

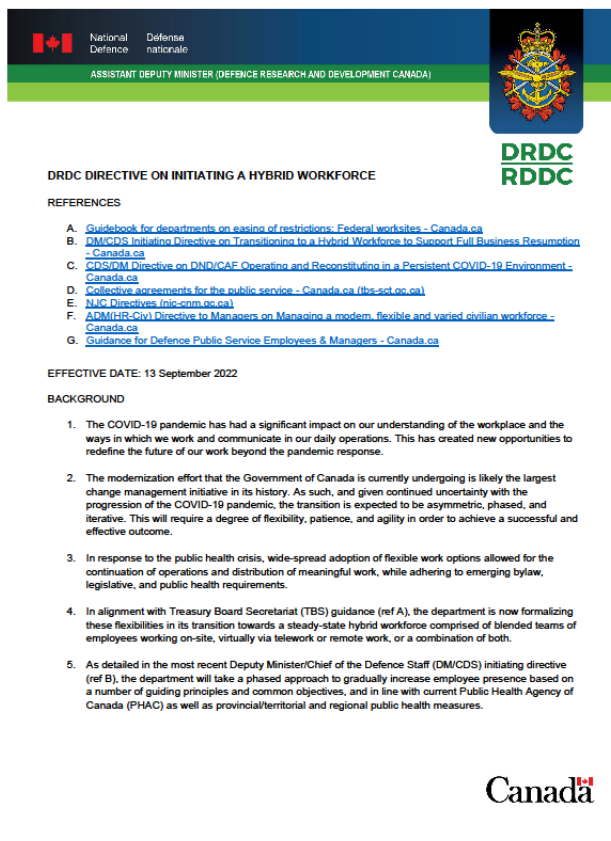
DRDC Report

National Executive Meeting November 2022

The DRDC portfolio has been quiet since our last National Executive Meeting.

I attended the informal update on June 07. Since June there were two other meetings that were scheduled but did not occur for various reasons.

DRDC is still promoting the hybrid work environment. Attached is their draft direction that was sent out on the DreNet/DWAN. Those that can work from home are still able to. Those that are working in labs and can complete paperwork at home are encouraged to do so. Further discussion on the Future of Work occurred at the DRDC UMCC (below)



The DRDC UMCC was held in-person at the Carling Campus on October 31st. This was our first face-to-face meeting since Jaspinder Komal took the reigns of ADM(DRDC). UNDE brought up 3 areas of concern – Staffing, Acting Paperwork at Suffield Research Centre (SRC) and Procurement and SRC Corporate Service Budget.

It was mentioned that DRDC was once the employer of choice; however, it appears as though there has been an influx of departures from employees, leaving the Public Service or going to an OGD (other

government department). It was stated that those who left work still needs to be completed so is being pushed onto those employees who are still there and there does not seem to be any hiring to backfill. Jaspinder stated that at the beginning of the Fiscal Year, DRDC had approximately 10 million deficit in SWE. In October, that pressure dropped to approximately 4 million. It was stated that 300 staffing actions have been completed this fiscal year, with another 250 current staffing actions hoping to be filled. I asked where those 300 positions have been filled (a breakdown was not provided other than nationally) and will be asking for a breakdown of those and the other 250 positions. A request from ADM(DRDC) for additional SWE from the DM has not occurred. ADM(DRDC) stated that ADM Fin stated that there is no longer a possibility for him to exchange L101 funds to L111 (operations to SWE).

A discussion on the Hybrid approach was had. Some managers are wanting to see staff at their desks on occasion. I pointed out that having bottoms in the seat at the worksite just to have seats filled was previously discussed and stated that would not occur. There is no one size approach that will work for DRDC. Jaspinder stated that it is important to have that social connection at work and that was one reason to have employees come in on occasion. It was mentioned that if employees have been successful working from home for the past 2+ years and there are no areas of concern that it does not seem reasonable to 'force' someone back to the office.

It was also stated that the Pandemic has shown that teleworking can be successful if given the appropriate tools. Members have stated that if they will be forced back into the office that they would look elsewhere for employment. Jaspinder responded that if people wanted to leave then they (corporate) will deal with that at that time.

