



GOVERNMENT OF BERMUDA  
**Department of Communications**

11 May 2020

CONTACT

Aderonke Bademosi Wilson

Director

Phone: (441) 505 1868

Email: [abwilson@gov.bm](mailto:abwilson@gov.bm)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**11 May COVID-19 Update**

Good evening.

Tonight I am filling in for the Premier, he is out this evening celebrating the birthday of his son Ed. So we wish Ed a happy birthday and we look forward to seeing the Premier back with us on Wednesday at the next press conference.

Today we will have the Minister of Health who will be giving the update on COVID-19 and the work of her Ministry; The Minister of National Security, who will provide an update on the work of his ministry and the Regulations that his Ministry and been overseeing during this period. And, we are also have an update from Minister Zane De Silva who is the Minister of Tourism and Transport who will give us an update on the work to get our public transportation system back up and running again and also helping with our economy as a result.

And now Minister of Health Kim Wilson.

**MINISTER WILSON SPEAKS**

Thank you Minister.

I would like to now extend our condolences to the unfortunate, most recent death related to COVID-19 to the family and friends of that person. I would also like to continually express condolences to everyone who has lost a loved one as a results of COVID-19. And certainly, we should keep in our thoughts our thoughts, all those who continue to fight this disease here in Bermuda, and wish them recovery.

The House of Assembly passed legislation on Friday 8 May amending the National Pension Scheme (Occupational Pensions) Act 1998 to permit a person under the age of 65 who participates in a private, defined contribution pension plan or local retirement product, to voluntarily withdraw up to \$12,000.

The Senate will meet this Wednesday to debate the legislation and if approved by the Senate, the legislation will be signed by the Governor.

Following this, the Minister of Finance will then bring the legislation into operation with the publishing of a notice in the Official Gazette. Once the legislation has been brought into operation, a member or former member of a pension plan or local retirement product under the age of 65 will be able to apply to their administrator for a refund of up to \$12,000. This will require them to complete an application form along with providing the appropriate supporting documentation.

If their application is approved, their plan administrator will have up to twenty working days to make the payment to the applicant as requested.

The Pension Commission will be providing specific guidance to the plan administrators to make the entire process as efficient and as timely as possible.

Also during Friday's virtual session, the Premier confirmed changes to the Emergency Powers (COVID-19 Continuing Precautions) Amendments Regulation 2020.

These changes were:

- Marriages and domestic partnerships can now take place with no more than ten people, including the officiant, in attendance;
- Clarity was given around SCUBA diving. It is prohibited during Phase One; and
- Money service businesses are permitted to operate, with the permission from the Minister of National Security, restricting the number of customers inside at any given time in the business. It should be noted that licensed money service businesses must receive permission from the Minister of National Security prior to opening their business.

The Minister for National Security will give an update on the work of his Ministry during this period in time. Minister Caines.

MINISTER CAINES SPEAKS

Thank you Minister Caines.

I wish to also acknowledge the presence of the Police Commissioner Mr. Corbishley who is here as well.

As part of our phased and measured approach to reopening the island, public transportation plays a crucial role with getting our people and economy moving again. The Minister for Tourism and Transport, the Hon. Zane De Silva is here to give an update on the work he and the Ministry are doing to get public transportation going and as a result getting our economy moving.

Minister DeSilva. MINISTER DE SILVA SPEAKS

Thank you Minister De Silva.

Finally tonight, I'd like to extend a word of thanks to all of my colleagues that are here today, but also to the ministries and departments behind them, that ensure that the work that they're doing is done well. And they're all doing a great job.

I would also like extend a heartfelt thanks to my own ministry team those at the Ministry of Home Affairs and all the departments. I would like to particularly give thanks, because I haven't had an opportunity to do this during this period, to my PS of Home Affairs and particularly to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, which has been giving great assistance to our commercial farmers, commercial fishermen, veterinary practices and pet stores.

I would also like to give thanks to one particular department in my ministry, the Department of Consumer Affairs, which is fielding a lot of questions from people around issues of consumer protection, through this period.

But as I said, there are many ministries and departments, including this one of Communications that has been doing a great job for us through this period. So I extend this message to that team as well, who are here at every press conference, helping to make sure that we get the message out to the public..

I would also like to thank everyone on the island who has been working to protect our community from COVID-19 and particularly those who have been helping us to enforce the emergency regulations which have been in place for a number of weeks now. And who are sacrificing a lot of their time and energy, right now, to get our economy going in this Phase One. But I'd like to also mention as well, the goal is to get to the next phase. It's not just to stay where we are.

And that will depend on a number of things. That will depend on the number of new cases that we get, it will depend on the number of hospital admissions, it will depend on the number of ICU admissions, it will depend on compliance by the public regarding physical distancing.

Obviously, people in public we've asked them to wear masks. And also, the amount of hospital PPE that we have that can ensure the protection of everybody who's working to take care of people through this period And the use of the Health IQ app as well. This will help our community to manage the situation.

This will be able to be led by the Ministry of Health and how we get to that next phase, and the advice that the public health professionals provide us in the government, and it will guide those decisions that we make.

And, of course, at the end of the day, if we all follow the rules, we will get to the next phase. So it's very important that we remember, it's by our cooperation and following the rules that are carefully laid out, that Bermuda will get from one phase to the next.

And we will be a healthier and safer country as a result.

And with that, I conclude and would happily in turn, receive any questions from you who are here today.