

CEB Human Resources Network

Guidance Note
for Offices affected by an Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) Outbreak
on
the Management of personnel other than staff members

This statement on the management of personnel other than staff members, has been prepared with the view of ensuring a coordinated, common approach at the country and local level with regard to the most important aspects of managing personnel in the event of an Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) outbreak. In the case of UN Volunteers, the UNV office in Bonn will have to be permanently informed.

UN system personnel may find the latest information related to EVD at:

<http://www.who.int/csr/disease/ebola/en/>
<http://un-epst.org/>

Background

On 8 August 2014, in accordance with the International Health Regulations (2005), the Director-General of WHO determined, on the advice of an Emergency Committee, that the ongoing public health event regarding EVD in Guinea, Liberia, Nigeria and Sierra Leone, constituted a public health emergency of international concern (see WHO statement). A Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) is an extraordinary event determined by the Director-General of WHO to constitute a public health risk to other States through the international spread of disease and to potentially require a coordinated international response. Following this determination, on the advice of the above Committee, the Director-General issued temporary recommendations to guide States with the support of partners, in the response to the EVD outbreaks. UN System Medical Directors are responsible for communicating any changes in the EVD outbreaks and subsequent coordinated response as they apply to the UN system.¹

Introduction

Guidelines and provisions that differ from organization to organization at the same duty station are discouraged as they would undoubtedly lead to difficulties and further disruption at a time of severe crisis. Therefore, the same country-specific provisions should be applied by all organizations present at any given duty station. Accordingly, Head of Offices while honoring existing, individual contract provisions, are encouraged to:

¹<http://www.who.int/mediacentre/news/statements/2014/ebola-20140808/en/>

- ensure a coordinated, common approach taking into account the provisions of national authorities (e.g. with regard to permits and visas); and
- adapt internal organization policies to their local requirements as necessary.

When offices are open

All personnel are required to report for duty unless and until informed otherwise. Unauthorized absence from office will be dealt with in accordance with the terms stipulated in their respective contracts or UNV conditions of Service, and may include prorating of fees and/or contract termination. Taking into consideration the local health advisories and the WHO guidelines and in order to limit possible exposure to EVD, Heads of Offices may:

- a) authorize flexible working arrangements for personnel including the possibility of tele-commuting (working from home or alternate location), or
- b) exercise flexibility in authorizing absence²

When offices are closed

UN system offices may be closed at the instruction of the host government. Alternatively, the Designated Official, guided by WHO and following consultation with the UN Country Team, recommends to the Secretary-General, office closure when deemed necessary. Upon authorization by the Secretary General on the closing of UN system offices, the Designated Official will notify the host government and local authorities.

Duty travel

Planned travel. The decision as to whether to travel to or from an affected duty station should be made in accordance with the national travel advisory set by the host country and taking into consideration WHO guidelines. This should be in conjunction with the local Senior Crisis Management Structure relevant to the duty station.

Planned duty travel that has not been initiated and which is considered non-critical may be deferred. Duty travel should be planned and authorized in accordance with the needs of the Organization as determined by the Head of Department/Office in line with all current security measures in place.

Initiated travel. In the event that the authorized itinerary has to be changed for reasons related to EVD travel restrictions, the Head of Office shall inform personnel of alternate work arrangements.

Illness & inability to perform duties related to EVD

Personnel in contact with a suspected or confirmed EVD case, must immediately notify their responsible Medical Service and should not report to duty.

² Payment/non-payment of fees/VLA shall be in accordance with the terms and conditions set out in their employment agreements.

Hiring

The decision as to whether to hire new personnel should be made in accordance with the national travel advisories set by the host country and taking into consideration WHO guidelines. This should be done in conjunction with the Senior Crisis Management Structure relevant to the duty station.

Hiring of personnel:

- a) will be carried out in accordance with interests, needs and priorities of the Organization;
- b) initiated in direct support of critical functions and in connection with EVD will be given priority and the process will be expedited to the extent possible; and
- c) will be decided upon on a case-by-case basis by Heads of Departments/Offices and deferred whenever possible, for individuals who are not envisaged to perform critical function or in support of EVD.

Extension of contracts

Every effort should be made to renew the contracts of personnel deemed critical one month in advance. Conversely, personnel not deemed to be critical should be informed of non-renewal of their contracts in line with the terms and conditions of their respective contracts/UNV Conditions of Service, or that the term of their service will be shortened if closure of the premises makes it impossible for them to complete the agreed-upon services.