



March 2020



Coronavirus Update #4 – Coronavirus – Guidelines to Employers Following the Prime Minister’s Guidelines of March 16, 2020 and the Ministry of Health’s Guidelines of March 17, 2020

Following our previous Client Updates of [March 8, 2020](#), [March 12, 2020](#) and [March 16, 2020](#), below is a summary of certain updates regarding the SARS-CoV-2 virus outbreak which causes the COVID-19 disease (hereinafter the “**Coronavirus**”) and its impact on employment matters.

Changing work arrangements to mitigate contagion and exposure to the Coronavirus

Pursuant to the Prime Minister’s guidelines of March 16, 2020, **the private sector was instructed begin to limit its activities. The main significance of this limitation of activities is the 70% decrease of employees that will arrive to work in workplaces of over 10 employees.** Within the next few days, the Prime Minister’s guidelines will be brought to the government for approval and afterwards, more detailed injunctions will be published accordingly, making the guidelines legally binding.

Decreasing the number of employees arriving to their workplace can be done, *inter alia*, by having employees work in shifts, encouraging and/or requiring that employee work from home or forcing employees to take paid vacation or unpaid leave.

The guidelines published by the Ministry of Health on March 17, 2020, require employers to reduce the necessity that employees leave their homes by instructing them to work from home, conduct meetings through video conferences or telephonic conference calls or

allowing them to continue with their regular work while adhering to the Ministry of Health's guidelines, including maintaining at least a distance of two meters between employees.¹

Unpaid leave - clarifications on employer obligations

In parallel with the aforementioned guidelines, the Minister of Finance provided numerous additional guidelines regarding unemployment benefits for employees forced to take unpaid leave, most importantly, clarifying that an employee that worked six² out of the past 18 months will be entitled to unemployment benefits (subject to meeting the other eligibility conditions of the National Insurance Institute). The remaining obligations of employers continue unchanged from those discussed in our previous updates.

Declaring a state of emergency

As of the date of this update, a state of emergency throughout the market has yet to be declared. If a state of emergency will be declared, it will result in the closure of workplaces. In such a scenario, the limitations and rules that will apply will be pursuant to current law as well as specific orders and/or guidelines that will be published.

The information provided in this notice is for informational purposes only and does not constitute legal advice.

The Employment Department at Gornitzky & Co is ready to assist (within existing limitations) during these challenging circumstances and is available for any clarifications with respect to this update and any general concerns or needs that arise.



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¹ [Ministry of Health's guidelines.](#)

² Instead of the normal period of 12 months.