

1. Date \_\_\_\_\_
2. Name \_\_\_\_\_
3. Ministry/Office/Island \_\_\_\_\_
4. Purpose of Travel  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Authorising Authority Cabinet/HOM/Minister  
  
(CM No.) \_\_\_\_\_
6. Date of Travel Depart \_\_\_\_\_  
Return \_\_\_\_\_
7. Per Diem \$\_\_\_\_\_ (Non Accountable)  
(variances please explain)
8. Is Travel aid funded of Ministry/Office/Island funded? If partial or in whole please explain.
9. Please record any out-of pocket expenses for claim, e.g. transport, communications etc.
10. Please indicate class of travel?  
Economy \_\_\_\_\_



Business \_\_\_\_\_

First Class \_\_\_\_\_

I certify that the above information is true and correct.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date\_\_\_\_\_



## **17.Vehicle Policy**

## **17.1 Policy Statement**

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- 1.1. All vehicles, which belong to the Cook Islands Government (CIG) should be used for the purpose of delivering government programs and services.

## **17.2 Purpose**

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- 2.1. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that Government vehicles are used solely for the purpose of conducting government business.

## **17.3 Application**

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- 3.1. This policy shall apply to all Government Departments and Crown Agencies

## **17.4 Definitions**

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- HOM – Any Head of Ministry or Crown Agency
- Driver - Any person who operates a government vehicle
- Employee - An individual that is employed by the CIG
- Government Vehicle- Any vehicle or mobile equipment which has been purchased or leased with public funds. All government vehicles must be registered with a GA number plate.
- Personal Use- Any use of a government vehicle for purposes other than to deliver government services and programs.

## **17.5 Authority and Accountability**

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Authorities and Accountabilities are as follows:

### **5.1. HOMs**

- 5.1.1. Responsible for ensuring that employees operate government vehicles in accordance with this policy
- 5.1.2. Responsible for implementing and enforcing disciplinary action against their employees should they fail to adhere to these policies

### **5.2. Drivers**

- 5.2.1. Responsible for seeking authority to operate government vehicles in accordance with this policy

### **5.3. Department of Finance (MFEM)**

- 5.3.1. Ensures that adequate and proper insurance coverage is maintained on government vehicles.

## **17.6 Provisions**

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### **6.1. Use of Government and Public Vehicles**

- 6.1.1. Government vehicles are only to be used for government business unless individual employment contracts state otherwise
- 6.1.2. Only government employees shall be authorized to drive government vehicles.

Only in extreme emergencies may an employee authorize a non employee to drive government vehicle

- 6.1.3. All employees who operate a government vehicle must possess a valid driver's license and a copy of the employee's license be placed on file.
- 6.1.4. Smoking and/or consumption of alcoholic beverages in Government vehicles is not permitted
- 6.1.5. Reasonable efforts must be made to ensure the security of vehicles at all times.
- 6.1.6. Government vehicles are to be maintained according to standards of efficiency and lifetime cost effectiveness.

## **6.2. Insurance**

- 6.2.1. The HOM must ensure that all vehicles used by the Ministry/Agency are insured through the Government insurance policy administered by MFEM.

## **6.3. Personal Use of Vehicles**

- 6.3.1. Employees other than HOMs shall not use government vehicles for personal use unless approval to do so has been granted by the HOM in exceptional circumstances.

## **6.4. Driver Qualifications**

- 6.4.1. Every driver of a government vehicle must possess an up-to-date and appropriate class of driver's license to operate the type of vehicle they have been assigned.

## **6.5 Parking**

- 6.5.1. The vehicle should always be treated as driver's own and the necessary security precautions taken when parking the vehicle.
- 6.5.2. Where available, government vehicles shall park in government reserved spaces. Residential parking of vehicles is permissible for employees that are on call after work-hours.
- 6.5.3. All vehicle drivers must ensure that the vehicle is not parked under coconut trees or exposed to obvious risks of being damaged while parked.

