

General Guidance for Businesses

Employers & Employees

This document provides an overview of COVID-19; what it is, how it is spread, what employers and employees can do to prevent transmission and what to do if an employee becomes ill or tests positive for COVID-19.

What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 is an illness caused by the new coronavirus SARS-CoV-2. **COVID-19 often presents with symptoms similar to the common cold or flu.** The most common symptoms include:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Difficult breathing or shortness of breath
- Decrease or loss of smell or taste
- Not feeling well, extreme tiredness, sore muscles
- Sore throat, trouble swallowing
- Nausea, abdominal pain
- Runny nose¹

There is evidence to suggest that some (including children) may also experience diarrhea and vomiting², while some people infected with COVID-19 may have mild or no symptoms. It may take up to 14 days following an exposure for symptoms to appear. In very serious cases of COVID-19, the infection can cause pneumonia, and in some cases may require hospitalization, ventilation and/or cause death.³

How is it spread?

COVID-19 has been identified as a virus that **is transmitted through droplets.**

Exposure can occur through:

1. Direct contact with droplets of someone infected with the virus (cough, sneeze or other direct close contact).

2. Contact with surfaces where droplets from a cough or sneeze of someone infected have landed. For infection to occur, the droplets must come into direct contact with the mucosal membranes of the nose, mouth or eyes.

There is evidence to show that COVID-19 can be spread by people who are both symptomatic and asymptomatic (no symptoms), which makes general prevention efforts even more important.^{3,4}

What does this mean for businesses?

Following advice from Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health, the government of Ontario is gradually opening businesses, services and public spaces on a regional basis. [Ontario's framework for reopening the province](#) states that certain businesses and services will be allowed to reopen in stages, as long as they follow strict public health measures and workplace safety guidelines.

Stage 1

The first stage became effective in May 19, 2020 and includes certain workplaces that can meet current public health guidelines. Please review [A Framework for Reopening our Province: Stage 1](#) for more information.

Stage 2

The second stage became effective on June 12, 2020 and includes more workplaces with significant mitigation plans. Please review [A Framework for Reopening our Province: Stage 2](#) for more information. Additionally, once strict guidelines have been met by [child care centres](#) and [summer day camp programs](#), these facilities are allowed to reopen.

Stage 3

The third and final stage became effective July 17, 2020 and includes opening all workplaces responsibly. Please review [A Framework for Reopening our Province: Stage 3](#) for more information.

Updates and additions to the list of openings will be posted on the provincial [emergency information page](#) as emergency orders are amended. For sector-specific guidance, visit

the [Government of Ontario website](#) and refer to the provincial or federal professional association affiliated with your business sector, if applicable.

If your business is open during an outbreak, it is important for preventative measures to be taken to reduce the risk of COVID-19 exposure.

Recommendations to reduce the spread of COVID-19

Recommendations for Employers

Businesses are expected to continue to put the safety and wellness of their employees top of mind, and in alignment with all [labour laws](#), including the [Employment Standards Amendment Act \(Infectious Diseases\), 2020](#).⁵ There are some specific things that employers can do to make their workplaces safer during this COVID-19 pandemic. Use the [COVID-19 Checklist for Reopening Businesses and Workplaces](#) to help plan to reopen your business while following current public health guidelines. The Government of Ontario has also created a [guidance document for essential workplaces](#) (see Appendices) and a [guide and template on how to develop a workplace safety plan](#).

1. Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health (WDGPH) recommends that **businesses make operational changes where possible** to reduce the risk of disease transmission, such as allowing employees to work from home if possible, making changes to offer delivery and pick-up services, and staggering schedules.
2. Workplaces are responsible for **implementing a COVID-19 screening procedure** for any workers or essential visitors entering the work environment. Screening should occur before or when a worker enters the workplace at the beginning of their day or shift, or when an essential visitor arrives. Other examples of screening tools are Ontario's online [COVID-19 self-assessment](#) tool or WDGPH's [COVID-19 Screening Poster](#).
3. **Increase the frequency of disinfection** of high touch surfaces such as door handles/knobs, counters, keyboards, bathrooms and eating spaces (see this [guidance document](#) for more information). Health Canada provides a [list of approved disinfectants](#) for use against SARS-CoV-2. Using a Health Canada approved disinfectant with a DIN number will ensure that cleaning practices are effectively removing the virus from surfaces.⁶