SRC seems to be foregoing official acting paperwork. It sounds as though this is a local area concern and not a DRDC problem. JF Morel (DG Scientific Engineering) will be looking into this.

With a high turnover in SRC's procurement office, there is an immense backlog of e-pro's. Purchasing ceased at the beginning of October and will only be focusing on High Priority purchases. Required materials and products are not received for the scientific work to be completed. Many employees are opting to go out and purchase what they need in order to continue their experiments and trials. Sadly, hearing that it is taking a year or more for a purchase order to go through is becoming more common.

Corporate Services SRC received a few hundred thousand dollars less this year in their budget and have long since run out of basic office supplies and regular stores materials, that employees rely upon. Many employees are brining in their own pens/paper, etc so they can do their jobs.

Respectfully Submitted,

Bryan Meakin

VP ABN



DRDC
RDDC

DRDC DIRECTIVE ON INITIATING A HYBRID WORKFORCE

REFERENCES

- A. [Guidebook for departments on easing of restrictions: Federal worksites - Canada.ca](#)
- B. [DM/CDS Initiating Directive on Transitioning to a Hybrid Workforce to Support Full Business Resumption - Canada.ca](#)
- C. [CDS/DM Directive on DND/CAF Operating and Reconstituting in a Persistent COVID-19 Environment - Canada.ca](#)
- D. [Collective agreements for the public service - Canada.ca \(tbs-sct.gc.ca\)](#)
- E. [NJC Directives \(njc-cnm.gc.ca\)](#)
- F. [ADM\(HR-Civ\) Directive to Managers on Managing a modern, flexible and varied civilian workforce - Canada.ca](#)
- G. [Guidance for Defence Public Service Employees & Managers - Canada.ca](#)

EFFECTIVE DATE: 13 September 2022

BACKGROUND

1. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on our understanding of the workplace and the ways in which we work and communicate in our daily operations. This has created new opportunities to redefine the future of our work beyond the pandemic response.
2. The modernization effort that the Government of Canada is currently undergoing is likely the largest change management initiative in its history. As such, and given continued uncertainty with the progression of the COVID-19 pandemic, the transition is expected to be asymmetric, phased, and iterative. This will require a degree of flexibility, patience, and agility in order to achieve a successful and effective outcome.
3. In response to the public health crisis, wide-spread adoption of flexible work options allowed for the continuation of operations and distribution of meaningful work, while adhering to emerging bylaw, legislative, and public health requirements.
4. In alignment with Treasury Board Secretariat (TBS) guidance (ref A), the department is now formalizing these flexibilities in its transition towards a steady-state hybrid workforce comprised of blended teams of employees working on-site, virtually via telework or remote work, or a combination of both.
5. As detailed in the most recent Deputy Minister/Chief of the Defence Staff (DM/CDS) initiating directive (ref B), the department will take a phased approach to gradually increase employee presence based on a number of guiding principles and common objectives, and in line with current Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) as well as provincial/territorial and regional public health measures.

AIM

6. This directive is intended to provide an L1-specific framework for applying the most recent DM/CDS initiating directive (ref B) to support DRDC managers and employees in efforts to explore a gradual return to the workplace in a predominately hybrid model, when and where possible.
7. An initial trial period will provide an opportunity for DRDC defence team members to share their feedback and identify any gaps or challenges as we prepare for a more robust transition towards a fully hybrid workforce by the end of the fiscal year. These insights will directly contribute to the future of work effort at DRDC and inform the modernization of our workspaces.
8. Recognizing that a number of DRDC regional research centres have been operating within a hybrid work model for some time now, this directive is intended to kick-start a similar process in the National Capital Region (NCR) and any other DRDC worksite where this transition has not yet been initiated.
9. This directive aims to support each research centre and L2 organization in addressing and accounting for unique circumstances while also establishing some commonalities across the broader organization.
10. Centre Directors are authorized to establish any regionally-specific guidance that may be necessary, in accordance with the articles outlined in the DM/CDS initiating directive (ref B) and the current L1 directive. Directors are expected to maintain a degree of consistency across their respective teams.