## **6.6. Traffic Rules**

- 6.6.1. All drivers shall obey all traffic rules when operating a government vehicle.
- 6.6.2. Under no circumstances, will government pay any fines related to traffic violations that occurred while an individual was operating a government vehicle.

## **6.7. Accidents Involving Government Vehicles**

- 6.7.1. The driver of a government vehicle will be required to immediately report any accident to his or her HOM and the police.
- 6.7.2. For insurance purposes, the driver involved in an accident will be required to complete an Accident Report and provide it to MFEM as soon as reasonably possible.

## **6.8. Leasing of Vehicles**

- 6.8.1. Government agencies may lease vehicles, where it is cost effective.
- 6.8.2. Vehicles may be leased when they are needed for specific and temporary projects, but not on a permanent basis.

## **6.9 Renting of Vehicles**

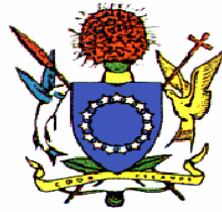
- 6.9.1. The use of rental vehicles by government employees shall be preauthorized by the HOM.

**6.10. Privately Owned Vehicles**

- 6.10.1. It is the responsibility of the employee to provide their own transportation to and from their work place.
- 6.10.2. In one off circumstances where the use of privately owned vehicles for official government business is required, reimbursements for the use of such must be preauthorized by the HOM.

**7. Breach of Motor Vehicle Policy**

- 7.1. Any driver who knowingly breaches this policy may be considered to have committed an act of gross misconduct and may be subject to disciplinary action.



## **18.Remuneration of Board Members (non employees)**

## 18.1 **Policy Statement**

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The Ministry sees it fit to remunerate members of Ministry Boards who are not employees of the Ministry. This is to compensate for their time away from their respective jobs and the contribution that they make to the Ministry Board(s) that they sit with. The Ministry will set each sitting fee at \$50 per member who is not an employee of the Ministry. This will be paid to the respective Board member after each meeting.

Note that the sitting fee may be amended by the Ministry or the Cook Islands Government Cabinet from time to time.

## 18.2 **Application**

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All Board members of any Ministry of Health Board who are not employees of the Ministry are to be remunerated as appropriate. The fee for one sitting is \$50.



## **19. Accommodation Policy**



## **A. Purpose**

The provision of accommodation to employees in the workplace is necessary to establish an equitable working environment and maintain good employer principles.

This policy provides guidance for:

1. The provision of accommodation to employees within the Rarotonga Hospital premises or the Outer Islands health centers;
2. The provision of accommodation for short term rental for those other than Ministry of Health employees.

## **B. Objectives**

The key objectives of this Accommodation Policy are to:

- Ensure that staff are provided with adequate accommodation at the Rarotonga Hospital premises or Outer Islands Health Centers;
- Ensure that accommodation is readily available within the Rarotonga hospital to outer islands based staff who are on Rarotonga for short term up skilling;
- Ensure that accommodation is readily available within the Rarotonga hospital to contracted staff having relocated to the Cook Islands from overseas for long term employment. The length of stay within this accommodation facility is limited to one month.
- Ensure that accommodation facilities provided for employees are well maintained and equipped with the necessary household items.

## **C. Mandatory Requirements**

### **Rental**

#### **Rarotonga Hospital premises**

- A weekly rental of \$50 is applicable to any employee utilizing the accommodation residence at the Rarotonga Hospital.

#### **Outer Islands Health Centers**

- No rental will be charged to employees residing in the health accommodation in the Outer Islands however employees will be responsible for the payment of electricity, gas and personal telephone expenses.

Should a person/company/government ministry/agency opt to use the health residence, approval should be obtained from the Director of Funding and Planning who will also provide an appropriate rental fee to be paid for the use of the accommodation. Payment of rent can be made either to the Finance Division at the Funding & Planning office, Tupapa or the Hospital Liaison Officer at the Rarotonga Hospital or to the Officer in Charge on the island of residence.

