

COVID-19 employee mobilisation FAQs for employees

General

- The COVID-19 pandemic is challenging all aspects of our lives and the lives of everyone in our community.
- As a public sector, we must ensure we can keep supporting those members of the community who rely on us, and also help those who will require specific support as a result of these extraordinary circumstances.
- To make this happen, we are working together as a Queensland public sector to ensure essential service delivery to the community and supporting our colleagues who need us.
- We have a long history of pulling together in times of crisis, and we know we get through the tough times by pitching in and working together.

How is this mobilisation working?

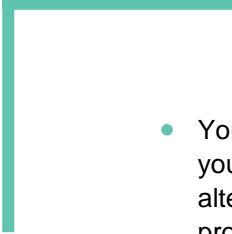
- Agencies are identifying those parts of their workforce that can be made available to support the COVID-19 response.
- This might mean being mobilised to perform new duties that emerge as a result of the outbreak, or performing duties essential to normal operations that have been impacted by staff availability due to COVID-19.
- The Public Service Commission is coordinating with agencies to place available resources in areas of highest demand.

How is this mobilisation different to Community Recovery/Ready Reserves?

- Ready Reserves have already been mobilised to help with some short term and discrete tasks, such as supporting the Local Government elections and this may continue as a separate process.
- Ready Reserves are generally mobilised for short periods of time under specific arrangements, to meet an emergent community need. This may be to help a community affected by a natural disaster to stand back up quickly and receive the government support they require.
- This mobilisation is different to the Ready Reserves, as rather than seeking individual volunteers, resources are nominated by their agencies to fill needs identified across the sector. Mobilisation placements are most similar to a 'work performance arrangement', where employees perform work for a different agency while retaining their existing employment conditions and employer.

Do I have a choice about being mobilised?

- Employees from across the sector who are well and able to work are needed to support essential services.
- All efforts will be made to match your skills and experience with the duties where you are most needed, while at the same time ensuring we place available resources where there is the greatest demand.

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- You will not be required to do something that you do not have skills to do, or that places you at risk. However, our employment framework enables employees to be mobilised to alternative work. Therefore, if there are no genuine constraints, you will be expected to provide assistance where it is most needed.
 - If you have concerns about the request to mobilise and assist, you should raise these with your home agency manager.

I'm not sure I have the skills to do this work?

- For the most part the skills required will not require extensive experience but you will be supported to upskill or reskill where necessary. You will be given appropriate induction information, along with the necessary training to carry out your duties.
- You will most likely be asked to do work that relates to your existing skill set and experience or that builds upon your abilities.
- Please raise any concerns with your home agency manager. We understand that this is a time of heightened anxiety for many and we want to work with you to ensure that this mobilisation is successful.

Can I do this work from home?

- In some cases it might be possible to conduct alternative work from home but not always.
- This will be discussed with you to determine your availability to perform particular duties.

I am vulnerable because of my health or personal circumstances. Am I able to be placed in this mobilisation?

- We are committed to keeping people safe during this process.
- If you have pre-existing medical conditions, suppressed immunity, or have other specific circumstances you will not be placed in location that presents a risk to you.
- However, if you are available to work, you may be able to undertake duties remotely.
- Your home agency manager should be aware of your circumstances, to enable them to identify appropriate duties for you.

I'm a casual or a part-time employee. Am I eligible to be mobilised?

- Yes, you are – we need to mobilise all available resources.
- As much as possible, you will be matched to perform duties that fit in with your existing work patterns (e.g. normal number of hours worked for casuals or part time employees).

How long will my mobilisation be for?

- We are working our way through this together and at the moment the timeframe is unclear.
- It is expected that most placements will be for months rather than weeks.
- While we cannot be certain how long this initial phase might last for, we do know that we need to vastly increase our capacity to respond immediately.

How will my mobilisation impact my pay and conditions?

- Your existing award provisions and industrial instruments will continue to apply during your mobilisation.
- You will continue to receive your regular remuneration while you are mobilised performing other work.
- Your home agency will continue to pay you in the usual way and on your usual pay day.
- Employees who are mobilised will be asked to perform duties as requested.
- As much as possible, employees will be matched to duties with similar working patterns as their usual role.
- However, some duties may involve shifts and other arrangements such as weekend work. Employees required to undertake these roles will receive remuneration in accordance with their award entitlements. Agency chief executives will be expected to exercise discretion to make overtime payments to employees who would otherwise be exempted from being entitled to remuneration for overtime.

What information will I be provided before I am placed?

- You will be provided with the contact details of your 'placement supervisor' who will be your primary point of contact throughout your placement. Your placement supervisor will be responsible for your onboarding, and any questions you may have about the placement.
- You will also be told where and when to arrive, and what to expect from the duties you are being asked to undertake.
- Your agency's mobilisation coordinator will also have these details, and is your primary point of contact from your home agency during your placement.

What happens if I, or someone I'm caring for becomes ill with COVID19 during my placement?

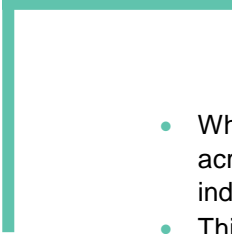
- Your health, wellbeing and safety is of paramount importance.
- If you or someone in your immediate family or household becomes ill, you may access your sick leave to recover or provide care in line with your existing industrial entitlements. Should you exhaust your sick leave entitlements, the directive relating to the health pandemic provides for additional pandemic leave entitlements for public service employees as defined under section 9 of the *Public Service Act 2008*.
- You would need to advise your placement supervisor in the usual way, and appropriate arrangements would be made for your replacement depending on the particular circumstances.
- You will also need to notify your home agency supervisor, to ensure necessary leave recording arrangements can be made.

I have some leave planned – what will happen with this?

- You may be asked to defer leave.
- However, if this is not possible you should discuss with your placement manager how your leave commitments might be accommodated.

How will this help my career?

- The future of work is all about agility and adaptability. 'Soft skills' are becoming more important, as service delivery shifts toward complex cases and specialised services.

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- What was 'a career for life' becomes a life of acquiring skills and experiences portable across multiple careers. Mobility will be essential. Working across roles, agencies and industries will increase your agility.
 - This type of broad experience builds agility and increases career opportunities.

