



# **UNV Administrative Guidelines for the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Outbreak**

## **Operational Measures for Management of UN Volunteers**

**Volunteer Solutions Section  
Version 6.0  
1 April 2022**



## **Purpose**

These Guidelines are intended for the UN Volunteer recruitment/management practitioners, including but not limited to UNV Regional Offices, Field Units, Volunteer Service Centre, and for reference by UN Host Entities and UNV Funding Partners during the COVID-19 operational response.

These Guidelines are informed by the [unified Conditions of Service](#) for UN Volunteers, which are the main legal instruments governing the management of UN Volunteers.

As such, these Guidelines should be viewed as an extension of the applicable Conditions of Service for UN Volunteers and are intended to provide clarity on the operational measures for the management of UN Volunteers during the COVID-19 crisis.

All volunteer management practitioners are expected to implement the provisions of these Guidelines.<sup>1</sup> UNV's guiding principle for aspects not covered in this guidance should be informed by the principle of equity that UN Volunteers are treated with at least the same minimum duty of care standard as UN staff.

These Guidelines will be reviewed periodically, as necessary, by the UNV Volunteer Solutions Section and amended accordingly.

## **Applicability**

These Guidelines are applicable to all UN Volunteers and recognized dependents globally as of the date indicated on the cover page of the document until notice is provided revoking or amending their applicability.

These Guidelines may be updated, as determined by UNV, in response to COVID-19.

These Guidelines will expire in alignment with the CEB HR Network winding down of COVID-19 administrative provisions for UN staff.

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<sup>1</sup> Guidelines and provisions of similarly situated UN staff that differ from UN Volunteer guidance will be carefully reviewed and interpreted flexibly to the interest of UNV to minimize difficulties and disruption at a time of crisis.



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## Guidelines for COVID-19 affected UN Volunteer Assignments

Topic	Administrative Guidance
<p><b>1. Deployment of UN Volunteers within the United Nations Systems Criticality Framework</b></p>	<p>As per current UN security policy a key principle is programme/mission criticality.</p> <p>New deployment requests (including replacements) should take into consideration the criticality guidance established by the Designated Official of the country of assignment.</p> <p>Prior to travel, security clearance must be requested through the UNDSS TRIP system (<a href="https://trip.dss.un.org/">https://trip.dss.un.org/</a>). All security clearance requests will be reviewed by UN DSS officials in the destination/assignment country.</p>
<p><b>2. Consideration of candidates for international UN Volunteer assignments from countries in lockdown</b></p>	<p>International UN Volunteer selected candidates from countries barred from travelling to the country of assignment or prohibited to leave from their current location due to official restrictions will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis for telecommuting possibilities, in consultation and agreement with the UN Host Entity and the Field Unit/Regional Office covering the country of assignment.</p>
<p><b>3. COVID-19-related disruptions to authorized travel</b></p>	<p>a) <b>Disruption to non-initiated travel:</b> In the event that the itinerary for authorized travel must be changed due to COVID-19 related travel restrictions, the selected candidate should immediately inform the UN Host Entity and explore alternative options.</p> <p>If alternative travel options are found, then the travel monetization process is initiated per current UNV practice and the UN Host Agency is charged for any rebooked tickets.</p> <p>If no alternative travel options are found, please refer to the approach set out under Section 2 above.</p> <p>b) <b>Initiated travel disrupted - stopover:</b> If during authorized travel, local authorities, UN guidelines, or airlines create an unavoidable stopover for a UN</p>



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	<p>Volunteer, then any DSA payments<sup>2</sup> to be made will follow applicable UN Host Entity rules and remain payable in the stopover location until the first available flight to the authorized final destination is confirmed and travel authorized.</p> <p>c) <b>Initiated travel disrupted – cancelled:</b> If during authorized travel, local authorities, UN guidelines, or airlines prevent completion of the journey, then any DSA payments to be made will follow UN Host Entity rules and remain payable in the transit location up until the first available flight either to the originating location, or in exigent circumstances, a third location is confirmed and travel authorized.</p>
<p><b>4. Disrupted return to official duties following discretionary leave</b></p>	<p>UN Volunteers who are authorized to travel outside the Duty Station on discretionary leave (Annual Leave, Family Leave, Learning &amp; Training Leave, Home Visit, and when applicable Rest &amp; Recuperation), must be aware that, re-entry into the Duty Station or departure from the countries to which they travel may not be possible.</p> <p>In these cases, the UN Volunteers’ supervisor is the primary authority in assessing and mitigating this risk to the UN Volunteer before taking discretionary leave noting that discretionary leave approval may not be forthcoming based on their risk assessment and good judgment.</p> <p>UN Volunteers who are unable to return from approved discretionary leave to the Duty Station should explore telecommuting options with the UN Host Entity, if feasible. When UN Volunteers cannot return to resume their official duties and when telecommuting is not feasible or approved by the UN Host Entity, separation may result after exhausting all authorized entitlement leave per Section XIII.5.b.v of the unified Conditions of Service.</p>