## **Provision of Accommodation**

### **Outer Islands**

For the islands of Aitutaki, Mangaia and Atiu, a health residence is available free of charge for either the Officers in Charge or for employees working on those islands who are not residents of that island - the priority being the Officers in Charge of each health center. Employees will be responsible for the payment of electricity, gas and personal telephone expenses.

Circumstances may occur where there are two Doctors for the island of Aitutaki who are individuals and not a couple/family. That is, both Medical officers are “single” individuals. In this situation, both Doctors will be accommodated in the Health Residence. If a Medical officer does not accept this arrangement, they can relocate to a private accommodation at their own cost.

For the island of Mauke, until the construction of a health residence, the Officer in Charge will be housed at the Dental clinic.

For the island of Palmerston, the Ministry will arrange for private accommodation and the employee may be provided with a housing entitlement to pay for rent. The amount to be paid for the housing entitlement will be at the discretion of the Head of Ministry.

For Mitiaro, Manihiki (Tukao & Tauhunu), Rakahanga, Penrhyn, Pukapuka and Nassau, the residence is part of the Health Center and Officers in Charge or employees working on those islands who are not residents of that island will be accommodated in the residence, free of charge - the priority being the Officers in Charge of each health center. Employees will be responsible for the payment of electricity, gas and personal telephone expenses.

When locum cover is required for the Outer Islands, the locum will reside in the health residence. If this arrangement is not feasible, the Ministry will arrange for private accommodation for the locum.

### **Health Residence Furniture & Appliances**

The Ministry of Health will equip each residence with the required basic household items. The minimum listing is stipulated in Appendix 1. Additional items to the listing provided will have to be met by the occupant(s).

Upon occupation of each health residence, an accommodation agreement with a list of the household items will be executed between the Ministry and the occupant. Prior to the cessation of the occupancy, all items must be viewed and verified against the Fixed Asset Listing by a delegated Funding and Planning employee.

Items must not be removed from the residences.

If any items are damaged during occupancy other than normal “wear and tear”, these must be replaced by the occupant.

### **Telephone**

The Ministry of Health will be responsible for payment of the monthly **telephone standard rental fee only** within the health residences. All other telephone charges must be paid by the occupant in a timely manner to avoid disconnection of telephone services. Changes to the type of telephone services provided (e.g. NDD, IDD, internet) is not permitted unless authorized by the Funding and Planning Directorate. The Ministry of Health will not be responsible for any additional payment e.g. reconnection fee

### **Electricity (Stand-alone residences)**

The Ministry of Health will not be responsible for the payment of electricity within the residences as this is the responsibility of the occupant. The occupant must ensure to pay in a timely manner to avoid disconnection of electricity services. If disconnection occurs, the occupant is responsible for the payment of the reconnection fee.

**(Residences connected to health clinics/centers)**

If an employee is accommodated in the health residence where the power connections are shared between the health clinic and the health residence, the occupant will be required to make a monthly payment of no less than \$50 towards electricity costs.

**D. Process**

- The Director of Funding and Planning will have the overall responsibility of implementing this policy in collaboration with the Chief Nursing officer, Hospital Liaison officer and Chief Medical and Clinical Services officer;
- The approval to use the health residence shall be made in writing to the Director of Funding and Planning who will seek the HOM endorsement;
- All payment of rent is to be either receipted using the Government official receipts or deposited directly into the Ministry ANZ account;
- All requests to replace household items in the residences due to normal “wear and tear” shall be made to the Director of Funding and Planning. The request should be accompanied by an asset write-off form, a current photo of the asset and where applicable, a service report from a repairman.
- An incident report must be completed for any damages incurred on health properties and assets;
- A handover form for completion of term or use of accommodation should be provided to the Director of Funding and Planning three days before leaving the premises to allow an inspection to be carried out by the nominated person approved by the Director.
- All hospital premises are considered Government premises and therefore fall under the purview of the Cook Islands Investment Corporation (CIIC). Any renovations (major or minor) must be made in consultation with CIIC.