4. **Adapt workspaces to allow for 2-metres (6 feet) of physical distancing** where possible between employees and clients. Consider installing a [physical barrier](#) like a cubicle or Plexiglas window and sharing and/or posting [Social Distancing Guidelines at Work](#).
5. **Meetings or professional development activities should take place online or over the phone whenever possible.** In-person meetings should be designed to allow attendees to maintain 2 metres (6 feet) distance from each other at all times. The prohibition on the number of people allowed in a social gathering does not apply with respect to attendance at a place of business for a purpose related to providing or receiving the goods/services provided by the business. However, businesses who are **renting** a meeting or event space must adhere to the limits placed on numbers permitted for gatherings ([Ontario Regulation 364/20](#)). Other recommendations for holding in-person meetings include:
 - Consider holding meetings outside
 - Keep them as short as possible
 - Food/snacks should be prohibited
 - Consider wearing face coverings (especially in those situations where physical distancing cannot be maintained)
 - Communicate safety protocols to attendees prior to meeting
6. **Reduce all unnecessary contact with clients and suppliers.** Provide curbside drop off or pick up where possible to reduce contact. If clients must enter the physical business, ensure physical distancing is maintained and limit the number of customers in the business at one time. Stickers or tape may be used to delineate physical space in lines, such as for cash registers.
7. **Cancel or postpone all non-essential work travel.** If travel is deemed essential, employees should [self-monitor](#) for 14-days following travel within Canada and must [self-isolate](#) for 14-days following any travel outside of Canada. Discuss with employees what is considered essential within your workplace and what can be postponed or cancelled.⁵
8. **Minimize all ride sharing.** For businesses that use ride sharing for employees, consider reducing the number of employees per vehicle if the business has additional vehicles that could be of use. Alternatively, consider providing mileage or other mutually agreed-upon terms for employees to use their own transportation. At minimum, if multiple employees will be in one vehicle, ensure that employees are provided with face masks for use while in the vehicle to best

protect one another while unable to physically distance. Vehicles should be stocked with hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes and be disinfected regularly. For additional tips on how to stay safe while using shared transportation, see [Guidance for Taxi and Drive Supports](#).

9. **Create ‘sanitation stations’ within the workplace.** According to the [Section 22 Class Order](#), all commercial establishments must ensure that alcohol-based hand rub (60-90% alcohol) is available at all entrances and exits for the use of all persons entering or exiting the establishment. Other businesses and workplaces with client contact should also create sanitation stations at the entrance and exit of the business. Additional stations should be set up at the cash register for use after handling cash, and soap and disposable paper towels should be provided in the bathroom and/or kitchen. The [Bank of Canada](#) highlights the importance of continued acceptance of cash and how to safely handle it. Ensure there are adequate supplies of sanitizer and soap at wash stations. Consider posting [safe handwashing](#) or [hand sanitizing](#) posters at sanitation stations.
10. **Prohibit persons from entering the premises of a commercial establishment or remaining in the premises if the said person is not wearing a face covering.** According to the [Section 22 Class Order](#), face coverings must be worn inside commercial establishments at all times, unless it is reasonably required to temporarily remove the face covering for services provided by the establishment. For more information, review the [Frequently Asked Questions](#) on our website. People who are exempt from wearing a face covering are:
 - Children under the age of two years; or under the age of five years (either chronologically or developmentally) who refuse to wear a face covering and cannot be persuaded to do so by their caregiver
 - People whose ability to breathe in any way is inhibited by the face covering
 - People that have any other medical reason they cannot wear a face covering safely, such as, but not limited to, respiratory disease, cognitive difficulties or difficulties in hearing or processing information
 - The obligation to provide reasonable accommodation under the Ontario Human Rights Code requires exemptions from this requirement.Ensure that employees are trained on the proper way to [wear and care for face coverings](#). The [Workplace PPE Supplier Directory](#) has an up-to-date list of

Ontario companies and business associations that are ready to supply personal protective equipment.

11. **Encourage respiratory hygiene** by sharing information about correct [cough and sneeze etiquette](#), including how to cough or sneeze into your sleeve to prevent spreading of droplets within the workplace.
12. **Employers should consider reviewing HR policies with respect to sick leaves.** Employers are encouraged to review sick policies, including sick time, if an employee is required to self-isolate due to illness or provide care to a family member. Note that the [Employment Standards Amendment Act \(Infectious Diseases\)](#) outlines the requirements for job-protected leaves resulting from COVID-19. **Employers cannot request medical notes from employees as proof of eligibility for COVID-19 leave.**⁵ COVID-19 policies should be clearly communicated with employees. Contingency plans should be made in the event that staff are ill and required to stay home, including arranging transportation for ill employees (see more on this in ‘What to do if an employee becomes ill?’ section below).

Employers may consider posting [Preventing COVID-19 in the Workplace: Employers, Employees and Essential Workers](#). Business sector-specific guidelines and posters can be found in [Resources to Prevent COVID-19 in the Workplace](#). Businesses may also refer to the provincial or federal professional association affiliated with their business sector, if applicable.

Recommendations for Employees

All staff have a role to play in reducing the likelihood of transmission of COVID-19 in the workplace. Below are recommendations for maintaining the health and safety of all employees.

1. **Complete a [COVID-19 screening tool](#) before** entering the work environment. Screening should occur before entering the workplace at the beginning of the day or shift. Other examples of screening tools are Ontario’s online [COVID-19 self-assessment](#) tool or WDGPH’s [COVID-19 Screening Poster](#).
2. **Maintain physical distance of 2-metres where possible.** Employers should assist employees to reduce workplace density where possible.

