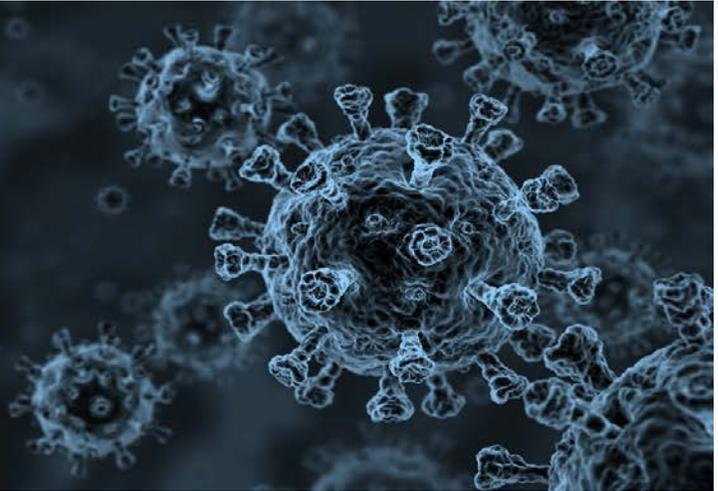




COVID-19: PRECAUTIONS WHEN WORKING AS A TRANSIT WORKER



OVERVIEW

A new type of coronavirus, abbreviated [COVID-19](#), is causing an outbreak of respiratory (lung) disease. The severity of this illness can vary from person to person. There are, however, steps you can take to prevent the spread of infection. This document provides important information to help protect workers during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

When faced with workplace hazards, organizations should apply a systematic approach to control them. This approach is often called RACE- Recognize, Assesses, Control and Evaluate. RACE is a framework that can be applied to all workplace hazards and is proven to be a highly effective hazard management tool.

PROTECTING YOURSELF AND CO-WORKERS

Coronaviruses are spread primarily from person-to-person through close contact, including at work. Here are some [helpful tips](#) to help prevent the spread of germs:

- Maintain physical distancing of at least 2 metres (6 feet) or more between persons including co-workers.
- [Wash your hands](#) often with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer (with greater than 60% alcohol content) if soap and water aren't available.
- Sneeze and cough into your sleeve.
- If you use a tissue, discard immediately and wash your hands afterward.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.
- Avoid contact with people who are sick, and where unavoidable, maintain physical distancing and practice regular hand hygiene
- Stay home if you are sick.
- Avoid high-touch areas, where possible, or ensure you clean your hands after.
- Where possible, wear [gloves](#) when interacting with high-touch areas. Do not touch your face with gloved hands. Take care when removing gloves. Ensure you wash your hands after removing them.



- Wash your clothes as soon as you get home.
- If you have symptoms or you think you were exposed to COVID-19, notify your supervisor immediately, complete the [self-assessment](#) and follow the instructions you get.

RECOGNIZE AND ASSESS

According to Health Canada, symptoms can appear in as little as a few days or as long as 14 days after being exposed to someone with the disease. [COVID-19](#) can cause a range of symptoms including fever, cough, sore throat and shortness of breath.

For some people, the symptoms are like having a cold; for others they are quite severe or even life threatening. It is important to check with your healthcare provider, Telehealth, or local Public Health Unit and follow instructions about [staying home](#) or away from public spaces to prevent the spread of the virus.

The virus typically spreads through coughing and sneezing, personal contact with an infected person, or touching an infected surface and then the face - mouth, nose, or eyes.

Close contact with passengers or touching potentially contaminated items (such as ticket machines, turnstiles, door handles, steering wheels, handrails, wheelchairs and other hard surfaces often touched by transit passengers) are likely to pose the greatest exposure risks. In general, close contact with other people increases the risk of exposure to someone who may be already infected.

CONTROL

1. Follow the requirements set out in the [Occupational Health and Safety Act](#) (OHSA) as well as policies and procedures, including infectious disease preparedness and response plans established by your employer

All workplace parties have roles and responsibilities to protect workers from hazards in the workplace as set out in the OHSA and its regulations, and the applicable directives coming from the Chief Medical Officer of Health.

Workers should raise any concerns to their:

- Supervisor
- Joint Health and Safety Committee or Health and Safety Representative

Under [Subsection 28\(1\)](#) of the OHSA, workers have a duty to:

- Work in compliance with the provisions of the Act and regulations
- Use or wear the equipment, protective devices or clothing that the worker's employer requires to be used to work
- Report to his or her employer or supervisor the absence of or defect in any equipment or protective device of which the worker is aware and
- Report to his or her employer or supervisor any contravention of the Act or Regulations or the existence of any hazard of which he or she knows.



Under the OHSA, employers have the duty to take every precaution reasonable in the circumstances to protect workers from hazards in the workplace. Workers have [right to refuse unsafe work](#). If health and safety concerns are not resolved internally, a worker can file a complaint with the Ministry's Health and Safety Contact Centre at 1-877-202-0008. Failure of the employer to comply with the OHSA and its regulations could result in enforcement action such as an order to comply, which may include a [stop-work order](#), upon inspection by the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development.