**Results achieved**

1. The provision of suitable accommodation for health staff on both Rarotonga and the Outer Islands ensuring an equitable working environment and maintaining good employer principles.

**APPENDIX 1 (Standard listing of household items in the health residence by island)**

Qty	Description	PUK	Pen-Omoka	Pen-Tetau	Mhx-Tau	Mhx-Tukao	Rak	Na ss	Ait	Atiu	Mang	Mit	Raro
1	4 Burner Gas or Electric FreeStanding Stove/Oven	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
1	2.25l – 3.85l Fridge	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
1	4 Seater Dining table	√	√	√	√	√		√	√	√	√	√	√
1	2-3 Piece Lounge Set	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
1	Queen size bed	√	√	√	√	√	√		√	√	√	√	
2	Single beds	√	√	√	√	√	√		√	√	√	√	√
1	Chest drawers	√	√	√	√	√	√		√	√	√	√	
1	Queen size bed sheets	√	√	√	√	√	√		√	√	√	√	
2	Single bed sheets	√	√	√	√	√	√		√	√	√	√	
1	Electric Fry Pan	√	√		√	√							
1	3 piece Pot set	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	
1	Electric Jug	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	
1	Dressing table	√	√	√	√	√	√		√	√	√	√	
4	Pillows	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
1	Foodsafe cupboard	√	√	√	√	√	√	√					
1	Food pantry/cupboard	√	√	√	√	√	√						
1	20 piece dinner set	√	√	√	√	√	√		√	√	√	√	
1	4 piece cutlery set	√	√	√	√	√	√		√	√	√	√	√
4	tea towels	√	√	√	√	√	√		√	√	√	√	
2	Bath mats	√	√	√	√	√	√		√	√	√	√	
1	Shower curtain	√	√	√	√	√	√		√	√	√	√	
1	7.5kg washing machine or wringer washer	√	√	√	√	√	√		√	√	√	√	√
1	Large plastic or s/s basin	√	√	√	√	√	√						
1	Chest Freezer 320 litre	√	√		√	√	√						

## APPENDIX 1 (Handover form)

Qty	Description	Stock on hand	Condition (Good or Not in Working Condition)
1	4 Burner Gas or Electric FreeStanding Stove/Oven		
1	2.25l – 3.85l Fridge		
1	4 Seater Dining table		
1	2-3 Piece Lounge Set		
1	Queen size bed		
2	Single beds		
1	Chest drawers		
1	Queen size bed sheets		
2	Single bed sheets		
1	Electric Fry Pan		
1	3 piece Pot set		
1	Electric Jug		
1	Dressing table		
4	Pillows		
1	Foodsafe cupboard		
1	Food pantry/cupboard		
1	20 piece dinner set		
1	4 piece cutlery set		
4	tea towels		
2	Bath mats		
1	Shower curtain		
1	7.5kg washing machine or wringer washer		
1	Large plastic or s/s basin		
1	Chest Freezer 320 litre		

Completed by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Verified by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



## **20. Communications Policy**

## Policy Statement

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that communication across the Public Sector is well coordinated, effectively managed and responsive to the diverse information needs of the public service and the public.

## Scope

This policy applies to all public sector agencies to support effective communication internally and externally.

Communication under this policy includes:

- ☐ Internal and external communications
- ☐ Stakeholder engagement or public consultation
- ☐ Managing content on websites and intranet
- ☐ Speaking to the media and at conferences or events
- ☐ Protocols for official functions or events
- ☐ Sponsorship

This policy excludes:

- ☐ Disaster or emergency communications – refer to National Disaster Risk Management Plan
- ☐ Responding to official information requests – refer to Official Information Requests Guide
- ☐ Managing official information – refer to Official Information Management Policy

## Principles

Delivering information and meeting internal and external communication needs, efficiently and effectively, requires cooperation. Public servants must respect the rights of individuals to be informed and have access to relevant information for decision making in all communication activities.