3. **Hands should be sanitized using sanitizer or washed with soap for 20 seconds frequently throughout the day.** If handling cash, hands should be sanitized after each encounter. Hands should be washed after using the bathroom and before consuming food. Also consider frequent sanitizing of personal belongings such as phones or keys after use.
4. **Avoid touching your face.** The virus is most often transferred from hands to the eyes, mouth or nose. Only touch your face after sanitizing or washing hands with soap for 20 seconds.
5. If you have to cough or sneeze, make sure to **use appropriate respiratory hygiene etiquette**. This includes coughing or sneezing into your sleeve or into a tissue, immediately disposing, and washing your hands or using hand sanitizer.
6. **Wear a non-medical face covering (e.g., cloth mask).** According to the [Class Order](#), the face covering must be worn inside the establishment at all times, unless it is reasonably required to temporarily remove the face covering for services provided by the establishment. People who are exempt from wearing a face covering are:
 - Children under the age of two years; or under the age of five years (either chronologically or developmentally) who refuse to wear a face covering and cannot be persuaded to do so by their caregiver
 - People whose ability to breathe in any way is inhibited by the face covering
 - People that have any other medical reason they cannot wear a face covering safely, such as, but not limited to, respiratory disease, cognitive difficulties or difficulties in hearing or processing information
 - The obligation to provide reasonable accommodation under the Ontario Human Rights Code requires exemptions from this requirement.

Please check our website for [tips for the wear and care of face coverings](#).

7. **Avoid ride sharing if possible.** If your employment typically includes ride sharing, alternate transportation should be arranged if possible, including use of additional work vehicles to reduce the number of employees in one vehicle, or using a personal vehicle. If ride sharing cannot be avoided, employees should use masks while in the vehicle and unable to physically distance. Consider having one driver to reduce potential cross-contamination or use disinfecting wipes before switching drivers. Consider keeping windows open to increase airflow.

8. **Avoid all non-essential work travel.** If travel is deemed essential, employees should [self-monitor](#) for 14-days following travel within Canada and must [self-isolate](#) for 14-days following any travel outside of Canada.⁷
9. **Stay home if sick** and report illness to employer. If an employee becomes ill, follow the tips in the 'What to do if an employee becomes ill' section.

For more tips on stopping the spread of COVID-19, visit [COVID-19: Stop the Spread](#) on the Ontario government site.

What to do if an employee becomes ill?

We know that community transmission of COVID-19 is now occurring, and that despite a person's best effort to protect themselves from exposure to COVID-19, some staff may still become ill.

- A sample staff memo on self-monitoring for COVID-19 symptoms can be found in Appendix 1. All employees should be advised to follow these guidelines.
- If an employee becomes ill at work, they should be separated from other employees in the workplace immediately until transportation can be arranged to bring the employee home. Public transportation should be avoided (bus, taxi, uber) if possible and private transportation should be arranged.
- Staff should be informed to go to their nearest COVID-19 assessment centre to be tested and self-isolate at home until their test results are available and will be provided with further direction.⁸ Assessment centre locations can be found on [the Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health website](#).

What if an employee tests positive?

- If the employee has tested positive for COVID-19, Public Health will be notified and will follow up with the employee to monitor their symptoms and provide direction for length of isolation period, including the length of time they must wait after symptoms subside. Public Health will assess for close contacts of these employees which may include co-workers who may have been exposed. Close contacts are also followed up by Public Health.
- Employees who test positive should follow the recommendations they are given from Public Health. They will be required to remain in isolation until these three conditions are met:

- They have isolated for 14 days after symptoms started AND
- They no longer have a fever AND
- Their symptoms are improving for at least 72 hours
- Staff should communicate with their employer about the required leave from work and their expected return date. Employers **must** allow employees to complete the full isolation period and allow employees to return once their COVID-19 case has been resolved. Employees and employers should follow workplace occupational health and safety and return to work plans and procedures. Please note, Public Health is unable to provide return to work clearance or letters of clearance to each positive case. Public Health will provide guidance for when an employee who had tested positive can discontinue isolation.
- Employees do not need to be retested to return to work safely.

Steps Taken by Public Health

The steps that WDGPH will take in the event that one positive case is identified, in accordance with [COVID-19 Provincial Testing Guidance](#), are outlined below. Please note that the employer/business will only be contacted if exposure may have occurred at the workplace.

1. The testing lab notifies the responsible public health unit of each positive case of COVID-19.
2. Public Health staff then follow up with the individual who has tested positive to:
 - a. Let the person know they have tested positive and answer any questions they may have.
 - b. Advise them of the need to self-isolate for a specified duration of time.
 - c. Try to determine how they may have been exposed to COVID-19.
 - d. Determine the places they went while they were infectious (e.g., to work or public places) and who their close contacts were. If close contacts are identified, Public Health will contact them and others to assess the risk to others (e.g., their employer).
3. Public Health will follow up with any close contacts to let them know of the situation, to confirm if they were a close contact, and if so, to advise them to go to their [nearest COVID-19 assessment centre](#) to be tested and self-isolate at

home until their test results are available and for 14 days from their last exposure to the case. If it is difficult to determine close contacts, broader testing may be required.

4. In the event of an outbreak (more than one positive case) in a workplace, as determined by Public Health, all individuals associated with the outbreak area should be tested. Public Health may determine if others should be tested or if any individuals do not require testing.

If a person was at work while infectious, Public Health staff will determine if they posed risk in the workplace. **Public Health will only consult with the employer if additional information is required related to the individual to determine close contacts or if any other measures need to be taken by the workplace or employees to reduce the risk of transmission.**

It is important to note that Public Health:

- Is required by law to respect the privacy of the person infected.
- Will only disclose a positive case to an employer if it is needed to manage the exposure risk to others.

If the employer is contacted regarding a positive case, the employer may wish to inform staff or clients about the positive case. Employers are encouraged to maintain privacy of the employee where possible. A sample memo is provided in Appendix 2 that may be used for this purpose (adapted with permission from Peel Public Health).

