

Accommodation:

Protocols for returning to operation

The following content was posted to WorkSafeBC's website on June 9, 2020. For the most current version, please visit [worksafebc.com](https://www.worksafebc.com).

The following protocols offer guidance for the accommodation industry, including hotels, motels, backcountry operators, lodges, RV parks, cabins, and hostels. These employers may also benefit from reviewing protocols related to [office space](#), [food and drink services](#), [retail services](#), and [parks](#).

Many elements of managing hotels are included in [COVID-10 Guidance to the Hotel Sector](#) issued by the BCCDC. Employers must also ensure they are abiding by any [v](#), and the appropriate health authority, that are relevant to their workplace.

Developing a COVID-19 safety plan

Employers are required to develop a [COVID-19 Safety Plan](#) that outlines the policies, guidelines, and procedures they have put in place to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission. This plan follows the six steps outlined on [COVID-19 and returning to safe operation](#). Employers must involve frontline workers, joint health and safety committees, and supervisors in identifying protocols for their workplace.

Employers are not required to submit plans to WorkSafeBC for approval, but in accordance with the order of the [Provincial Health Officer](#), this plan **must be posted** at the worksite. During a WorkSafeBC inspection, we will ask employers about the steps they have taken to protect their workers or to see the plan if it has been developed.

One part of developing your COVID-19 Safety Plan is identifying protocols that everyone at the workplace must follow to keep workers safe. We've provided industry-specific protocols below to consider as you develop the plan for your workplace.

These protocols are not a list of requirements; however, they should be considered and implemented to the extent that they address the risks your workplace. You may need to identify and implement additional protocols if the protocols suggested here do not sufficiently address the risk to your workers.

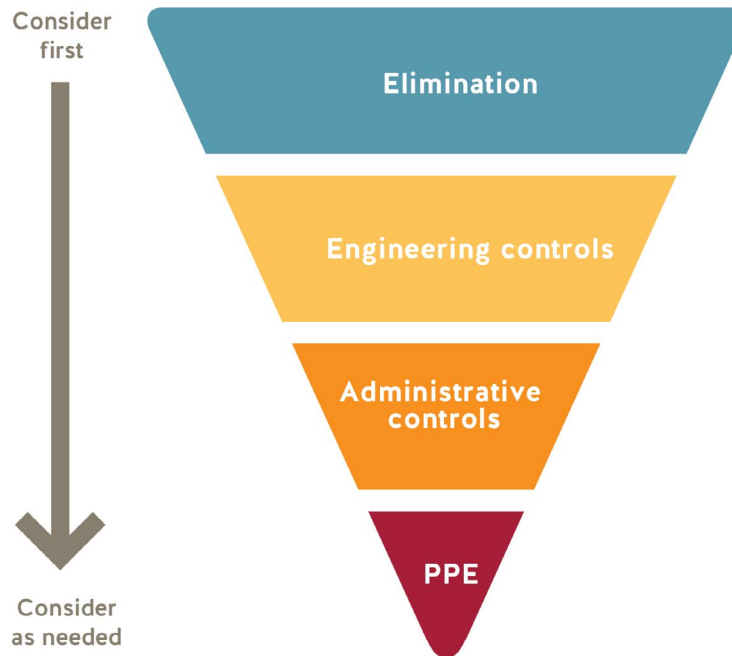
Understanding the risk

The virus that causes COVID-19 spreads in several ways, including through droplets when a person coughs or sneezes, and from touching a contaminated surface before touching the face. Higher risk situations require adequate protocols to address the risk.

- The risk of person-to-person transmission is increased the closer you come to other people, the amount of time you spend near them, and the number of people you come near. Physical distancing measures help mitigate this risk.
- The risk of surface transmission is increased when many people contact same surface, and when those contacts happen in short intervals of time. Effective cleaning and hygiene practices help mitigate this risk.

Selecting protocols for your workplace

Note that different protocols offer different protection. Wherever possible, use the protocols that offer the highest level of protection and add additional protocols as required.