The Official Information Act provides that all agencies must ensure the public have access to official information relating to public policies, programmes and services.

## Procedures

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Employers are responsible for administering this policy and developing procedures to support implementation of the policy. Employers are also responsible for ensuring all policies are easily accessible to employees. Employees must read, understand, and comply with this and other relevant government policies. A breach of the policy may be considered misconduct and may be subject to disciplinary action.

## Communication

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Communication requirements must be taken into account in the planning, implementation and evaluation of public policies, programmes and service delivery.

Communication involves:

- ☐ The way agencies communicate and engage with each other, stakeholders and the public
- ☐ The way agencies receive and disseminate information
- ☐ Using appropriate channels and modes of communication
- ☐ Ensuring access to reliable and accurate information

### All employers must ensure that:

- a) The Official Information Act, regulations and policies are adhered to;

- b) Employees are trained and knowledgeable in providing information services to the public;
- c) Communication is timely, accurate and considers the privacy and safety of the public;
- d) Methods and channels of communication are used to meet the diverse needs of the public;
- e) Information issued by specific agencies is easily identifiable;
- f) Prompt and clear explanations are provided when information is unavailable;
- g) Agency service charters have timelines for responding to enquiries and complaints;
- h) Opportunities are available for the public to provide feedback on major policies, programmes and services, and such feedback is carefully considered in reviews or evaluations;
- i) Agencies have consultation processes that respect the views and interests of others; and
- j) Current information about agency mandates, structures and services is available.

## **Communication principles in practice**

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Effective communication enables the exchange and sharing of information. Information must be disseminated, readily available and easily understood throughout the Cook Islands.

**The following principles must be upheld in the way agencies communicate.**

### **All Agencies must:**

#### **1. Communicate in English and Cook Islands Māori**

- ☐ The official languages of communication are English<sup>1</sup> and Cook Islands Māori<sup>2</sup>
- ☐ All government departments must have a Cook Islands Māori name
- ☐ Where practical, communications directly relevant to public goods and services should be communicated in a concise format, in both English and Cook Islands Māori
- ☐ Pa Enua dialects should be used where appropriate
- ☐ Where appropriate, use Cook Islands Māori salutations and closing remarks, such as 'Kia Orana', 'Kia Manuia' and 'Meitaki'

#### **2. Collaborate to ensure coherent and consistent communication**

- ☐ Employees must work collaboratively to ensure coherent and consistent communication
- ☐ Communication must be in formats that are easily understood and appropriate for the user/receiver of the information

#### **3. Clarify information in a timely, accurate, clear and objective manner**

- ☐ Employees have a duty to explain and inform key stakeholders of public policies, decisions and work programmes and ensure information is accurate and complete
- ☐ Communication should support active and meaningful participation in information sharing and ensure programmes and services are transparent

#### **4. Coordinate better visibility, accessibility and accountability**

- ☐ Information on services and programmes must be visible and accessible through relevant media such as: customer service, telephone, mail, print, broadcasting and internet websites
- ☐ Information from specific agencies must be clearly identifiable with the Crown logo and agency name or logo

#### **5. Construct information in a variety of formats and ways to communicate effectively**

- ☐ Information must be written in a way that can easily be understood and enable people to contribute to the design and delivery of public policies, programmes and services
- ☐ Information must be communicated to meet the diverse needs of people, wherever they reside

#### **6. Consult with stakeholders**

- ☐ Dialogue between agencies and the public must be continuous, informed, inclusive,



relevant, clear, secure and reliable

- ☐ Research, evaluate and listen to the needs of people as this is critical to the design and implementation of public policies, programmes and services

### **Communication Rules and Protocol**

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Communication is a shared responsibility that requires cooperation among agencies to meet the information needs of the public service and the public. Every agency must develop and implement a communication plan outlining types of information, media and authorised employees to communicate and/or disseminate information.

