As a result of the declaration by public health officials that Covid-19 is a world-wide pandemic, ISS*of*BC has temporarily closed all office sites to walk-in/public traffic. Services to clients have been transitioned to online service and telephone support.

Guidelines for Staff Working Remotely

Working remotely is a temporary arrangement allowing employees to continue to work during the duration of the Covid-19 health crisis and is for a limited time only. It is not an entitlement or benefit and therefore does not supersede or change your terms and conditions of employment.

While ensuring client and business needs are met, ISS*of*BC remains committed to supporting flexible working hours and arrangements for staff during this challenging period. Allowing staff to work remotely is consistent with public health recommendations regarding self-isolation and reducing unnecessary travel aimed at protecting ourselves, our families, our clients and the general public as well as being the preferred method to contain the spread of this disease.

While working remotely, staff who become ill with Covid-19 or any other illness are not expected to work. They are, however, to follow established policies and procedures regarding sick-time notification to Managers. ISS*of*BC staff are expected to continue working their normally- scheduled hours, to take breaks throughout the day and not "work-through lunch," and to continue to record and submit sick time/vacation requests or any other leave requests.

Of paramount importance, staff need to stay connected with their Manager and conversely, Managers should be maintaining connections with their staff via means available such as telephone calls, email, and meetings on Microsoft Team/Zoom etc.

Staff who are struggling with either work or personal issues that may be amplified during this time can assess our Employee Assistance Program by contacting:
- 1-844-880-9142 (toll-free)
- Web: workhealthlife.com
- Mobile App: My EAP

Tips for Working Remotely

- Having some form of routine is important so make a schedule and set reminders such as alarms so you don't lose track of time;
- Keep your routine of getting ready for the work day whatever that may be. Try to avoid spending the day in sweats or pajamas;

- Do not skip meals. Build them into part of your schedule for that day, and when on your break, avoid responding to work-related emails or phone calls;
- If the current situation requires you to spend a part of what is traditionally considered "work hours" to help children with schooling, or caring for sick, frail or physically/mentally challenged individual, notify your Manager you may be unavailable for part of the day and explain why;
- Update your clients and/or supervisors regularly, even if it's something as simple as checking in to see how others are managing;
- If it is safe for you to do so and you can maintain social distancing – taking breaks and going outside for a short walk helps refresh your mind and body; and,
- Keep to your "normal" office hours. When you are off-work, try to disconnect as much as possible. Log-off the computer; if you have both a work and personal cell phone, mute the work phone and tidy up your work space so you don't feel consumed by work.

Workplace Safety

Remote workplaces should be set-up in a manner that ensures they are safe. The following list provides guidance for employees to self-asses the safety conditions of their work-from-home space or office:
- Area is adequately-illuminated with lighting directed toward the side or behind the line of vision, not in front or above it and that the area is well-ventilated and ambient temperature is comfortable;
- Exit(s) are free of obstructions;
- Supplies and equipment (both departmental and employee-owned) are in good condition;
- Storage is organized to minimize risks of fire and spontaneous combustion;
- All extension cords have grounding conductors and all electrical enclosures (switches, outlets, receptacles, junction boxes) have tight-fitting covers or plates. Any exposed or frayed wiring and/or electrical cords etc. are repaired or replaced immediately upon detection;
- Surge protectors are used for computers, fax machines, and printers;
- Heavy items are securely placed on sturdy stands close to walls;
- Computer components are kept out of direct sunlight and away from heaters;
- Desk, chair, computer, and other equipment are of appropriate design and arranged to eliminate strain on all parts of the body; and,
- Staff are encouraged to get up and move around, stretch, take breaks as they normally would throughout the day in an office setting. In particular, staff are not to work through their lunch period.

Privacy and Professional Conduct

- Privacy when working remotely is of vital importance. Sound travels and it is not unusual that people often speak louder when on the phone or in meetings on either Teams or Zoom. Use a headset when possible, avoid putting your phone on speaker, and consider who else is around you.
- Avoid taking business calls when you are outside your home and in a public space. Let someone know you can't take their call right now and arrange a time to call them back.
- When you step away from your computer, make sure nothing is showing on your screen that is confidential or sensitive in nature and then lock it so other household members cannot log-in to your worksite.
- When you are in a Team or Zoom meeting, remember you are a representative of ISS*of*BC and present yourself in a professional manner, particularly if there are representatives from outside of the organization in the meeting.

We are in this together. Be calm, be safe, be kind.