



## ODG CIRCULAR NO. 5 OF 2020

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**To:** Attorney General  
Financial Secretary  
Permanent Secretaries  
Heads of Department  
All Civil Servants

**Cc:** H.E. the Governor  
Hon. Premier

**From:** Deputy Governor

**Ref:** ODG 7/1

**Date:** 25 March 2020

**RE: CLOSURE OF ALL NON-ESSENTIAL GOVERNMENT OFFICES AS OF THURSDAY 26<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2020**

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Having been made aware of a second confirmed case of COVID-19, Cabinet has made a decision to close all non-essential businesses on island for a period of fourteen (14) days effective Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> March 2020.

As a result of this Cabinet decision, I wish to advise that all non-essential Government of Montserrat offices will be closed at end of business today, and that from tomorrow, Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> March, only essential Government of Montserrat staff should attend their workplace.

All staff would have been previously advised of the adoption of flexible working arrangements, and most Heads of Departments would have been developing business continuity plans aimed at reducing the number of staff in various offices at any one time.

I am asking every civil servant who is not one of our essential workers to finalize the necessary arrangements to allow them to work remotely as a matter of urgency today. From tomorrow Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> March 2020, all non-essential civil servants are required to work from home and not return to the workplace until Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> April 2020, unless otherwise directed.

There will be some civil servant who are not essential staff who will not be able to continue to deliver their work remotely due to the nature of their jobs. These individuals are reminded that they are subject to redeployment to assist with filling any capacity gaps arising from the Government of Montserrat's COVID-19 response. These employees are therefore asked to remain available and flexible should their services be required.

For the avoidance of doubt, the following have been identified as essential services at this time:

- Royal Montserrat Police Service (to include Marine and IBSU)
- Fire and Rescue Services

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- Prison Services
- Ministry of Health and Social Services (All Departments)
- Airport Management
- Radio Montserrat
- Government Information Unit
- Cesspool Operators and Driver
- Security/Night Watchmen
- Customs
- Supreme Court Registry (Births and deaths)
- Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (at the direction of the DPP)
- Attorney General's Chambers (at the direction of the Attorney General)
- Department of Information and E-Government Services (DITES)
- Ministry of Finance (Budget and Economic Team, Treasury, General Post Office)
- DMCA

Employees in the following areas are expected to be On Call:

- Air Traffic
- Access
- External Affairs
- Cabinet Secretariat
- PWD
- Vehicle Maintenance
- Sanitary and Phytosanitary
- Plant/Nursery Workers
- Animal Protection workers
- Consular/Passport Services

The above list of areas is subject to review and from time to time adjustments will be made as the situation demands.

Being identified as essential does not mean that a Head of Department will no longer require staff to work remotely where possible or that other flexible arrangements cannot be used to reduce the number of staff physically in one space at any given time.


All Permanent Secretaries and Heads of Non-Ministerial Departments are considered essential personnel and will work either fulltime or remotely or a combination of both. In the case of uniformed services, non-uniform support staff may be deemed essential at the discretion of the Head of Department.

As this situation continues to evolve, there may be some departments or personnel not listed above who may need their staff to be in office to deliver services. In such instances, Heads of Departments should liaise with their Permanent Secretaries who will then forward the request and their recommendation to me for consideration on a case by case basis.

I would like to remind all civil servants that we remain part of an established structure and that at this critical time, there will be no tolerance for uncooperative officers at any level. There will be a zero tolerance approach for obstructive behavior and unreasonable rigidity in responding to legitimate requests. The need for flexibility and adaptability is being underscored.

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At this point in time, we are required to set the standard in terms of complying with instructions from the Government especially as it relates to staying at home, practicing social distancing and taking all steps necessary to stop the spread of this deadly virus. Please continue to cooperate and support the national effort to truly flatten the curve and reduce the spread of COVID-19 in Montserrat.



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Lyndell G M Simpson (Mrs.)

LGMS/oet