How can we stay informed about COVID-19?

Updates on provincial cases of COVID-19 are posted daily at covid-19.ontario.ca, while information on local cases, testing locations and local news can be found at wdgpublichealth.ca/coronavirus.

Additional Resources

Additional resources can be found in the Appendices, including guidance documents, hand washing/sanitizing posters, tips for social distancing at work, a sample letter to staff and clients in the event of a positive case, and a sample staff memo on self-

monitoring for COVID-19 symptoms. Also, please review the [COVID-19 Information for Workplaces & Living Spaces](#) on wdgpublichealth.ca.

References

1. Government of Ontario, COVID-19. [Accessed: April 20, 2020]. Available at: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/2019-novel-coronavirus>
2. Centre for Disease Control, COVID-19 and Children. [Accessed: April 20, 2020]. Available at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html#COVID-19-and-Children>
3. Government of Canada, Coronavirus (COVID-19): Symptoms and Treatment [Accessed: April 20, 2020], Available at: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/symptoms.html?topic=tilelink>.
4. Government of Canada, Coronavirus (COVID-19): Prevention and risks. [Accessed: April 20, 2020], Available at <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/prevention-risks.html?topic=tilelink>
5. Government of Ontario, Your Guide to the *Employment Standards Act* [Accessed: April 22, 2020]. Available at: <https://www.ontario.ca/document/your-guide-employment-standards-act-0>.
6. Health Canada, Hard Surface Disinfectants and Hand Sanitizers (COVID-19): List of Hard Surface Disinfectants. [Accessed: April 20, 2020]. Available at: <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/disinfectants/covid-19/list.html>.
7. Government of Canada, Coronavirus (COVID-19): Travel Restrictions and Exceptions. [Accessed: April 23, 2020]. Available at: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/latest-travel-health-advice.html>.
8. Government of Ontario, COVID-19 Self-Assessment. [Accessed April 20, 2020]. Available at: <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/self-assessment/>.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Sample staff memo on self-monitoring

Staff Memo: COVID-19 Self-Monitoring

To help prevent the spread of infection, self-monitor yourself for symptoms of COVID-19 (such as fever, cough, shortness of breath, muscle aches, fatigue, headache, sore throat, runny nose, vomiting or diarrhea) and notify your manager if you develop symptoms or feel unwell.

If you begin to feel unwell while at work

- Immediately put on a mask if available and notify your manager.

Before coming into work everyday

- Complete a COVID-19 screening tool. You may use Ontario's online [self-assessment tool](#) or another [similar tool](#).
- If you have a fever or other symptoms that align with COVID-19, go to your nearest COVID-19 assessment centre to be tested and self-isolate at home until your test results are available. Assessment centre locations can be found on [the Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health website](#).
- Follow the same steps as you would to call in sick and inform your manager that you are staying home because you have symptoms that align with COVID-19.

If a member of your household has symptoms

- If a member of your household has symptoms and has been directed by a health care professional to isolate, please take all measures to self-isolate yourself from them to ensure your continued health.
- If you have had close contact with someone with COVID-19 outside of work contact WDG Public Health for advice (519-822-2715 ext. 7006).
- Know how to self-monitor and self-isolate, and in which circumstances they should be followed.

If you work for multiple employers

- If you have not already done so, please notify your supervisor if you work for multiple employers. Your supervisor will work with you to develop appropriate plans as needed.

Appendix 2: Sample memo notifying employees and/or the public of a positive case in the workplace*

An Important Update

The COVID-19 situation is evolving. Today we were notified that one of our staff has been confirmed with having the COVID-19 virus. The employee last worked on <insert date>.

At this time, the employee is resting at home in self isolation <insert description of how they are doing>.

Every effort will be taken to continue to be honest with you, our employees, customers and community.

We are taking all necessary precautions to ensure the safety of all employees and clients and are working closely with Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health to assist them with their investigation. They have stated <insert WDGPH health risk language here- to be provided by Public Health>.

We do know that COVID-19 is now in our community, so again we encourage everyone to take precautions and wash your hands and practice physical distancing when you do have to go out.

We're here for you during these difficult times.

BUSINESS <Insert description of business type> HOURS HAVE BEEN IMPACTED<list hours>

Thank you, OWNER

*Adapted with permission from Peel Public Health

Appendix 3: Additional Resources

Help prevent COVID-19 and other illnesses

You are welcome here if you:

- Have **no** symptoms (fever, cough, shortness of breath, muscle aches, fatigue, headache, sore throat, runny nose, vomiting or diarrhea)
- Have **not** travelled outside of Canada in the past 14 days
- Have **not** been in close contact with a confirmed or probable case of COVID-19

Please remember to practice social distancing and keep a 2-metre (6 feet) space between you and others.



Ministry of Health

COVID-19 Guidance: Essential Workplaces

Version 1, May 2, 2020

This guidance provides basic information only. It is not intended to take the place of medical advice, diagnosis, treatment or legal advice.

The purpose of this document is to assist with the minimization of COVID-19 transmission in non-health care workplaces. However, this document may not be applicable to all non-health care workplaces (e.g., congregate living settings). Appropriate preventative measures should be put in place which account for the specific hazards and risks of exposure that may be present in a workplace setting.