First level protection (elimination): Use policies and procedures to keep people at a safe physical distance from one another. Limit the number of people in your workplace at any one time, and implement protocols to keep workers at least 2 metres from other workers, customers, and members of the public.

Second level protection (engineering controls): If you can't always maintain physical distancing, install **barriers** such as plexiglass to separate people.

Third level protection (administrative controls): Establish rules and guidelines, such as cleaning protocols, telling workers to not share tools, or implementing one-way doors or walkways.

Fourth level protection (PPE): If the first three levels of protection aren't enough to control the risk, consider the use of **non-medical masks**. Be aware of the limitation of non-medical masks to protect the wearer from respiratory droplets. Ensure workers are **using masks appropriately**.

Protocols for accommodation

General considerations

- Where possible, employers should consider work from home options for workers who do not require on-site attendance.
- Advise guests at the time of booking of the facility's policies around guests with symptoms of COVID-19, who have travelled from outside of Canada, and who have had close contact with someone with COVID-19. Post signage at entrances advising of this policy.
- Ensure physical distancing can be maintained between workers and guests throughout the workplace. The configuration of some workplaces will not allow for physical distancing to be maintained – for example, at some reception and concierge desks where the width of the desk will not ensure adequate distance. In these cases, consider other ways of maintaining distance, such as tape on the floor to indicate where guests should stand, or install a **physical barrier** to reduce the risk of transmission.
- Install markers on the floor (or wall, or otherwise) 2 metres apart to support physical distancing at reception desk and other areas where guests may line up.
- Place hand sanitizer dispensers (touchless, where possible) at guest and employer entrances and high contact areas, including lobby reception areas and employee entrances, other hotel lobby areas, restaurant entrances, meeting spaces, elevator, and other public areas.
- Avoid sharing equipment, such as pens, radios, computers, walkie-talkies and cell phones. If equipment is shared, disinfect after use.
- Empty and clean garbage cans in public areas regularly.
- Develop a **cleaning and disinfecting** protocol that indicates the frequency of cleaning common places (door handles, inside elevators, counters, and bathrooms). Consider eliminating unnecessary items from reception areas, including magazines, brochures, and leaflets to facilitate this process.
- Establish and post **occupancy limits** for areas such as elevators, cleaning supply closets, worker break rooms, and laundry rooms to ensure physical distances can be maintained.
- If staff common rooms are small and do not allow for physical distancing, consider repurposing unused spaces such as banquet rooms.
- Display signs encouraging **hand hygiene**, **respiratory etiquette**, and physical distancing for staff and guests, particularly in high-traffic areas, including the front lobby, reception areas, as well in back of house areas.
- Ensure staffing plans allow for new levels of cleaning requirements and that heightened risks of violence and harassment from guests (potentially due to amended service level) are planned for.

On-site amenities

- On-site pools, whirlpools, wading pools, hot tubs, water spray parks, saunas, playgrounds, gym facilities and play areas are subject to guidance and restrictions from health authorities and public health. Ensure that this guidance is followed. When these facilities can remain open, follow relevant WorkSafeBC guidance contained in **Gyms and fitness centres** and **Parks**.
- Control risks of water-related bacterial disease such as **Legionnaires' disease** due to prolonged shut down of water systems including drinking fountains, decorative fountains, hot tubs, steam rooms etc.

- Ensure business centres are included in cleaning and disinfecting protocols.
- For personalized services (e.g. babysitting and dog walking), evaluate whether appropriate physical distancing and hygiene can be maintained. If control measures cannot be put into place, consider suspending these customer value-added services.
- For hostels, implement a plan to ensure physical distancing in shared sleeping rooms, kitchens, and bathrooms. This may include blocking alternate beds, sinks, and workstations and having morning/ evening timetables or scheduling access to kitchens and bathrooms by rooms or bed numbers.
- For hostels or shared accommodation, arrange beds at least 2 metres apart, and head-to-toe. Use temporary barriers between beds, such as curtains.