SCOPE

11. This directive applies to all DRDC public service employees and to all managers of DRDC public service employees, including Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) managers of DRDC public service employees.

DEFINITIONS

12. For the purposes of this directive, the following definitions will guide our understanding and discourse on the future of work (ref B):
 - a. **Designated worksite** refers to a physical location under the organization's control and is **not** a virtual location or a residential address.
 - b. **On-site work** refers to work performed at an employee's designated worksite.
 - c. **Telework** refers to a voluntary arrangement where an employee works at a location other than the designated worksite and is governed by the directive on telework (ref E).
 - d. **Remote work** refers to the employer-directed arrangement where employees work at a location other than the designated worksite in the context of temporary unforeseeable circumstances, such as pandemics, states of emergency, inclement weather, etc.
 - e. **Hybrid work** refers to a combination of on-site and remote work and/or telework.
 - f. **Hybrid workforce** refers to blended teams of employees who work on-site, remotely, telework, or a combination of the three arrangements.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

13. Decisions related to the level of presence in the workplace and the most appropriate work arrangements for each employee must be made with operations in mind. It is important to ensure that organizational and **operational excellence** is never compromised to allow DRDC to continue to deliver on its' mission and mandate.

14. Although a one-size-fits-all approach is not possible nor expected, all cases are subject to the same considerations to ensure **consistency** across the organization.
15. To the degree possible, **flexibility** will be afforded to support a thriving hybrid workforce of the future. All agreements will be routinely reviewed and adjusted, as required.
16. Supported by consistent, timely, and centralized communication of information, progress towards full business resumption and an increased presence in the physical workplace will be **transparent** and well-defined for all DRDC defence team members.
17. In all cases, employees are treated **equitably** and fairly in decision-making, given their specific set of circumstances, and with a view to creating diverse and inclusive workplaces.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Health and Safety Considerations

18. Although DND officially assumed an endemic COVID-19 posture in March 2022 (ref C), a significant resurgence of cases may impact the speed and direction of the transition to a fully hybrid workforce. The public health situation is consistently being monitored and any developments will be communicated as they emerge, both at the regional and national level.
19. DRDC defence team members will not report for on-site work/duty if they have symptoms of COVID-19 or test positive for COVID-19. DND employees and CAF members must follow applicable guidelines as per ref C with respect to isolation and recovery. CAF members will also follow direction from their local Health Services Centres on how best to access care.
20. Anyone with COVID-19 symptoms will not be granted access to Defence establishments, unless they live on the Defence establishment or are present at the Defence establishment to obtain medical services.
21. As DRDC continues to enforce adherence to DND/CAF Public Health Measures (PHMs) and Layered Risk Mitigation Strategies (LRMS) (ref C), efforts are in place to ensure the workplace remains amongst the safest environments for employees.
22. Local workplace health and safety committees will continue to fulfill their mandate and provide feedback and recommendations to senior management on health and safety issues to ensure the workplace remains a safe environment for employees.

Operational Considerations

23. Decisions regarding the most appropriate work arrangements for each position should be made with operational requirements top-of-mind. Dependant on the roles and responsibilities of a position, prioritization may be required when determining the level of workplace presence, particularly in cases where workspace may be limited.
24. The potential for telework, remote work, and/or hybrid work depends on the feasibility and suitability of virtual work for all tasks comprised in a position. Within a two-step process, all L2 organizations will be asked to complete a positional review and an incumbent assessment to help determine the most appropriate work model for each position, and subsequently, each incumbent within the position. Step one of the process will be initiated shortly, in line with mid-year performance reviews and discussions. Supporting resources will be provided at that time.

