



# PRESS STATEMENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
March 18, 2020

## **NIB ACTIVATES ORANGE ALERT STAGE IN COVID-19 BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLAN**

The National Insurance Board (NIB) has activated its Business Continuity Plan (BCP) to address potential business disruptions, which may come as a result of COVID-19. NIB has been in contact with the National Coordinating Committee to ensure that the necessary actions are consistent with the national response.

NIB's BCP is at the *Orange Alert* stage which concentrates on streamlining processes to protect the most vulnerable customers, such as the elderly, and to limit risks to staff. These changes will ensure that critical services continue to be provided, while ensuring the safety and health of our staff and customers. These measures are in addition to actions already taken to promote staff awareness and education of COVID-19 and upgrades to hygiene and cleaning regimes.

### **Suspension of Face-to-Face Verification**

Face-to-face pension verifications will be suspended until further notice. NIB will not prioritize suspension of benefits due to non-verification. For convenience, the verification form (B.75b) is available on NIB's website, [nib-bahamas.com](http://nib-bahamas.com). Beneficiaries who are able to may submit their completed forms electronically at [verification@nib-bahamas.com](mailto:verification@nib-bahamas.com) email or, if possible, make use of drop boxes available at NIB offices. NIB will also be using other modalities to confirm continuing eligibility as required by Regulation 13(2) of the National Insurance (Benefit and Assistance) Regulations. Additionally, the verification hotline, 502-1556, is available to answer questions.

### **Assignment of Bank Accounts for Benefit Payments**

While the majority of payments to NIB's beneficiaries are made via direct deposit to bank and credit union accounts, some claimants have elected to receive their benefits via cheques. The National Insurance Board, as per its Business Continuity Plan, now strongly urges that all persons who receive benefit or assistance payments via cheques complete the Direct Deposit form,

found on NIB's website, to designate a bank or credit union account to facilitate continued payments in the event of a business disruption due to COVID-19. Please ensure that you are providing the full and correct account details (branch and account number) rather than the debit card number.

The completed Direct Deposit Form, together with account details, should be emailed to [directdepositform@nib-bahamas.com](mailto:directdepositform@nib-bahamas.com) as the preferred method; however, forms may also be received at Local Offices, where a drop box will be provided. An acknowledgement of your request, will be sent within 72 hours.

### **Registration for Employer Self Service (ESS) Portal**

NIB's cashier services remain open for customers to pay NIB contributions at this time; however, in preparation for a business disruption, employers are urged to sign up for the Employer Self Service portal by emailing your request to [ess@nib-bahamas.com](mailto:ess@nib-bahamas.com) and [compliance@nib-bahamas.com](mailto:compliance@nib-bahamas.com). An ESS representative will guide you through the employer set-up process. You will be able to submit your contribution statements (C10 forms) and pay online via credit card via the portal. Cheque payments can also be submitted through the NIB cheque drop box or RBC online. Other payment arrangements are being finalized including instructions for wire payments.

### **Suspension of Face-to-Face Interview for New Claims Submissions**

NIB Customer Service Departments throughout The Bahamas remain open at this time. However, in our efforts to promote social distancing, claim forms will be collected, but the face-to-face interview that usually accompanies the submission of claims will be suspended until further notice. Customer Service representatives will telephone customers should additional clarifications be necessary. Claims will be acknowledged within 72 hours. Completed claim forms and supporting documents may also be emailed to [customerservice@nib-bahamas.com](mailto:customerservice@nib-bahamas.com) (*preferred method*).

### **Temporary Suspension of NIB Smart Card Renewals**

NIB will temporarily suspend the expiration date for all NIB Smart Cards until further notice and the need for card renewals. NIB has contacted the financial institutions, utilities companies and government agencies which rely heavily on NIB's Smart Card for identification purposes to advise that with immediate effect, all NIB issued Smart Cards should continue to be considered as valid, irrespective of the expiration date (and without the renewal security decal). These agencies have been provided with a hotline number and email to confirm the validity of any Smart Card presented. NIB advises that the National Insurance number of a person is unique and never

changes. NIB further reminds that its Smart Card does not imply legal immigration status in The Bahamas. Proof of immigration status can only be verified by an appropriate immigration card/document.

NIB will continue to issue new Smart Cards for those with lost or stolen cards and first time cardholders for as long as it is practical and medically safe. Any further changes will be advised.

**NIB will issue additional operational changes during the *Orange Alert* stage and encourages customers to visit [www.nib-bahamas.com](http://www.nib-bahamas.com) and Facebook for updates.**

**NIB COVID 19 Alert Stages:**

ALERT	NATIONAL THREAT LEVEL	NIB's RESPONSE
<b>YELLOW</b>	COVID-19 threat to The Bahamas is imminent.	NIB institutes internal BCP protocols.
<b>ORANGE</b>	COVID-19 is confirmed in The Bahamas.	NIB's operations streamlined to protect those most vulnerable to COVID 19 outbreak and to limit risk to staff. Offices are open with amended operations procedures. Details will be available via website, Facebook and public notification systems.
<b>RED</b>	COVID-19 warnings issued for businesses requiring them to alter normal operating procedures.	Potential office closure with NIB's core services offered through alternative channels. Details will be available via website, Facebook and public notification systems.
<b>GREEN</b>	Outbreak in The Bahamas is deemed to be under control.	Offices re-open and business resumes normal operations.

Contact: Tonique Williams | Public Relations Manager | [tonique.williams@nib-bahamas.com](mailto:tonique.williams@nib-bahamas.com)  
| 242. 397. 3599

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