See Annex 01 for a guidance matrix on information types and media.

**The following rules must be adhered to by agencies relating to the key areas shown below:**

#### **Internal communications**

- ☐ Accurate and evidence-based information must be provided to Ministers
- ☐ Ministers and key stakeholders must be kept informed of issues as they arise ('no surprises' approach)
- ☐ Legal obligations and communication protocols must be complied with at all times
- ☐ Privileged or confidential information should be treated sensitively and disseminated carefully

#### **External communications**

- ☐ Official information should be disclosed proactively and published
- ☐ The Official Information Act provides that information held by agencies should be available to the public unless there are good reasons for withholding it
- ☐ All information must be factual, accurate, provided in a timely manner
- ☐ Agencies must ensure:
  - o published information is available on request;
  - o official information is current and is clearly identifiable;
  - o external correspondence is signed by authorised agency representatives; o appropriate official languages with minimal technical jargon is used;
  - o opportunities are available for stakeholders to provide feedback; and
  - o Minister(s) are notified of any information to be released publicly before doing so

#### **Protocols for official functions, events or meetings**

- ☐ All major official functions, events or public meetings must begin and end in prayer
- ☐ Government, traditional and religious leaders must be acknowledged at official public gatherings
- ☐ All public servants must be dressed appropriately at official functions and behave in a manner that promotes the good reputation of the public service (domestically and abroad)

#### **Stakeholder engagement or public consultation**

- ☐ Relevant stakeholders must be identified and consulted on matters of public policy, programmes and services, and kept informed on consultation outcomes
- ☐ Open, honest and responsive communication should be apparent during consultations
- ☐ Factual information, in language or formats that are easily understood, will be presented

#### **Managing content on websites, social media and intranet**

- ☐ Agencies will maintain websites or social media to provide current and accurate information on agency policies, programmes and services
- ☐ The Public Service will maintain an ICT network and intranet to facilitate communication across agencies
- ☐ Employees will be trained to prepare content for websites/social media and how to post

these

### **Speaking to the media and engagements at conferences or events**

- ☐ Only ministers, heads of agencies and 'authorised' staff are permitted to speak to the media
- ☐ Opportunities to enhance the public service reputation through the media will be optimised
- ☐ Any reputational risks arising from misinformation or poor communication will be mitigated
- ☐ Staff invited to participate in various fora as speakers or panellists (domestically and abroad) must be duly authorised and trained to do so effectively, as government representatives
- ☐ All official speeches should be critiqued prior to their public release

### **Sponsorship/Advertising**

- ☐ Agencies may provide sponsorship to support activities or events that fall within the scope of agency mandates or cabinet directives, especially where they promote public-private partnerships and enhance the reputation of the public service
- ☐ Agencies must not advertise or endorse private sector products and services, except where they provide sponsorship towards government led events e.g. Te Maeva Nui
- ☐ Ministers, heads of agencies or staff may be required to represent government in sponsored events, but must not actively seek personal gain from such engagements
- ☐ Individuals or organisations are prohibited from using the 'Crown' logo, government or agency name, without written permission from the head of the agency

### **Role of Central Agencies, Line Agencies and Employers**

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The Office of the Public Service Commissioner is responsible for supporting heads of departments (HoMs) administer this policy to strengthen public service communications.

The Office of the Prime Minister is responsible for coordinating and maintaining access to official information across the public sector, including an official government directory as required under the Official Information Act. Refer to Crown Law or the Official Information Requests guide for details on how to respond to requests for official information.

Line agencies are responsible for implementing this policy and ensuring communication within agencies, among agencies and with the public are managed effectively and positively, to promote the good reputation of the public service.