- a. **Step 1: Positional Review** to establish the most appropriate work model based on the roles, responsibilities, and work objectives of each position, including those that may be vacant at the time of the review. To be completed by **3 October 2022**.
 - b. **Step 2: Incumbent Assessment** to include several layers of key considerations in determining the most appropriate work model for the individual currently incumbent in each position. At this stage, employee- and team- specific considerations are accounted for to provide a more comprehensive and nuanced analysis. To be completed by **17 October 2022**.
 - c. Hybrid, remote, or telework work arrangements must be formalized through a [Flexible Work Agreement \(FWA\) Form \(DND4722\)](#) as part of the Civilian Flexible Work Program. To be completed by **31 March 2023**.
25. In addition to the more common feasibility/suitability criteria (ref B – Annex A), the following DRDC-specific considerations also apply:
- a. **Development and transfer of expertise (Defence Scientists and other groups):** Over the next five years, the scientific community at DRDC will face significant changes, in large part as a result of upcoming retirement eligibility. Successfully adjusting to these anticipated changes will require significant on-the-job training, job shadowing, and mentoring in order to achieve the required transfer of knowledge and expertise. Consequently, the limitations of carrying out these types of activities in a virtual posture must be considered.
 - b. **Obligation to carry out sensitive, classified work and access installations:** In support of CAF capabilities and operations, DRDC engages in the development of cutting edge research and development (R&D), both in-house and through industry engagement. In doing so, DRDC employees often conduct sensitive and classified work that requires access to specific installations and protected and classified documents exclusively available on-site. As such, security and accessibility limitations in a virtual posture must be considered.
 - c. **Intramural innovation:** While scientific work is fundamentally driven by rigorous methodologies and processes, brilliant ideas are often sparked through peer-to-peer interactions and discussions. When establishing work agreements, DRDC needs to strike the right balance between flexibility and enabling opportunities for the collaboration and mutual inspiration inherent to a team dynamic, something that is not easily replicated in a virtual context.
 - d. **Competitiveness in the job market:** The DND continues to invest in top-of-the-line equipment, technology, and infrastructure that enables DRDC to attract new talent and support employees in their career progression. Moreover, while workplace culture and team dynamics are important factors for prospective employees, it is important to consider the ways in which increased flexibility can position DRDC as an employer of choice, most notably by supporting and promoting total health and wellness and accounting for the work-life balance preferences of a diverse workforce.
 - e. **Social cohesion within DRDC and with the broader Defence Team:** Collaboration with the defence team is another key factor in the success of DRDC. As such, there is a need to ensure that social cohesion with DRDC partners is preserved to create and maintain strong working relationships. As organizations increasingly return to the physical workplace, this will impact our approach going forward.

Management Considerations

26. A one-size-fits-all solution is not feasible nor expected. Managers must work with their teams to identify the right balance between supporting employee wellness and well-being and maximizing team productivity to meet organizational objectives and operational requirements. Managers are encouraged to explore various work models, to the degree possible, to gain insights that will support them in striking this balance.
27. DRDC managers must make informed decisions that take into account the guiding principles of this directive and any related policies, directives, collective agreements (ref D), and terms and conditions of employment.
28. DND's values with respect to inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility must inform decision-making in order to foster a diverse, inclusive, equitable, safe, and productive workforce that is free from harassment and discrimination.
29. In this initial phase of transition, work arrangements may be temporary to allow for trial and error. Once an ideal work arrangement has been identified and agreed upon, it must be formalized via FWA.
30. Hybrid work will generally replace the remote work posture of the pandemic response, however in some cases, specific circumstances may require consideration of continued full-time telework. These arrangements will be by exception only and must be assessed on a case-by-case basis.
31. All hybrid employees will be expected to go on-site when required and all positions must remain associated with a designated worksite and its corresponding geo-location.¹ Temporary or ad hoc changes to the designated worksite location associated with a position are **strongly discouraged** and must be assessed on a case-by-case basis in consultation with the L1 Organization and Establishment (O&E) team, and require final approval from the Chief of Staff [COS(DRDC)].
32. Similarly, requests to work remotely outside of Canada are considered exceptional in nature and require consultation with, and approval from, the COS(DRDC).
33. To maintain effectiveness throughout this period of transition, managers must keep employees and relevant collaborators informed of current work arrangements for each member of their team. This awareness will ensure all employees are accounted for in the coordination of tasks and meetings, and that information is distributed effectively, as required. To facilitate the day-to-day management of activities, managers must set an expectation of standard work hours and/or core business hours for employees and ensure that they are broadly communicated.
34. Managers must manage employee performance and talent management irrespective of work location and the agreed upon work arrangement.
35. Inherently, there are some tasks that can only be performed on-site (ref B – Annex A). Where a team consists of a mix of on-site, telework/remote work, and hybrid work arrangements, managers need to take these tasks into consideration and plan accordingly to ensure that no employee is disproportionately or negatively impacted as a result of their particular work arrangement. An individual's particular work arrangement should not impede the ability of others to complete their work (i.e. other members of the team, support service staff, etc.)