Employers may refer to additional sector-specific guidance provided by the [Ministry of Health](#) (MOH), the [Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development](#) (MLTSD) and industry partners to ascertain what types of preventative measures may be appropriate for particular workplace settings.

Please check the MOH [COVID-19 website](#) regularly for updates to this document, the latest case definition, FAQs, and other pertinent information.

General Advice

There are several things that workplaces can do to protect their workers¹ and customers:

- Implement organizational pandemic and/or business continuity plans as appropriate. These should include plans to address situations when workers are unwell or when they are not able to work due to other circumstances.
- Develop communication policies and procedures about what to do if their workers are ill.
- Have workers work from home, whenever possible, and equip them with the means to do so.

¹ Refers to staff (i.e., workers) and is intended to include, students, or volunteers that conduct business or related activities, where applicable and appropriate.

- In situations where workers are deemed essential and need to physically come into the workplace, review infection prevention and control/occupational health and safety policies and procedures with all workers.
- Review COVID-19 guidance from your industry associations to determine the steps workers need to take to be properly prepared in the workplace.
- Instruct workers to self-monitor for [symptoms of COVID-19](#) such as fever, cough or difficulty breathing. If they have symptoms, they should use Ontario's [self-assessment tool](#). They can also contact their health care provider or Telehealth Ontario (1-866-797-0000). Advise all workers to stay home if they are unwell.

Prevention

There are many things that workplaces can do to prevent the spread of COVID-19, particularly by facilitating proper [hand hygiene](#), respiratory etiquette and [physical distancing](#), such as:

- Provide access to handwashing and have available alcohol-based hand sanitizers at multiple, prominent locations in the workplace.
 - Ensure there are enough supplies on hand for proper hand hygiene, including pump soap, warm running water and paper towels or hot air dryers.
 - If possible, consider adding alcohol-based hand sanitizer stations throughout the workplace to supplement hand washing. Portable hand sanitizer bottles should also be provided to workers at their work stations if they interact directly with customers. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers with greater than 60% alcohol should be used.
 - Workers should conduct hand hygiene between every interaction with customers.
- Non-touch, lined waste disposal receptacles for use by workers and customers should be provided throughout the workplace.
- Implement physical distancing (maintaining a distance of at least 2 metres or 6 feet from other people), to the greatest extent possible. This could include:
 - Using telephone, video conferencing, or the internet to conduct business, including appointments, as much as possible (including within the same building), instead of in person meetings.

- Permitting flexible hours and staggering start times, breaks, and lunches or staggering days that workers are in the workplace.
- Providing physical barriers, such as plexiglass dividers.
- Marking out a distance of 2 metres or 6 feet between seats and seating areas to ensure physical distancing in common or shared spaces and lines (i.e., reception areas, meeting rooms, waiting rooms, grocery lines, kitchenettes, elevators, offices and other work spaces).
- Admitting fewer customers at a given time.
- Dedicating specific hours to high-risk populations, including those over 65 and with disabilities.
- Encouraging the use of self-scanning technologies at check outs.
- Encouraging customers to pack their own purchases, whenever possible, and discouraging the use of multi-use bags.
- Requiring passengers to sit in the rear seat of a vehicle and open the windows, weather permitting, in taxis and rideshares.
- When physical distancing cannot be maintained, employers may implement the use of face coverings as source control (e.g., non-medical masks or cloth masks).
- Encourage contactless methods of payment (tapping credit or debit cards) instead of cash.
 - If cash payments are made, workers should wash or sanitize their hands every time after handling cash.
 - The credit/debit machine should be disinfected frequently throughout the day.
- In addition to routine cleaning, surfaces that have frequent contact with hands should be cleaned and disinfected twice per day and when visibly dirty. Special attention should be paid to commonly touched surfaces in the workplace such as doorknobs, elevator buttons, light switches, toilet handles, counters, hand rails, touch screen surfaces, and shared materials, equipment, workstations, keypads, etc.
- Place clear, visible signage at all entrances and within the workplace reminding workers and customers about the signs and symptoms of COVID-19, what to do if they feel unwell and how to protect themselves (e.g., hand hygiene, etc.).

- If travelling is required for any worker, travel should be delayed if they are symptomatic or confirmed to have COVID-19 or have had close contact with someone with COVID-19.
- If the risk of COVID-19 cannot be sufficiently reduced by other methods, PPE may be required. If PPE is to be used, employers must provide adequate training on the care, use and limitations, including how to put on and take off, and when to perform hand hygiene.

Additional Guidance

Entering Homes or Other Workplaces

- If essential work in homes or other workplaces can be delayed, it should be.
- Where it is not possible to delay work, customers should be contacted prior to the worker's arrival to enquire if anyone on the premises is unwell, so the customer can self-isolate during the visit, where possible.
- A daily log should be kept of all the homes and workplace settings the worker has visited while working.
- Work duties should be performed at least 2 metres or 6 feet away from other people, whenever possible. This may include asking customers to move to a room with a closed door or another area of the residence while work is being completed, where possible.
- To minimize contact with surfaces in the home, have customers open doors and turn on lights before the worker enters to work.
- If the worker touches surfaces in the home, they should perform hand hygiene immediately after finishing the work.
- Workers should clean and disinfect all items/tools that were used in the home or workplace, and then perform hand hygiene.

