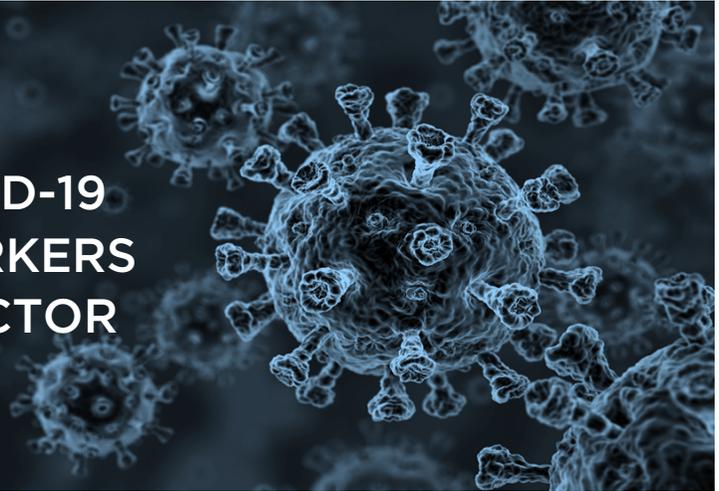




HEALTH AND SAFETY GUIDANCE DURING COVID-19 FOR FOODSERVICE WORKERS IN THE HEALTHCARE SECTOR



OVERVIEW

During the COVID-19 (coronavirus) outbreak, we all need to do our part to keep workers, customers and the public safe and healthy so we can stop the spread and prepare to reopen the province, when we are ready.

Below is a set of resources, tips and best practices to help employers and employees prevent the spread of COVID-19 and work together to reopen the province.

Employers and workers in Ontario have certain duties and rights under the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA) and its regulations. Employers should also review and follow any applicable directives and guidance coming from the Chief Medical Officer of Health and Ministry of Health.

You should also regularly check for requirements applicable to your region, such as:

- the provincial COVID-19 Response Framework
- municipal bylaws
- orders from your local public health unit

To help prevent outbreaks, you are encouraged to develop a COVID-19 workplace safety plan. All businesses operating in a region in lockdown are required to have one under provincial regulation.

LEARN MORE ABOUT:

- [workers' rights](#)
- [employers' responsibilities](#)



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:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer (60% - 90% alcohol content).
- [You must use a face covering \(non-medical mask, such as a cloth mask\) in public indoor spaces](#)
- 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.
- Stay home if you are sick.
- Avoid high-touch areas, where possible, or ensure you clean your hands after.
- Wash your hands and clothes as soon as you get home.
- Self monitor for illness.
- If you are ill notify your supervisor immediately, complete the [self-assessment](#) and follow the instructions you receive.

BEST PRACTICES TO STAY HEALTHY AND SAFE

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, close contact with an infected person, or touching an infected surface and then the face - mouth, nose, or eyes.

Close contact with a potentially infected person or touching potentially contaminated items (such as carts, meal trays, equipment, door handles, hard surfaces, etc.) 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.

Recognize hazards and assess risks: The first step to controlling risks in a workplace is to identify the risks. This applies to all workplace hazards, not just COVID-19. Identifying and controlling workplace hazards is required of all employers in Ontario under the Occupational Health and Safety Act and its regulations. The key risk factors for COVID-19 transmission include:



- prolonged exposure - spending more time with potentially infected people
- close proximity - working close to others
- crowded places - having more people in a space
- closed spaces - indoor spaces with less fresh air exchange (working indoors is riskier than working outdoors)
- forceful exhalation - activities that cause people to breath more deeply, such as exercise, speaking loudly and singing

It is possible for COVID-19 to be spread by people who do not have any symptoms. This makes effective control measures very important. We must act as if everyone is infected when setting up controls. The risk of severe health outcomes is not the same for all workers. The risk increases with age and is higher for people with certain medical conditions.

CONTROL

1. Follow the requirements set out in the Occupational Health and Safety Act as well as policies and procedures, including infectious disease preparedness and response plan established by your organization.

All workplace parties have roles and responsibilities to protect workers from hazards in the workplace as set out in the [Occupational Health and Safety Act \(OHSA\)](#) and its regulations, and the 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
- Union if applicable

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

- Comply 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 worn
- 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 Ontario law, workers have the [right to refuse unsafe work](#). If health and safety concerns are not resolved internally, a worker can seek enforcement by filing a complaint with the ministry's Health and Safety Contact Centre at 1-877-202-0008.



Follow your workplace safety plan and any 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 site will [operate](#) during the pandemic including but not limited to health and safety considerations such as sanitization of sites, how employees 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. By maintaining physical distancing, you are less likely to be exposed to a respiratory virus. Physical distancing may not be possible when performing certain tasks and PPE may be required.

Wear personal protective equipment (PPE) that protects your eyes, nose and mouth (surgical/procedure mask and goggles or face shield) if:

- a. you are required to come within 2 metres of another person and,
- b. if you are not separated by plexiglass or some other impermeable barrier from a person.

