



## **CIRCULAR NO H 217 / 2020**

**TO: ALL HEADS OF DIVISIONS / DIRECTORATES / CHIEF DIRECTORATES / HEADS OF INSTITUTIONS / REGIONS / DISTRICTS AND SUB-STRUCTURES**

### **End-of-year functions Advisory**

The end of the year is fast approaching. This is traditionally a time for workplaces to host functions as an occasion for celebration, expressing gratitude, reflecting on the year's hard work and connecting as a team in a less formal setting. These end-of-year functions are very important for morale and team building within a caring organisation such as ours. Traditional end-of-year functions tend to be large gatherings accompanied by refreshments and close contact socialising. However, COVID has forced some extraordinary changes on us and modifying the end-of-year function is yet another change which we will have to bear. Given the resurgent pandemic in the province and the fact that social events (especially with large numbers of people) are significant drivers of coronavirus transmission, this year's end-of-year functions will have to take a different form.

### **There are several alternatives to traditional in-person large gathering events:**

#### **1. Virtual Events**

Workplace virtual meeting platforms (such as MS Teams and Zoom) can be repurposed to host virtual end-of-year functions. Many end-of-year function traditions can also take place virtually, such as speeches, prize-giving ceremonies (gift cards can be emailed), dress-up competitions, dance competitions (e.g. employees can pre-record dance challenges on their phones which can be collated by the organisers' and played during the function), and team-building games (e.g. charades, trivia games).

#### **2. Virtual Group chats**

If virtual meeting software is not available (e.g. a workplace that is largely not office-based) an end-of-year WhatsApp chat group can be created for employees to chat, share messages, photos and videos.

### 3. Postponement of end-of-year function

If virtual options are not suitable, 2020 end-of-year functions can be postponed until such time in 2021 when the COVID epidemic has subsided.

### 4. Severely restricted in-person event

If an in-person event is held, **(which is not advisable)**, these events should:

- Be short duration (e.g. 1.5 hours or less)
- Have 10 or fewer attendees (including organisers)
- Be held outdoors only (and cancelled in the case of inclement weather)
- Maintain 1.5m distance between attendees at all times
- Ensure mask-wearing at all times
- Require documented symptom and exposure screening of all attendees before attending
- Require hand-washing upon arrival for all attendees
- Not permit eating or drinking, as this would require attendees to remove their masks
- Travel to and from the event should be in vehicles at only 50% capacity, with windows open, all occupants wearing masks, and all occupants having sanitised their hands before entering the vehicle

Given the risk of spreading COVID at end-of-year functions, staff are strenuously urged to use one of the 4 options above, with option 4 only being used as a last resort, if none of the other options are logistically possible.



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DDG: Chief of Operations

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