<sup>2</sup> The costs associated with DSA payments or any other costs associated with provision referred to or triggered as a result of these Guidelines will be borne by the UN Host Entity. In cases of fully-funded UN Volunteers costs that would be borne by the UN Entity partner will be absorbed by the UNV donor funding partner.



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	<p>The UN Volunteer bears the financial risk associated with travel arrangements and rebooking in all cases of discretionary travel.</p> <p>Any DSA payments that may be payable will follow the same rules for similarly situated UN Host Entity staff, however such payments are generally not provided.</p>
<p><b>5. Special Leave with VLA</b></p>	<p>UN Volunteers will continue to receive their Volunteer Living Allowance when they are in situations where similarly situated UN staff would receive Special Leave With Full Pay (SLWFP) due to COVID-19 as per the Administrative Guidelines for Offices on the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Outbreak by the HR Network or any supplementary UN Host Entity specific guidance.</p>
<p><b>6. State Mandated Quarantine</b></p>	<p>a) Countries may put in place protective/preventive measures and screening procedures for any suspicious signs of infection in individuals arriving at locations within their jurisdiction. In addition, some countries and jurisdictions may require specific vaccination requirements are fulfilled before entrance is granted. These measures are the responsibility of the UN Volunteer to understand and comply with as per official instruction.</p> <p>Depending on the circumstances, a UN Volunteer arriving in the country of assignment may be quarantined under state mandates.</p> <p>Deployment of UN Volunteers to begin their assignment or while on an authorized entitlement travel may continue, but candidates need to be aware of the increasingly stringent special state mandated quarantine measures they may be subject to during transits and upon arrival in the country of assignment.</p>
	<p>b) <i>Unforeseen State Mandated Quarantines</i> - For UN Volunteers and authorized dependants quarantined while on authorized entitlement travel (Assignment, Home Visit, Repatriation) payment of DSA will be applicable by UN Host Entity when the quarantine was unforeseen. If hospitalized or placed in a quarantine facility with full board, DSA will be reduced to one third. Self-isolations that are either</p>



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	<p>not obligatory or are in locations that do not incur accommodation costs are not eligible for DSA.</p> <p>c) <i>Foreseen and Home Visit/Repatriation country mandated quarantines.</i> Mandated quarantines that are foreseen or those imposed during Home Visit and Repatriation that occur in the Home Visit/Repatriation country of the UN Volunteer are not eligible for any DSA payments. DSA payments during Home Visit or Repatriation would only be applicable for unforeseen state mandated quarantine in transit locations while travelling on the authorized travel route. If transit locations are known to have mandated quarantine obligations, then the UN Volunteer should request an alternative authorized travel arrangement or bear any costs associated with in-transit mandatory quarantine.</p>
	<p>d) UN Volunteers and authorized dependants placed under involuntary quarantine for any other circumstance not covered in this Section will be subject to UN Host Entity rules for similarly situated UN staff (I.e. international or national).</p>
<p><b>7. COVID-19 PCR Test</b></p>	<p>Medical insurance provider will provide coverage of COVID-19 PCR tests when prescribed by a medical practitioner. When it is impossible to obtain a prescription from a medical practitioner the costs of a COVID-19 PCR tests that are required at any stage of an authorized travel itinerary will be the responsibility of the UN Host Entity under the following circumstances only:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Authorized entitlement travel (Assignment, Home Visit, Repatriation).</li> <li>• Authorized dependant entitlement travel</li> <li>• Authorized assignment related travel (medical evacuation, security evacuation)</li> <li>• Authorized mission travel</li> <li>• Authorized R&amp;R</li> <li>• When authorized by the UN Host Entity or UNV Donor Funding Partner</li> </ul> <p>Unprescribed COVID-19 PCR tests that are not included in the above list will be borne by the UN Volunteer.</p>



