



Given the stinging blow local businesses and workers face in light of the state of alarm surrounding the Covid-19 health emergency, the Consell de Formentera wishes to remind islanders of a number of their rights and some of the region- and nationwide measures that have been taken.

In the areas where it has authority, the Consell, for its part, is rigging up a host of measures to make things easier on islanders, chiefly for those most at-risk and groups that stand to be hit hardest. Some measures will involve taxes, permits and licences.

Businesses, freelancers and employees

The most important thing to remember in the current situation is that employers can neither terminate staff nor force them to use holiday time, which must be agreed with workers' representatives. Remote work and flexible scheduling are among the measures recommended for companies whose operations continue.

For businesses and self-employed individuals, ISBA and ISCO have set up a series of one-off liquidity lines in a bid to shore up liquidity. If a freelancer's professional activity dries up as a result of the state of alarm, or if total invoices drop more than 75% compared to the previous quarter, benefits can be requested for the duration of the emergency. Such individuals will also pay into Social Security for the length of the crisis. Tax payments on quarterly earnings declarations normally scheduled between 13 March and 30 May 2020 are likewise postponed.

Temporary layoffs

Any business wishing to place employment contracts on hold must file the corresponding temporary redundancy paperwork. Such a measure either entails short-term suspension of a contract or reduced hours. Employees with permanent seasonal contracts must also be accounted for in any temporary redundancy cases: businesses are obliged, on the pre-arranged date, to contact any employees who weren't notified when a layoff was agreed on, and incorporate these individuals into the temporary redundancy plan.

Employees of companies that submit temporary redundancy plans need not take any special steps: these individuals will be automatically enrolled in the Employment Service of the Balearic Islands (SOIB) and benefit payout will be automatic too.

Temporary layoffs must be negotiated with workers' representatives and, when the previously agreed-upon time elapses, staff are re-employed under the terms of current contracts.

During the temporary layoff, workers are eligible for provisional unemployment benefits unrelated to typical unemployment benefits. Individuals facing temporary layoffs receive 70% of their average pay-in over the last 180 days of work (or the 180 days prior to coronavirus-interrupted activity), and benefits will continue the length of the temporary layoff. Technically speaking, workers will remain employees of the company for the duration of the disrupted activity.

The Govern balear has created the online portal www.caib.es/sites/coronaviruseconomia/ca/po rtada so that freelancers, business owners and employees can get answers questions that might arise amid the current situation.

Pensioners

With pension payments due to be issued in the days ahead, the Consell de Formentera wishes to urge individuals who receive pensions, as an at-risk group, to avoid personal contact unless absolutely necessary. Individuals are advised to use outdoor ATMs instead of going inside banks, and to continue following hygiene measures, namely, by refraining from touching one's face and washing hands as soon as one arrives at home.

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**Department of Communications
Consell de Formentera**