



ANY REPLY OR SUBSEQUENT REFERENCE SHOULD BE ADDRESSED TO THE
FINANCIAL SECRETARY AND THE FOLLOWING REFERENCE NUMBER QUOTED -

Telephone No. 92-28600-16
Website: <http://www.mof.gov.jm>
Email: info@mof.gov.jm

MINISTRY OF FINANCE
30 NATIONAL HEROES CIRCLE
P.O. BOX 512
KINGSTON
JAMAICA

2020 March 30

Circular # 6

Permanent Secretaries
Chief Executive Officers
Principal Finance Officers
Financial Controllers

Re: COVID-19 Guidelines for Government Accounting Practitioners

In an effort to limit the community spread of the COVID-19 virus, public officers are being encouraged to work from home where it is possible to reduce the level of public travel and interaction. Consequently, Permanent Secretaries, Chief Executive Officers, Principal Finance Officers and Financial Controllers are advised to identify all personnel who are required to carry out functional activities for which physical presence is needed, in relation to the collection of revenue and the payment of bills, in a bid to identify the officers requiring remote access to the Government Financial Management System (GFMS).

Working off-site

To connect to the Government Financial Management System (GFMS) users have to be at the relevant government offices; notwithstanding, the IT Department of each Ministry or Department, with the proper technology and security, can allow certain users to access their network from home remotely, on the approval of the respective Head of Entity. This approval must be contingent on:

- The respective entity (Ministry, Department or Agency) having the facility to allow officers to work from home.
- Officers having the appropriate facility at home; reference Circular #4 dated 2020 March 17 (attached). That is, the respective officer must have indicated "yes" to the questions on the approved "Work from Home" form.
- Officers being assigned GOJ laptops/devices that are to be used for remote access. Under no circumstance should remote access be from personal equipment.



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In order to ensure that adequate internal controls are maintained, the following guidelines must be adhered to in the processing of payments:

1. All original documents must remain at the office.
2. There must be a system of rotation for assigned personnel within the accounting unit/function to remain in office during the period, unless a full lock down is mandated by the Government of Jamaica.
3. The officers assigned to office duties must scan documents and email to the relevant users that will be required to insert, certify or authorize the transactions.
4. Documents must only be emailed using work email addresses; personal emails must not be used in any circumstance.
5. All instructions via emails to make payments must be routed through the Principal Finance Officer or such Accountable Officer with responsibility for the accounts unit/department.
6. When normality resumes, all payment vouchers executed within this period must be printed, signed and filed in accordance with the established procedures.

Conclusion

Permanent Secretaries, Chief Executive Officers, Principal Finance Officers and Financial Controllers are asked to ensure that this Circular is brought to the attention of all relevant officers.

The Accounting Officer shall ensure that all other provisions of the Financial Administration and Audit Act: Financial Instructions are adhered to when executing the accounting function of the Ministries, Departments or Agencies.

Darlene Morrison
Financial Secretary