¹ The **designated worksite** is a physical location within the organization's control that a position is tied to. It is not a virtual location or a residential address and the region in which that designated worksite resides is considered the formal **geo-location** of that position.

36. It is important to note that the work objectives of a position **must not** be amended in order to suit a desired work arrangement; instead, work arrangements must be determined based on suitability given the existing roles, responsibilities, and work objectives of the position.
37. To support discussions with employees regarding a phased and gradual return to the workplace on a full-time or part-time/intermittent basis, an overview of the available amenities, facilities, support services, and accommodations at each DRDC worksite will be provided shortly.

Employee Considerations

38. As communicated in the latest DM/CDS initiating directive (ref B), the DND's current approach is to establish a predominately hybrid workforce going forward, whereby the vast majority of employees perform their job-related duties through a combination of work on-site at the physical workplace and virtually from home. The success of this transition is largely dependent on our ability to prepare DRDC worksites for this new model.
39. Employees are encouraged to capitalize on this opportunity to experiment with a gradual return to the workplace in an effort to prepare both themselves and their respective workplace for a more permanent hybrid work model. Contributions made during this time will be invaluable to the success of this change management initiative and efforts to modernize the workplace in the longer-term horizon.
40. Employees must present themselves at their designated worksite when required, regardless of their existing work arrangement, for activities such as, but not limited to, information technology (IT) servicing, validation of identity for security purposes, temporary or acute operational requirements, etc. Employees are responsible for all expenses associated with travelling to and from the designated worksite, subject to National Joint Council (NJC) directives (ref E).
41. To support general awareness and preparedness throughout the phased and gradual return to the workplace on a full-time or part-time/intermittent basis, an overview of the available amenities, facilities, support services, and accommodations at each DRDC worksite will be provided shortly.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Chief of Staff (COS) directorates

42. The Director R&D Strategic Resource Planning and Management (DRDSRPM) is responsible for leading the Future of Work effort at DRDC and coordinating the collaboration of key functional authorities and subject matter experts through the establishment of a Tiger Team.
43. DRDSRPM is also jointly responsible, along with the Director R&D Corporate Services (DRDCS), for relaying pertinent information within DND/CAF policy directives, such as the ones promulgated by the DM/CDS and ADM(HR-Civ) (refs B and F).
44. DRDSRPM and DRDCS are also jointly responsible for developing an overarching strategy for the gradual transition to a hybrid work model at National Defence Headquarters (Carling Campus) [NDHQ(Carling)] that will support each L2 organization and the Centre for Operational Research and Analysis (CORA) in the implementation of their own specific guidelines.
45. DRDCS is also jointly responsible, along with the Director R&D Technical and Information Services (DRDTIS), for leading Future of Work initiatives related to such functional areas as security, health and safety, accommodations, IT, and information management (IM).

