

RESPONDING TO COVID-19 IN THE WORKPLACE

Here are some tips for employers to help promote employee and guest health and safety during a pandemic.

Employers should ensure that their workers understand:

- Which job activities may put them at risk for exposure to sources of infection
- What options may be available for working remotely
- Social distancing strategies, including avoiding close physical contact (e.g. shaking hands) and large gatherings of people
- Good hygiene and appropriate disinfection procedures
- What personal protective equipment (PPE) is available, and how to wear, use, clean and store it properly
- How supervisors will provide updated COVID-19 related communications, and where to direct their questions

Do you have a formal plan in place in case of an outbreak at your workplace?

Contact a safety specialist at go2HR for guidance and more information:

safety@go2hr.ca

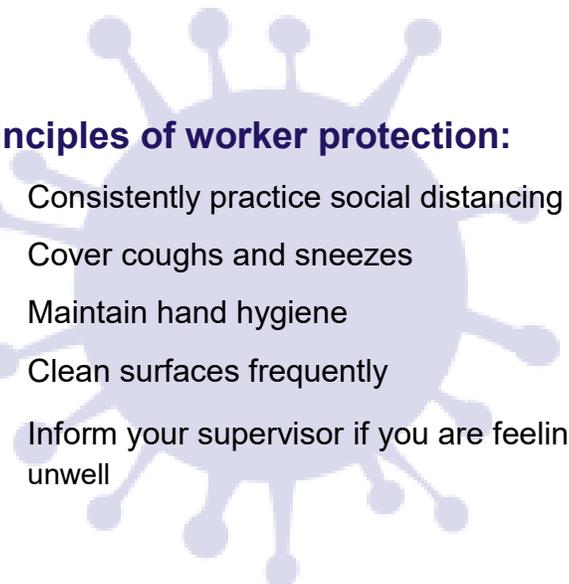
604-633-9787 ext. 220

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Principles of worker protection:

- ✓ Consistently practice social distancing
- ✓ Cover coughs and sneezes
- ✓ Maintain hand hygiene
- ✓ Clean surfaces frequently
- ✓ Inform your supervisor if you are feeling unwell



Sick Leave

Employers may consider providing sick leave so that workers may stay home if they are unwell. Flexible leave policies help stop the spread of disease, including to healthy workers. Workers can also collect EI benefits if they must take time off work due to a quarantine or self-isolation. As of March 11, 2020 the one-week waiting period for EI benefits has been waived for Canadians.

Training

Employers should provide worker training on infection controls, including the importance of avoiding close contact (within 6 feet) with others. Employers should provide adequate supplies and ready access to soap and running water, tissues, alcohol-based hand sanitizers and cleaning agents. Some worksites may need PPE (e.g., gloves or face masks). Frequent visual and verbal reminders to workers can improve compliance with hand hygiene practices and thus reduce rates of infection.

Control Measures

Employers may modify the work environment and/or change work practices to provide additional protection to workers and clients. For example, employers may install physical barriers (e.g., clear plastic sneeze guards), conduct business in a different manner (e.g., use drive-through service windows, implement telework arrangements), install additional hand sanitizer dispensers, provide facial tissues, and have workers use PPE.

Risk Communication

Workers should be aware of the exposure risk level associated with their job duties. In addition, a pandemic may disproportionately affect people in certain age groups or with specific health histories. Workers with job-related exposure to infections who voluntarily disclose personal health risks should be considered for job accommodations and/or additional protective measures, e.g., use of PPE. Remember that workers in BC have the right to refuse work if they believe it presents an undue hazard to their health. Maintaining a safe and healthy workplace and following the principles of worker protection will go a long way during this increasingly challenging time.

High Exposure Risk	Medium Exposure Risk	Low Exposure Risk
Healthcare workers, particularly those working with known or suspected pandemic patients.	Workers who frequently interact with the general public (e.g., those working in schools, retail, travel, tourism and hospitality or other crowded environments)	Workers who have minimal contact with the general public and other coworkers (e.g. office workers).