Check in/out procedures

- Consider using every other workstation, or otherwise separating workstations, at reception to ensure separation between front desk agents. Where physical distancing cannot be maintained, consider the use of physical **barriers**. Where possible, schedule agents so that consistent groups (cohorts) work together exclusively to prevent the risk of broader transmission through the workplace.
- Implement physical distancing measures at reception and other areas where guests may line up.
- Consider using every other workstation or otherwise separating workstations at reception to ensure separation between front desk agents. Where physical distancing cannot be maintained, consider the use of physical **barriers**.
- Encourage one-way guest flow with marked entrances and exits.
- Reconfigure public seating areas to promote physical distancing.

Supporting guests in self-isolation

- Requirements on supporting guests in self-isolation are provided in provincial health officer's [Guidance to the Hotel Sector](#).
- If possible, have self-isolating guests enter and exit through an exterior door that is not used by other guests. If possible, place self-isolating guests in rooms away from other guests. Depending on occupancy levels, designate a particular floor or wing for self-isolating rooms.
- Complete the registration card for the guest, or check them in online so that they do not have to stop at the front desk.

Transportation

- Employers should assess the number of people being transported or sharing vehicles and employ measures to ensure at least 2 metres of distance between people is maintained. Measures that may be taken to ensure at least 2 metres of distance include the following:
 - » Seat passengers in such a way that a physical distance of 2 metres is maintained wherever possible
 - » Stagger passengers to allow for maximum distance
 - » Adjust the number of passengers per trip
 - » If possible, use larger vehicles or multiple vehicles
- Employers must also implement a process that allows for physical distancing when loading and unloading vehicles.
- Employers should have handwashing facilities or sanitizing stations available to passengers as they enter and exit vehicles.

- Ensure that high contact surfaces within vehicles are routinely cleaned and disinfected. These include seatbelts, door handles, steering wheels, and hand holds.
- Incorporate end-of-shift vehicle wipe downs, include a method for tracking end of shift cleaning and provide passengers with appropriate supplies, like soap and water, hand sanitizer, and disinfectant wipes.
- If valet parking services are provided, ensure passengers are instructed to wash or sanitize hands before and after driving the vehicle. Ensure that appropriate handwashing or sanitizing supplies are available close to the valet area.
- Ensure courtesy vehicles are cleaned after every use.
- These same protocols should be followed for all types of transportation, including helicopters, and boats.

Cleaning protocols

- See the provincial health officer's [Guidance to the Hotel Sector](#) for cleaning protocols (Section C. Environmental cleaning). This includes guidance for general cleaning, housekeeping procedures both during and after guests' stays, waste management, and laundry.
- Ensure that all cleaning products are used in accordance with manufacturers' instructions, that appropriate supplies are provided, and that staff are trained on all enhanced cleaning protocols.
- Consider removing in-room binders and replace with a single sheet summary that can be disposed of, or provide the information on a website that can be accessed on cell phones. Otherwise, ensure room service folders/binders and other in-room information is cleaned and disinfected after each guest stay.
- Reduce the amount of kitchen equipment in the suite to bare essentials required.

Food and beverage services

- See the provincial health officer's [Guidance to the Hotel Sector](#) for cleaning protocols (Section D. Food and Beverage Services). This includes guidance for food handlers, general food service precautions, delivering and picking up food trays, and dishwashing.
- Additional protocols around the management of food service can be found in WorkSafeBC's guidance for [Restaurants, Cafés, and Pubs](#).

Engineering and maintenance

- Do not perform any non-urgent room maintenance until a room is no longer occupied and has been cleaned.
- If room maintenance is necessary when room is occupied, practice proper hygiene and physical distancing to ensure the safety of staff and guests.
- Clean and disinfect all shared tools and equipment after each shift or when tools are transferred between workers.

Meetings and events

- Establish and post occupancy limits for all meeting rooms. Occupancy limits should be established ensuring that physical distance of 2 metres can be maintained between attendees, and that attendees have adequate space to move around in the room as required.