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<p><b>8. Management of UN Volunteers serving during the COVID-19 pandemic</b></p>	<p>The overriding principle is that UN Volunteer assignments will continue to be managed as per the applicable UNV COS and the specific recommendations of the UN Host Entity/UN Country Team (UNCT)/Designated Official for Security (DO) in the respective countries (e.g. in terms of the applicable working regime, in-country rotation policy, MOSS, etc.).</p> <p>Implementation of this principle requires an open and continuous channel of communication between relevant UNV representatives with UN Host Entity duty of care focal points.</p> <p>a) In the event specific UN Host Entities and/or UNV Funding Partners request exceptions from the UNV COS or applicable administrative guidance, the UNV Regional Managers in line with relevant delegation of authority may exercise discretionary approval of waivers/deviations. Such deviations should not result in different treatment of UN Volunteers in the same duty station and type.</p> <p>b) When possible, there should be a UNV representative in UNCT, Security Management Team (SMT) or other UN meetings at UN country level where the COVID-19 crisis is being discussed.</p> <p>c) There is an increased need to exercise extra care with regards to monitoring the whereabouts of serving UN Volunteers.</p> <p>For instance, all travel needs to be closely monitored and recorded in TRIP module, and any UN Host Entity specific system. UN Volunteers should report every travel to TRIP.</p> <p>d) UN Volunteer data must be fully up to date at any point in time and be available upon request. Beneficiary and inventory forms in applicable Volunteer Management System, in particular, must be regularly kept up to date.</p> <p>e) The increased psychological pressure and morale issues amongst serving UN Volunteers is a duty of care concern. UNV Administrating Offices should promptly and proactively address specific</p>
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	<p>questions. Escalation may be channelled through <a href="mailto:support@unv.org">support@unv.org</a>.</p>
	<p>f) Should a UN Volunteer require reasonable accommodation to fulfil their assignment in the context of COVID-19 or otherwise, they should channel that request to their UN Host Entity and inform UNV.</p>
<p><b>9. Management of UN Volunteer dependants for COVID-19 duty of care/security system</b></p>	<p>The overriding principle is that UN Volunteers’ dependants will continue to be managed as per the applicable Conditions of Service and the specific recommendations of the UNCT and/or DO in the respective countries.</p> <p>a) All serving UN Volunteers with dependants, <i>regardless of whether they are recognized by UNV HQ or whether they are in a family or non-family Duty Station</i>, must be reported to and registered with UNDSS, when required, by the UN Volunteers.</p> <p>Such registration is solely meant for safety and security purposes and does not imply formal recognition or give rise to dependant-related entitlements.</p> <p>Dependant data must be fully up to date at any point in time and available upon request.</p>
<p><b>10. Repatriation disruptions</b></p>	<p>a) <b>Extension of appointment in country.</b> In cases where repatriation travel is not possible due to COVID-19, and depending on the circumstances, an assignment of a UN Volunteer holding a permit/visa in the Duty Station and who is not requesting residency status in the country of assignment, may be extended in consultation with the UN Host Entity and/or UNV Donor Funding Partner until departure/entry is possible and up until the first travel opportunity or flight is available to the UN Volunteer.</p>
	<p>b) <b>Extension of appointment in third country/reassignment.</b> There may be circumstances, due to COVID-19 related repatriation disruptions, where a UN Volunteer will no longer hold a valid permit/visa in the Duty</p>