Employers are responsible for ensuring adherence with this policy and developing agency-specific communication protocols and/or processes. Other government operational policies e.g. Code of Conduct and Risk Management can be referred to, to mitigate and manage any breaches of this policy.

### **Other Provisions**

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All records relating to key aspects of the communications process must be kept for at least seven years and will only be accessible by the employer and/or authorised staff. After the seven year period, the agency may destroy the documentation in adherence with government official information management policies.

The Office of the Public Service Commissioner is responsible for reviewing and updating this policy and associated documents from time to time.

## Annex 01: Communication Guidance Matrix

The following table provides a list of information agencies will disseminate through various media:

- Internal and external communication
- Stakeholder engagement or public consultation
- Managing content on websites and intranet
- Speaking to the media and at conferences or events
- Protocol for official functions or events
- Sponsorship

INTERNAL COMMUNICATION		
Information Type	Medium	Frequency
General information about agency staff contacts list and operational policies	Email/Phone call/Intranet	Permanent, but updated periodically
Agency major meetings, events and programmes	Email/Intranet/Media release/Newsletters	Monthly or as they occur
	Email/Intranet/Media release	As they occur
Changes to functions, strategy and structures	Email/Intranet/Media release/Newsletters	As they occur
Announcements of appointments to key posts	Email/Intranet/Media release/Newsletters	Monthly or as they occur
	Email/Intranet/Media release	As they occur
Key milestones and achievements	Annual Report	Annually
	Email/Media Release	As they occur
	Newsletters and/or intranet	As they occur
Advice to Minister/s	Email/Phone call/Face to face meeting	As they occur
Advice to Staff/Employees	Email/Phone call/Intranet/Face to face meeting/Newsletters	As they occur
EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION		
Information Type	Medium	Frequency
General information on the public service and agency mandates, structures, strategic policies and programmes	Website/Social media	Permanent, but updated periodically
	Strategic Plan/Statement of Intent	Medium term
	Annual Report/Business Plan	Annually
	Stakeholder meetings	Periodically
Legislative or mandated changes to functions or structures (post Cabinet/Parliament approval)	Website/Social media	As they occur
	Ministerial interview	Media schedule
	Media release	As they occur
Major policy or strategy changes (post Cabinet approval)	Website/Social media	As they occur
	Annual Report/Business/Strategic Plan	Annually or as they occur
	Stakeholder meeting	Periodically
	Media release	As they occur
Significant incidents (financial, operational)	Media announcement/brief	As they occur
	Annual Report	Annually
	Stakeholder meeting	Periodically
	Media release	As they occur
Public Service and Agency	Annual Report	Annually

performance	Six monthly report	Mid-Year
	Media release	As they occur
<b>STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENTS OR PUBLIC CONSULTATION</b>		
<b>Information Type</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Policy development or changes	Public notice/meeting	As they occur
	Email/intranet/media release	As they occur
	Website/Social media	As they occur
<b>MANAGING CONTENT ON WEBSITES, SOCIAL MEDIA AND INTRANET</b>		
<b>Information Type</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Content development or changes	Email/intranet/social media/media release	As they occur
<b>SPEAKING TO THE MEDIA, AT CONFERENCES OR AT OTHER EVENTS</b>		
<b>Information Type</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Press conference	Face to face meeting, Radio/television interview	As they occur
	Media release	As they occur
Presentation or speech	Face to face presentation	As they occur
	Media release/Website	As they occur
<b>PROTOCOL FOR OFFICIAL FUNCTIONS OR EVENTS</b>		
<b>Information Type</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Protocol for various events	Agency operation manual/induction guide	As they occur
Dress code and conduct	Agency operation manual/induction guide	As they occur
<b>SPONSORSHIP</b>		
<b>Information Type</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Types and scope of sponsorship	Agency operation manual	As they occur