- Cancel or reschedule special or private events in excess of 50 people, in accordance with public health officer's [prohibition on mass gatherings](#). Consider having registration and door attendants monitor capacities and advise when maximum numbers are reached.
- If the room has more than one door, consider designating one for entry and one for exit.
- If food services will be provided, mark areas on the floor where people can line up to ensure physical distancing is maintained.
- Ensure high-touch surfaces within the room, including door handles, light switches, audio/visual equipment, and seating areas are included in cleaning and disinfecting protocols.

Staff accommodation

- Evaluate the risks and consider strategies for shared staff accommodation, including housing people in groups of 6 or less and defining teams of workers who live and work together in exclusive groups (referred to in some industries as “teams” or “pods”). This will help reduce the risk of transmission to larger groups.
- Avoid having staff share a room if possible. If not possible, limit sharing to within teams or pods as noted above, arrange beds at least 2 metres apart, and head-to-toe. Use temporary barriers between beds, such as curtains.
- The BC Centre for Disease Control has issued [Protecting Workers, Contractors, and Employers Working in the Natural Resource Sector During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#) that might provide useful information for managing shared worker accommodations.
- Develop policies restricting employees or others from employee housing if they are ill or require isolation. Develop a plan to manage staff who develop symptoms of COVID-19 while in staff accommodation.
- Post signage promoting good [hand hygiene](#) and [respiratory etiquette](#).
- Stagger mealtimes, open additional dining areas, and limit group activities to decrease crowding and social interaction.
- Cleaning products should be readily available, monitored daily and restocked daily as required.
- High touch surfaces such as counters, handles, control switches should be cleaned a minimum of twice per day with regular household cleaning products, disposable wipes or a diluted bleach solution. This also includes food storage and preparation surfaces, serving areas, drinking stations, waste disposal facilities, tables, chairs, work surfaces, desktops and washroom facilities. Follow the directions on the cleaning product label.
- Maintain a cleaning schedule and log.
- Ensure staff are trained on the protocol and correct use of cleaning products.

Additional resources

- [British Columbia Center for Disease Control/B.C. Ministry of Health – Guidance to the Hotel Sector](#)
- [Industry Health and Safety Association](#)
- [BC Hotel Association](#)
- [Hotel Association of Canada](#)
- [Helicat Canada](#)
- [BLBCA](#)
- [BC Lodging and Campgrounds Association](#)

For more information

The information on this page is based on current recommendations and may change. For the latest guidance, please see the health information from the [British Columbia Centre for Disease Control](#) and the latest news from the [government of British Columbia](#).

If you have a question or concern

Workers and employers with questions or concerns about workplace exposure to COVID-19 can call WorkSafeBC's Prevention Information Line at 604.276.3100 in the Lower Mainland (toll-free within B.C. at 1.888.621.SAFE). You'll be able to speak to a prevention officer to get answers to your questions, and if required, a prevention officer will be assigned to assess the health and safety risk at your workplace.

Translated resources

Our key COVID-19 related resources are also available in [Chinese \(simplified\)](#), [Chinese \(traditional\)](#), [French](#), [Punjabi](#), [Spanish](#) and [Vietnamese](#).

Resources

COVID-19 Safety Plan

Employers are required to develop a COVID-19 Safety Plan that outlines the policies, guidelines, and procedures they have put in place to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission. This tool will guide...

COVID-19 health and safety: Selecting and using masks

Employers and workers may choose to use masks as part of safe work practices for COVID-19. This information sheet outlines the limitations of masks as a protective measure, and describes how to select...

Help prevent the spread of COVID-19: How to use a mask

This poster illustrates the steps to follow to put on and take off a mask safely. Additional...

COVID-19 health and safety: Designing effective barriers

To help prevent the spread of the virus that causes COVID-19, employers must implement measures to reduce the risk of person-to-person transmission. This resource will help you decide when to use barriers...

[See more resources](#)