



## JAMAICA CUSTOMS AGENCY

### STATEMENT FROM THE COMMISSIONER OF CUSTOMS RE COVID-19 AND JAMAICA CUSTOMS AGENCY PREPAREDNESS

The Jamaica Customs Agency values the health and well-being of all our employees, as we fulfil our role as trade facilitators, border protectors and revenue collectors. Accordingly, we are committed to continue taking a preventative approach to protecting our employees.

The Agency has a special responsibility to plan for continued operation in a crisis. Consequently, we have activated our Emergency Preparedness & Response Plan in respect of Public Health Emergencies of International Concern. In particular, our Human Resource Management & Development Division, through its Occupational Health, Safety & Environment Branch has been actively engaging our Customs Officers as well as the wider employee population regarding preventative measures, employee safety and operational readiness. We have been conducting the following activities, from as early as late January.

- **Employee Awareness and Communication on COVID-19:** This is done via face to face sessions, and in some instances includes representatives from the Ministry of Health and Wellness. Information is also available for employees on the Agency's intranet.
- **Dissemination of COVID -19 Interim Guidelines for Employees:** This gives employees guidance on preventative measures as well as how to report if they believe they have been exposed.
- **Procurement of additional infection and prevention control supplies** to include N95 dust masks, gloves, coveralls, disinfection products and hand sanitizers, which are standard items utilized in our daily operations by the employees.
- **Placement of hand sanitizers in public access locations,** for persons who enter our spaces to interact with our employees
- **Increased cleaning and sanitization of contact surfaces** by our janitorial contractors;
- **Meeting with internal contractors (Janitorial and Security Companies)** regarding the Agency's COVID-19 plans and their role in self-protection and protection of our employees;

Further to those measures, we are reviewing our processes at all levels, in an effort to reduce the necessity for face-to-face contact in conduct of business, where feasible.

The Agency remains committed to promoting the strategies being advanced by our local Ministry of Health and Wellness and the World Health Organization (WHO), as we work towards mitigating the impact of the pandemic on employees, their families, our customers and the entire Jamaica.

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Velma Ricketts Walker, JP  
CEO/Commissioner of Customs  
March 13, 2020