Delivering Goods

- Equip delivery personnel with alcohol-based hand sanitizer, tissues, and disinfectant wipes to clean frequently touched surfaces (e.g., car door handles, steering wheel) and provide them with instructions on their appropriate use and disposal.
- Delivery personnel should use alcohol-based hand sanitizer between deliveries.

- Wherever possible, deliveries should be contactless, with items being left at the door of the customer.
- For deliveries requiring a signature, consider alternate approaches including:
 - Having the delivery personnel call and inform the customer of the drop-off and that it has been received.
 - Informing customers in advance that signatures will not be obtained and documenting the reason for not obtaining the signature.
- Consider additional guidance on [handling and receiving packages](#) by the Infrastructure Health & Safety Association.

Providing Curbside Pickup

- For large numbers of orders, plan a traffic and pick-up route, and consider staggering pick-up times.
- Customers who drive should remain in their vehicle when orders are being placed in their vehicles by workers.
- Surfaces where orders are placed or organized should be cleaned and disinfected regularly.
- Consider additional guidance on [providing curbside pick-up](#) by Workplace Safety & Prevention Services.

Multiple Jobs or Work Settings

- Whenever possible, workers should only work in one work location.
- The date and time of different work locations of a worker should be documented in case a worker contracts COVID-19 and contact tracing is required.
- Between jobs or work settings, workers should adhere to hand and respiratory hygiene recommendations, as well as physical distancing protocols.
- Workers who report to multiple employers should be familiar with the occupational health and safety policy of each of their employers.

Food Premises and Food Processing, Manufacturing and Distribution

- Reinforce safe handling practices to all workers.
- Protect food from contamination at all times, such as ensuring guards or coverings for food and utensils.

- If a food handler wears gloves to conduct food preparation and handling activities, the worker must wash their hands prior to glove use and after the gloves are removed.
 - The gloves must be replaced, and hands washed, after any suspected contamination such as sneezing, touching the face, or contact with frequently touched surfaces.
- Clean and sanitize utensils and equipment in accordance with the with the [Food Premises Regulation](#) or applicable provincial and federal regulations.
- Note the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs inspectors may discuss current practices with facility operators (under their jurisdiction) and, under critical circumstances, contact the local public health unit for urgent advice and consultative support regarding COVID-19 public health precautions.
 - The public health unit may be able to provide advice on issues such as contact tracing, advice for returning to work following a worker testing positive for COVID-19, and cleaning and disinfection procedures.
 - If highly critical, a joint inspection may be conducted at the facility.

Construction Industries

- Refer to the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development's guidance on [Construction site health and safety during COVID-19](#) and the Infrastructure Health & Safety Association's [COVID-19 resources](#).

Mining, or other Resource Industries

- Reduce labour and operations as needed to allow for physical distancing, including maintenance-only operations.
- If travel to and from worksite is provided by the employer, and includes multiple workers, it should be conducted in a manner that permits physical distancing. For example, consideration should be given to the placement of workers in a vehicle during travel and driving with windows open (weather permitting).
- Consider reducing frequent fly-in, fly-out, or other long-distance domestic travel.
- Consider additional [guidance on mining](#) from Workplace Safety North.

For Agriculture Industries

- If workers have shared accommodations, refer to the [Guidance Document for Temporary Foreign Workers](#) for more information.
- Consider additional guidance on the agriculture and food processing and manufacturing from the [Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development](#).

Suspected or Confirmed Case of COVID-19 in the Workplace

- If a worker develops COVID-19 symptoms, they should return home and self-isolate immediately.
 - If they cannot leave immediately, the worker should be isolated in a specific space until they are able to leave.
- If the worker is very ill, call 911 and let the operator know that the person may have COVID-19.
- If the worker does not have severe symptoms, they should use Ontario's [self-assessment tool](#), and seek assessment and testing (e.g., at an assessment centre) if indicated to do so. They can also contact their health care provider or Telehealth Ontario (1-866-797-0000).
- Any worker who tests positive for COVID-19 will be contacted by the local [public health unit](#). The public health unit will perform case management and contact tracing that may require additional infection prevention and control (IPAC) measures to be put in place in the workplace, which could include additional testing, people self-isolating etc.
- Workers who have tested positive for COVID-19 must self-isolate at home for 14 days.
- Surfaces that were touched by the ill worker should be disinfected as soon as possible in accordance with enhanced environmental cleaning procedures and protocols. See Public Health Ontario's [Cleaning and Disinfection for Public Settings COVID-19 fact sheet](#).

Occupational Health & Safety

- Employers have legal duties under the [Occupational Health and Safety Act](#) (OHSA) to protect the health and safety of their workers², including from the transmission of infectious disease in the workplace. Following the guidance in this document may help an employer comply with those obligations.
- If COVID-19 is suspected or diagnosed in a worker, return to work should be determined in consultation with their health care provider and the local public health unit, based on provincial guidance. Detailed occupational health and safety guidelines for COVID-19 are available on the MOH [COVID-19 website](#) and the MLTSD [website](#).
- If the worker's illness is from an exposure at the workplace, in accordance with the [OHSA](#) and its regulations, an employer must provide a written notice within four days of being advised that a worker has an occupational illness, including an occupationally-acquired infection, or if a claim has been made to the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) by or on behalf of the worker with respect to an occupational illness, including an occupational infection, to the:
 - Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development;
 - Joint health and safety committee (or health and safety representative); and
 - Trade union, if any.
- The information required in a notice is outlined in sector specific regulations made under the OHSA.
- For more information please contact:
 - The Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development:
 - Employment Standards Information Centre: Toll-free: 1-800-531-5551
 - Health and Safety Contact Centre: Toll-free: 1-877-202-0008
 - The Workplace Safety and Insurance Board: 1-800-387-0750

² This section will refer to workers as defined under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*.