3. **Follow specific guidance for health and safety and infection prevention and control practices.**

- Refer to the Ontario [Ministry of Health](#) and [Public Health Ontario](#) for COVID-19 guidance
- Increase frequency of [cleaning](#) high-touch surfaces (i.e. door handles, counters, hand rails, touch screens, table tops, chairs, food contact services, meal trays, kitchen and buffet serving utensils) with cleaning products registered in Canada with Drug Identification Number (DIN) or WHMIS label at least twice daily and when visibly dirty
- Allow adequate contact time according to the manufacturer's instructions
- Protect food from contamination by using guards or coverings for food and utensils
- Food prepared for takeout and delivery should be packaged to protect food from contamination and to be consumed elsewhere
- [Wash hands](#) frequently with soap and water
- [Sanitize and clean equipment and utensils](#) using one of the following methods:
 - clean water at a temperature of at least 77 degrees Celsius or more for at least 45 seconds;
 - chlorine solution of not less than 100 ppm at a temperature of not lower than 24 degrees Celsius for at least 45 seconds;
 - quaternary ammonium compound solution of not less than 200 ppm at a temperature not lower than 24 degrees Celsius for at least 45 seconds;
 - clean solution containing not less than 25 ppm of available iodine at a temperature not lower than 24 degrees Celsius for at least 45 seconds; or
 - other sanitizing agents if approved for use by Health Canada, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency or the medical officer of health for the intended purpose, and used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions
- Food service workers should wear personal protective equipment (PPE) that is normally used as appropriate for the task being undertaken unless close contact is required.
- Proper [donning and doffing of PPE](#) and hand hygiene should be performed.
- For food handling and preparation specific resources, [contact](#) your local Public Health Unit.



- 4. Return to Work after travel or after illness.** Stay home if you are feeling ill. Comply with screening protocols at your workplace and actively [monitor yourself](#) for any symptoms. If you detect symptoms, you should immediately distance yourself from others and go home. If possible, avoid using public transit. Ensure you notify your supervisor so that they are aware of the situation and can also notify others who may have been exposed.

Where employees have travelled outside of Canada within the last 14 days and are seeking to return to work, it is important to balance the protection of the health system and the continued operation of these settings. Workers who have [travelled outside of Canada](#) within the last 14 days should self-isolate for a period of 14 days starting from their arrival in Ontario. Workers should not attend work if they are sick. If returning to work after illness, workers should consult their [local public health unit](#) and their manager/occupational health and safety department to plan their safe return to work.

- 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)
 - Limit any casual interactions that normally occur at work
 - Establish flexible work hours or alternative hours where possible

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 the time. Find out [helpful tips and coping strategies](#).

- 6. Practice stringent hand hygiene.** Health Canada recommends following basic hygiene practices:
 - Wash hands frequently and thoroughly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
 - If using hand sanitizers, they must be alcohol-based (60% - 90% alcohol) to be effective
 - Avoid touching your face
 - 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 (handwashing equipment) available to you?
- Were you able to practice physical distancing?
- Did you have the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) you require to protect you while you do your job?
- Have you been provided training on the proper use of PPE?
- Do you know what to do if you have symptoms?



- Are you aware of emergency risks in your region and how to be prepared as the situation evolves?

SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL:

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

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>

RESOURCES

Stay updated with daily government updates:

- [Government of Ontario](#)
- [Government of Canada](#)
- [Public Health Ontario](#)

ONTARIO GOVERNMENT AND AGENCY-ISSUED RESOURCES ABOUT COVID-19

The [Ontario Ministry of Health](#) is providing consistent updates on the provincial government's response to the outbreak, including:

- status of cases in Ontario
- current affected areas
- symptoms and treatments
- how to protect yourself and self-isolate
- updated Ontario news on the virus

[Public Health Ontario](#) is providing up-to-date resources on COVID-19, including:

- links to evolving public health guidelines, position statements and situational updates
- synopsis of key articles updating on the latest findings related to the virus
- recommendations for use of personal protective equipment
- information on infection prevention and control
- testing information
- other public resources



OTHER COVID-19 RESOURCES

[Health Canada](#) outlines the actions being taken by the Government of Canada to limit spread of the virus, as well as what is happening in provinces and communities across the country. It also maintains a live update of the number of cases by province.

The [World Health Organization](#) is updating the latest guidance and information related to the global outbreak and spread beyond Canadian borders.

It also provides the most up-to-date information on:

- current research and development around the virus
- a COVID-19 situation “dashboard”
- emergency preparedness measures
- live media updates on the spread of the virus

PUBLIC SERVICES HEALTH AND SAFETY ASSOCIATION

Access resources and information about COVID-19 at <https://www.pshsa.ca/covid-19>

This resource does not replace the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* (OHSA) and its regulations, and should not be used as or considered legal advice. Health and safety inspectors apply the law based on the facts in the workplace.