In addition, infectious disease preparedness and response plans established by the employer should be followed. The plan considers and addresses levels of risk associated with the workplace and job tasks. This includes how the workplace will [operate](#) during the COVID-19 outbreak including but not limited to health and safety considerations such as sanitization of workplaces, how workers and employers [report illnesses](#), how to ensure physical distancing, and how work will be scheduled.

2. Maintain [physical distancing](#). Physical distancing generally means maintaining a distance of at least 2 meters (6 feet) or more between persons at all times. By maintaining physical distancing, people are less likely to be exposed to a respiratory virus.
 - Reduce the number of clients using services at the same time (e.g. limit number of passengers on bus, modify hours of service)
 - Consider eliminating access close to the operator/driver by placing signs asking bus passengers to enter and exit the bus through rear entry doors. Consider exemptions such as transit passengers with impairment(s) who may need a ramp or other assistance requiring front door access. If so, establish procedures and controls to limit exposure to the operator.
 - Use physical barriers, visual cues or signage to limit close contact to the transit operator and to maintain distancing of at least 2 metres between the transit operator and passengers
 - Reduce activities that require close physical proximity or contact with people
 - Limit any contacts closer than 2 metres to the shortest time possible
3. Follow specific guidance for health and safety and infection prevention and control practices and measures and procedures established by the employer.
 - Refer to the [Ministry of Health](#), [Public Health Ontario](#) and the [Government of Canada](#) for COVID-19 Guidance
 - In addition to routine cleaning, [clean frequently](#) touched surfaces (i.e. steering wheels, door handles, handrails, customer service counters, touch screens, elevator buttons, etc.) at a minimum of twice per day. If the surfaces are visibly dirty, they should be cleaned prior to disinfection application.
 - Transit workers should use or wear personal protective equipment (PPE) (i.e. the equipment, protective devices or clothing) that the worker's employer requires to be used or worn. Workers are to be trained on the use and limitations of any PPE that the employer requires to be used by the worker.
 - Proper [donning and doffing of PPE](#) and [hand hygiene](#) should be performed.
4. Stay home if you are feeling ill. Actively [monitor yourself](#) for any symptoms and if you detect symptoms, you should immediately distance yourself from others and go home. If possible, avoiding



using public transit to get home. Notify your supervisor so that they are aware of the situation and can also notify others who may have been exposed.

5. Demonstrate the following precautionary measures while working:

- Do not report to work if you are exhibiting any of the [symptoms](#) or are under [self-isolation](#) or quarantine
- Limit the amount of face-to-face contact during work activities and [practice physical distancing](#) whenever possible.
- Use technology for communication (text messaging and mobile phones rather than in-person conversations)
- Avoid sharing equipment/supplies (i.e. vehicles, radio, tablets, and electronic devices) where possible. Disinfect regularly if sharing cannot be avoided
- Limit any casual interactions that normally occur at work
- Change out of work clothing at the end of each shift and wash them. Do not store your street clothes and work clothing in the same space unless both are clean
- Consider discussing any underlying medical conditions that might place you at a higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19 with your Human Resources Department

Additionally, the COVID-19 outbreak is a unique and unprecedented scenario for many workers. Ensure you are taking care of both your mental health and psychological well-being, as well as your physical health, during this time. Find out [helpful tips and coping strategies](#).

6. Practice stringent hand hygiene practices. Health Canada recommends following basic hygiene practices:

- Wash hands frequently
- Thoroughly [wash hands](#) with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
- If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based [hand sanitizer](#) containing at least 70% alcohol
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth
- Practice respiratory etiquette and sneeze or cough into your sleeve or a tissue and discard it
- Use a clean tissue or your knuckle/elbow to touch light switches, doors, buttons, etc.

EVALUATE

Ask and evaluate:

- Were the proper hygiene facilities (soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer) available to you?
- Were you able to practice physical distancing?
- Are you disinfecting (i.e. disposable wipes) frequently touched surfaces routinely?
- Did you use or wear the PPE that your employer requires you to use or wear to protect you while you do your job?
- Have you been provided training on the proper use of PPE and the limitations of the PPE?
- Do you know what to do if you have symptoms of COVID-19?



Safe Environments
Healthy Workers

www.pshsa.ca

SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL:

<https://covid-19.ontario.ca/self-assessment/#q0>

TAKING CARE OF YOUR MENTAL HEALTH DURING COVID-19

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/diseases-conditions/taking-care-mental-health.html>

TO CONTACT YOUR LOCAL PUBLIC HEALTH UNIT:

<http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/common/system/services/phu/locations.aspx>

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, REFER TO HEALTH CANADA'S WEBSITE ON COVID-19

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/being-prepared.html?topic=tilelink>

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT:

- <https://www.ontario.ca/page/2019-novel-coronavirus> (Ontario COVID-19 webpage)
- www.pshsa.ca/covid-19