Optimizing the Use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- In most situations, workers do not need to wear PPE to protect against COVID-19. The current COVID-19 pandemic does not change existing PPE requirements that may apply to certain workplaces or professions.
- If work involves direct contact with individuals who have respiratory symptoms (e.g., coughing and sneezing), a confirmed COVID-19 infection or direct contact with contaminated objects or environments, appropriate PPE must be used.
 - This may include gloves, a gown, a surgical/procedure mask, and/or a face shield. Note that for protection against COVID-19, N95 respirators are only required for aerosol generating medical procedures (AGMPs) and when otherwise determined by a regulated health professional.
- If PPE is provided by the employer, workers must be trained on the safe use, care and limitations of PPE, including [putting on and taking off PPE](#) as well as proper disposal.
 - Workers should ensure that gloves have no pinholes or tears and fit securely around their hands.
 - Gloves should be removed first, and hand hygiene should be performed immediately after removing gloves. The mask should then be removed, and hand hygiene performed again.

Resources

Sector-Specific Guidance:

- For additional sector-specific guidance, please see the:
 - [Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development](#), and
 - Websites of provincial Health and Safety Associations (HSAs):
 - [Infrastructure Health and Safety Association](#) (IHSA)
 - [Public Services Health and Safety Association](#) (PSHSA)
 - [Workplace Safety North](#) (WSN)
 - [Workplace Safety and Prevention Services](#) (WSPS)

Additional Information for Workplaces:

- Government of Canada's: [Risk-informed decision-making guidelines for workplaces and businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic](#) and [Advice for Essential Retailers During COVID-19 pandemic](#).
- Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development: [Workplace exposure and illness](#)
- Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development: [Infection prevention and control](#)

PREVENTING COVID-19 IN THE WORKPLACE: EMPLOYERS, EMPLOYEES AND ESSENTIAL SERVICE WORKERS



Across Canada, we are taking extraordinary steps to prevent the spread of COVID-19. For some workplaces, this may mean changing or limiting their hours of operation, or even closing for a period of time. Many employees have been told to stay at home, and others have been asked to work from home, while still others are asked to continue to go to work because their jobs are essential to keeping Canada functioning during this outbreak.

Essential workers are considered critical to preserving life, health and basic societal functioning. This includes, but is not limited to, first responders, health care workers, critical infrastructure workers, hydro and natural gas, and workers who are essential to supply society by critical goods such as food and medicines.

While all employees should continue to practice **physical distancing** and **hygiene** in their personal lives, we also need to take additional measures to protect important workplaces and employees, who are providing essential services. Employers and employees will need to work together to protect the health of employees and clients, and to keep the workplace delivering its essential services.

Employers should use the risk-informed decision-making guidelines for workplaces/businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic.

For all employees

All employees should ensure they understand and comply with the infection prevention policies and practices in place in their workplaces.

Keep your hands clean

- ▶ **Wash your hands** often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- ▶ If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- ▶ Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- ▶ Cough or sneeze into the bend of your arm.
- ▶ Avoid touching surfaces people touch often.
- ▶ Instead of a handshake, give a friendly wave or elbow bump.
- ▶ Use any necessary personal protective equipment, as directed.

Keep your environment clean

- ▶ Use appropriate **products to clean and disinfect** items like your desk, work surface, phones, keyboards and electronics, cash registers, keypads, elevator buttons, customer service counters and restaurant tables more often, especially when visibly dirty. If they can withstand the use of liquids for disinfection, frequently touched electronics such as phones, computers and other devices may be disinfected with 70% alcohol (e.g. alcohol prep wipes).



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Keep your distance

- ▶ Keep a distance of 2 metres between you, your coworkers, and customers.
- ▶ Increase distance between desks, tables and workstations.
- ▶ Reduce activities that require close physical proximity or contact with people, such as team meetings.
- ▶ Limit any contacts closer than 2 metres to the shortest time possible.

If you have a symptom of COVID-19

- ▶ If you think you might have COVID-19, use our **self-assessment tool** to find out what to do.
- ▶ It is critical that, if you have one symptom of COVID-19 (fever, cough or difficulty breathing), or even mild symptoms, you should stay home to avoid spreading illness to others.
- ▶ If you develop even mild **symptoms** while at your workplace, separate yourself from others and go home, avoiding use of public transit (e.g. buses, train, taxi) if possible.
- ▶ Contact your local **Public Health Authority** and follow their advice.
- ▶ If you are concerned about your financial stability during this time, the Government of Canada is providing assistance.