DRDC managers

46. DRDC managers are responsible for applying the articles of all DND/CAF policy directives, such as those promulgated by the DM/CDS and ADM(HR-Civ) (refs B and F). Managers are also responsible for applying the articles of any DRDC directives which may include unique L1-specific considerations.
47. DRDC managers are responsible for maintaining open and transparent lines of communication with their teams, both individually and collectively, in an effort to establish work arrangements that ensure the success of the team and the well-being of its members. This process will likely be iterative and require flexibility and a certain degree of trial and error before it is finalized.
48. DRDC managers are responsible for setting and communicating the requirements and expectations for the work unit, including respective roles, responsibilities, obligations, and performance expectations. Employees must be made aware of their security, IT, and IM obligations when working virtually in a telework or remote arrangement.
49. Once established, DRDC managers should review their employees' FWAs during mid-year and year-end performance reviews, at a **minimum**. Approved FWAs must be renewed each year via the [Manager's Portal](#) (DWAN) (ref G).
50. In cases where employees are requested to return to on-site work following an extended period of remote or telework, managers must provide adequate advance notice of at least four (4) weeks, where operationally feasible.
51. For arrangements involving telework, managers are responsible for consulting the IT teams for both DREnet and DWAN in a timely manner to confirm their capacity to provide proper support and discuss any security considerations, as required.
52. As a standard, dispute resolution should occur at the lowest level possible. Managers are encouraged to make use of their normal chain of command or Labour Relations Advisor, as required. For more information, please visit the [Labour Relations webpage](#) on the ADM(HR-Civ) intranet site (DWAN).

DRDC employees

53. DRDC employees are responsible for discussing their work-related needs, preferences, and any personal circumstances that require accommodation with their manager in order to enable well-informed decision-making and explore available flexible work options.
54. Where applicable, DRDC employees are responsible for completing an FWA form and submitting it to their manager for approval. Once finalized, DRDC employees are responsible for adhering to the terms of the agreement for the duration of its applicability. This includes an obligation to remain active, responsive, and easily accessible within scheduled work hours, as outlined in the agreement.
55. DRDC employees are responsible for understanding their obligations as per their respective collective agreements, terms and conditions of employment, and the operational requirements of their position. Employees must remain flexible, open, and collaborative, to the degree possible, to support the determination of an ideal work model/ arrangement for them.
56. DRDC employees are responsible for adhering to their security, IT, and IM obligations when working virtually in a telework or remote work arrangement. If found negligent, employees are liable for any consequences of non-compliance.

57. As a standard, dispute resolution should occur at the lowest level possible. Employees are encouraged to make use of their normal chain of command or union representative, as required. For more information and support, please visit the [DRDC Workplace Wellness Nexus site](#) (DWAN).

TOOLS AND RESOURCES

58. **Civilian Flexible Work Program.** ADM(HR-Civ) has promulgated a directive (ref F) that provides a list of resources that have been developed and updated to support this requirement, including:
- a. [Manager's Toolkit](#), also available on the HR Go app;
 - b. [Guidance on the current posture and eventual transition to the post-pandemic environment](#);
 - c. [Flexible Work Program guidance](#), outlining roles and responsibilities, options, and resources (further updates to come shortly); and
 - d. The [Flexible Work Agreement Form \(DND4722\)](#), with instructions.
59. **DRDC Future of Work intranet webpage (DWAN).** Developed as a one-stop-shop for all information, tools and resources related to DRDC's transition to a hybrid workforce, this webpage on the DWAN intranet site will serve as a hub of information as we continue to develop, grow, and improve our business resumption efforts. The webpage can be accessed via the following link: [Programs and initiatives | Future of Work \(mil.ca\)](#)
60. **Mental Health and Well-being Resources:** As organizations experiment with hybrid work models and solidify plans for re-occupancy of federal worksites, the Centre of Expertise on Mental Health in the Workplace has gathered resources from trusted sources to help support psychologically healthier and safer workplace transitions – these resources can be accessed here: [Mental health and COVID-19 for public servants: Preparing mentally for the next normal - Canada.ca](#).

For more information and resources, please visit the [DRDC Workplace Wellness Nexus site](#) (DWAN).

POINT OF CONTACT

61. For any questions, concerns, or additional information, please contact the DRDC Future of Work Tiger Team at: +DRDC Future of Work - Avenir du Travail RDRC@ADM(DRDC) DRDSRPM@Ottawa-Hull.
62. All feedback on your experience with returning to the workplace, including the identification of any challenges, gaps, and concerns should be directed to the positional inbox linked above.