

MEMBER UPDATE

The Single-Site Order is ending. What does it mean for you?

New memo shows timeline for ending of the Order

Around 20 months after having implemented the Single-Site Order during the first wave of COVID-19, Alberta Health has released its plan to phase out the Order and return to the previous system.

There are multiple stages in the phase-out of the order, but by the end of it, workers will once again be permitted to work in multiple sites, as had been the case prior to the pandemic. Here are the dates you need to know:

- **Dec. 9, 2021:** Deadline for employers / operators to communicate with staff who are on a single site leave of absence asking them to advise whether they wish to return to their positions or casual status
- **Dec. 23, 2021:** Deadline for staff on a single site leave of absence to notify their previous employers as to whether or not they intend to return to their previous worksites
- **Dec. 24, 2021 – Jan. 21, 2022:** Employers / operators work with their staff on a single site leave of absence to answer associated questions and revise staffing schedules.
- **Jan. 24, 2022 – Jan. 31, 2022:** Employers / operators share the schedules with their staff. Updated schedules take effect Feb. 16.
- **Feb. 16, 2022:** System wide – staff no longer are restricted to working at a single site but are permitted to work at multiple sites. This includes staff who previously did so and other staff who would like to have this work arrangement.

The important thing for you to take from this, for now, is that if you had a second job before the pandemic, and you were put on leave because of the Single-Site Order, **the employer from your second job is required to contact you by Dec. 9. You will need to let that employer know whether you want to return to work before Dec. 23.**

If you have not heard from your employer by Dec. 9, or need help through any step of the process, contact your Membership Services Officer by calling the Member Resource Centre at 1-800-232-7284. The Centre is open from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on weekdays.

Words of caution

If you are one of the workers who this applies to, then there are lots of things to consider before deciding what to do next.

An important part of the Single-Site Order is the provision for additional hours at your single site. When the order was implemented, AUPE fought to have a clause included that required your single-site employer to increase your hours, so far as reasonably possible, to make up for hours lost at your second job. While the Alberta Health memo does not specify it explicitly, you should assume that you will no longer have that protection after Feb. 16.

This means that, if you decide to stay exclusively at your single site, your employer is no longer required to keep you at full-time hours, as they had been compelled to do previously by the order.

Your previous employer on the other hand, is compelled to reinstate you, if you choose to return. So, if you were a regular full-time employee, they must bring you back as a full-time employee – the same goes if you're a part-time or Casual employee. However, the employer is not compelled to accept any requests for changes to your FTE status. In other words, if you were previously a casual and would like to be brought back as a full-time employee (or vice-versa), the employer is not required to accept that request.

If you believe the employer is breaking any rules, please contact your MSO at 1-800-232-7284.

If you make the decision to stay at a single site, your MSO will similarly attempt to support you through the process and work to ensure you do not lose hours, particularly during the period of Dec. 24 – Jan. 21, when the employer will be creating the new schedules.

Every collective agreement in continuing care is a little bit different, and so it's very important that you ensure that your employer (or employers) follow the rules outlined in your agreement. If you have negotiated benefit and pension language in your agreement with your previous employer(s), they were obligated to retain those protections for you throughout the period when the Single-Site Order was in effect. If they did not, please tell your MSO.

The most important thing for you to do is keep your MSO informed of any concerns you have. Once again, you can contact your MSO by calling the Member Resource Centre at 1-800-232-7284, between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. on weekdays.

No matter what you decide to do here, you have the backing of your union.

Fill out our survey

We have put together a brief survey for members who are subject to the Single-Site Order, to understand how the order affected you, and how you feel about returning to the pre-pandemic system.

Fill out the survey here: https://aupe.formstack.com/forms/single_site_order

The survey should only take five minutes to fill out. It will allow AUPE to understand what your priorities are when it comes to the Single-Site Order, and how we can best advocate for a transition that works for you.

Please send the survey to your co-workers as well, and talk to them about how they feel about this change. Just remember—don't have union conversations on employer-paid time.

After a year and a half of the Single-Site Order, this transition is going to be a significant change from what we have all gotten used to. By filling out this survey, you can let your union know how that change can work best for you.