For employers

Establish policies to reduce the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace and make sure these are communicated and understood by employees

- ▶ Use the risk-informed decision-making **guidelines for workplaces/businesses** during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- ▶ Increase communication to staff and your customers about COVID-19 and measures you are taking for prevention.
- ▶ Post signs asking ill clients or customers to stay away from the workplace.
- ▶ Post signs encouraging good respiratory hygiene, hand hygiene, and other healthy practices
- ▶ Where feasible, adjust policies and procedures to reduce social contact, such as teleworking arrangements, flexible hours, staggering start times, use of email and teleconferencing.

- ▶ Cancel or postpone all non-essential meetings or travel.
- ▶ Evaluate the workplace for areas where people have frequent contact with each other and share spaces and objects, and increase the frequency of cleaning in these areas.
- ▶ Consider ways that employees can practice physical distancing, such as increasing distance between desks, people in line-ups and workstations.
- ▶ Consider minimizing interactions between customers and your employees, such as limiting the number of customers permitted in your establishment or serving customers over the phone. Ideally, a 2 metre separation should be maintained, unless there is a physical barrier (e.g. cubicle, Plexiglas window).

Provide the necessary facilities and cleaning products to maintain a clean and safe workplace

- ▶ Provide access to handwashing facilities and place hand sanitizing dispensers in prominent locations throughout the workplace.
- ▶ Ensure that high traffic work areas or frequently touched surfaces are cleaned and disinfected more often. Ensure that cleaning supplies are available for employees to clean and disinfect their workspaces.
- ▶ Provide employees with any personal protective equipment recommended by occupational health and safety guidelines, and training to ensure it is used correctly.

Make sure employees know what to do when they have symptoms

- ▶ Consider relaxing sick leave policies for employees who are ill. This includes suspending the need for medical notes to return to work, as it reduces the burden on an already stressed health care system.
- ▶ If employees must use public transportation to come to work, consider flexible hours to allow them to avoid peak travel periods.
- ▶ Consider how employees will return home without using public transit if they develop symptoms at work.
- ▶ Prepare for increases in absenteeism due to illness among employees and their families or possible school closures.

Work-related travel

- ▶ Non-essential travel should not occur at this time.
- ▶ Consider the risks and benefits related to any upcoming essential travel and evaluate other options, such as postponing, cancelling or participating virtually.
- ▶ Check the latest information on affected areas and any **travel health notices**.
- ▶ When you return from any travel outside Canada, you must self-isolate for 14 days.
- ▶ When you return from travel within Canada, monitor yourself for **symptoms**, such as a cough, fever or difficulty breathing for 14 days.
- ▶ If you develop even mild **symptoms**, such as cough, fever or difficulty breathing, **isolate yourself** at home and contact your local **Public Health Authority** for further instructions.

Work-related travel for essential workers

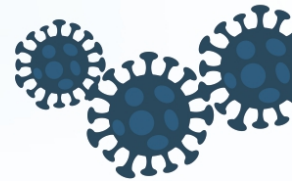
- ▶ Certain persons who cross the border regularly to ensure the continued flow of goods and essential services, or individuals who receive or provide other essential services to Canadians, are exempt from needing to quarantine (self-isolate) due to travel outside of Canada, as long as they are asymptomatic (do not have symptoms of COVID-19).

You must:

- ▶ practice physical (social) distancing
- ▶ self-monitor for symptoms
- ▶ stay in your place of residence as much as possible
- ▶ follow the instructions of your local public health authority if you feel sick

**WE CAN ALL DO OUR PART IN PREVENTING
THE SPREAD OF COVID-19.
FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT**

.....
Canada.ca/coronavirus or contact **1-833-784-4397**



How to handrub

Rub hands for 15 seconds



1 Apply 1 to 2 pumps of product to palms of dry hands.



2 Rub hands together, palm to palm.



3 Rub in between and around fingers.



4 Rub back of each hand with palm of other hand.

Rub hands for 15 seconds



5 Rub fingertips of each hand in opposite palm.



6 Rub each thumb clasped in opposite hand.



7 Rub hands until product is dry. Do not use paper towels.



8 Once dry, your hands are safe.



JUST CLEAN
YOUR HANDS

For more information, please contact handhygiene@oahpp.ca or visit publichealthontario.ca/JCYH



REDUCE THE SPREAD OF COVID-19. WASH YOUR HANDS.



1

Wet hands with warm water



2

Apply soap



3

For at least 20 seconds, make sure to wash:



palm and back of each hand



between fingers



4

Rinse well



under nails



5

Dry hands well with paper towel



thumbs



6

Turn off tap using paper towel

1-833-784-4397

@canada.ca/coronavirus



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SOCIAL DISTANCING GUIDELINES AT WORK

-  **1** Avoid in-person meetings. Use online conferencing, email or the phone when possible, even when people are in the same building.
-  **2** Unavoidable in-person meetings should be short, in a large meeting room where people can sit at least three feet from each other; avoid shaking hands.
-  **3** Eliminate unnecessary travel and cancel or postpone nonessential meetings, gatherings, workshops and training sessions.
-  **4** Do not congregate in work rooms, pantries, copier rooms or other areas where people socialize. Keep six feet apart when possible.
-  **5** Bring lunch and eat at your desk or away from others (avoid lunchrooms and crowded restaurants).
-  **6** Avoid public transportation (walk, cycle, drive a car) or go early or late to avoid rush-hour crowding on public transportation.
-  **7** Limit recreational or other leisure classes, meetings, activities, etc., where close contact with others is likely.