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	<p>Station, it will not be renewed in time, or there is some other COVID-19 related matter prohibiting their remaining in the Duty Station/country of assignment. In these cases where repatriation to the home country is not possible, the appointment of the UN Volunteer will be extended temporarily in consultation with the UN Host Entity and/or UNV Donor Funding Partner and travel should be facilitated to a third-country location as a reassignment until the first travel opportunity or flight is available to the UN Volunteer to be repatriated.</p>
<p><b>11. Telecommuting and alternate work arrangements</b></p>	<p>Work arrangements, including flexible working arrangements, are determined by the UN Host Entity regulations and/or applicable UNV Donor Funding Partner specific agreements.</p> <p>Alternate work arrangements, which are different from flexible working arrangements, may also involve working from a different location, within or outside the Duty Station, including from a UN Volunteer’s domicile. Alternate work arrangements are at the request of the UN Host Entity and as such are not considered flexible working arrangements.</p> <p>The authority to implement alternate work arrangements rests with UN Host Entities. In circumstances where the UN Host Entity has implemented alternate work arrangements, the applicable rules for similarly situated UN staff members will apply to UN Volunteers.</p> <p>The UN Host Entity is authorized to exercise discretionary approval of telecommuting arrangements for UN Volunteers outside of the Duty Station to allow flexibility arising from COVID-19 related disruptions in line with their telecommuting policies.</p>



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	<p>All costs<sup>3</sup> associated with authorized telecommuting arrangements are absorbed by the UN Entity<sup>4</sup>.</p> <p>In cases of authorized telecommuting arrangements by the UN Host Entity, the UN Volunteer should confirm in writing their agreement to the UN Host Entity the terms of such arrangements.</p> <p>In cases where the UN Host Entity has authorized the UN Volunteer to perform their assignment remotely, the Post Adjustment Multiplier (PAM) and related entitlements to be paid will be determined by the UN Host Entity and the official duty station may be adjusted to the duty station where the UN Volunteer is physically situated.</p> <p>UN Volunteers availing themselves of any telecommuting arrangements in locations other than their designated Duty Station should duly inform UNDSS of their location for United Nations Security Management System (UNSMS) accuracy for integration within that location.</p> <p>Medical coverage would follow the Cigna policy applicable to the physical location of the UN Volunteer. For UN Volunteers telecommuting from restricted locations such as the USA they must contact Cigna and inform UNV immediately. Any additional medical insurance costs due to approved telecommuting would be borne by the UN Host Entity or UNV Donor Funding Partner, when applicable.</p>
<p><b>12. COVID-19 related Well-Being Differential (WBD) increment</b></p>	<p>UN Volunteers meeting the eligibility criteria may receive a COVID-19 related Well-Being Differential increment, when designated by their UN Host Entity, who will apply the same criteria and methodology for similarly situated UN personnel for COVID-19 Danger Pay, subject to confirmation of funds by the UN Host Entity.</p>

<sup>3</sup> Authorized costs include all incurred costs as well as UNV proforma elements that are not utilized due to the authorized telecommuting arrangement.

<sup>4</sup> In cases of fully-funded UN Volunteers all costs will be borne by the UNV donor funding partner.

<p><b>13. Analogous guidance</b></p>	<p>On issues where the applicable UNV COS or this Guidance document are silent, relevant UN staff regulations, rules, and policies, including Administrative Guidelines for Offices on the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Outbreak by the HR Network, may be applied by analogy, subject to agreement between UN Host Entity and UNV, but without conferring staff status or creating new entitlements.</p> <p>A guiding principle for all analogous guidance is that to the extent possible UN Volunteers are treated equally to similarly situated UN staff members (i.e. international or national).</p>
<p><b>14. UN-led COVID-19 vaccination programme</b></p>	<p>In locations where there are no national COVID-19 vaccination programmes and where UN personnel may not have access to COVID-19 vaccine, or to a WHO approved COVID-19 vaccine, the United Nations, through the Department of Operational Support (DOS) of the United Nations Secretariat, is putting in place alternative arrangements to ensure that such personnel and their eligible family members, including the eligible dependents of UN Volunteers, can be vaccinated through a UN-led COVID-19 vaccination programme.</p> <p>UN Host Entities may also have specific obligations for their personnel to be vaccinated that would apply to UN Volunteers.</p> <p>UN Volunteers must follow all local instructions regarding UN-led COVID-19 vaccination programme based on the UN Medical Directors recommendations.</p>
<p><b>15. Critical incident and case management.</b></p>	<p>Critical incidents (i.e., Medevac) and special cases where health, safety and security are at imminent risk, must be brought to the immediate attention of the UN Volunteer’s direct supervisor/UN Host Entity, as well as the UNV Volunteer Services Centre, cc Regional Offices/Field Units, so that UNOG is informed without delay for further follow up/action.</p> <p>Designated COVID-19 Focal Point must also be informed in case of COVID positive test results.</p>