



HEALTH AND SAFETY GUIDANCE DURING COVID-19 FOR ENTERTAINMENT, MUSEUM AND GALLERY EMPLOYERS



OVERVIEW

During the COVID-19 (coronavirus) outbreak, we all need to do our part to keep workers, students 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.

Learn more about:

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

BEST PRACTICES TO KEEP YOUR WORKERS HEALTHY AND SAFE

The health and safety of workers is a top concern amid the global COVID-19 pandemic. During this time, all parties should place an increased focus on occupational health and safety in order to protect workers and to keep Entertainment, Museum and Gallery operations running and safe.



All measures taken to prevent the spread of COVID-19 should be done in compliance with requirements under the OHS Act and its regulations. In addition, a person responsible for a place of business has obligations under the *Emergency Measures and Civil Protection Act* (EMCPA) to operate in compliance with the advice, recommendations and instructions of Ministry and public health officials.

In addition, below are a set of resources, tips and best practices to help employers prevent the spread of COVID-19 in workplaces.

PROTECTING YOURSELF AND CO-WORKERS-GENERAL GUIDANCE

The virus typically spreads through coughing and sneezing, personal contact with an infected person, or touching an infected surface and then face – mouth, nose or eyes with unwashed hands. Here is some general guidance and [helpful tips](#) to help prevent the spread of germs:

- Maintain physical distancing of at least 2 metres (6 feet) or more between persons, including clients and co-workers. (see Physical Distancing)
- Promote good hygiene such as:
 - Wash your hands often with soap and water when hands are visibly soiled, before and after any breaks, at the beginning and end of their shift, and before preparing food or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer (with greater than 60% alcohol content) if hand washing is not possible.
 - 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 high-touch areas, where possible, or ensure you clean your hands after.
- Implement regular cleaning and disinfection (see Environmental Cleaning and Disinfection)
- Minimize contact with people who are sick and ensure controls are in place for the protection of workers.
- Instruct workers to stay home if they are sick.
- Wash your clothes as soon as you get home.
- Instruct staff who have symptoms or think they were exposed to COVID-19, to notify their supervisor immediately, use the [self-assessment tool](#) and follow the instructions provided.

ESTABLISH AN EFFECTIVE OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY AND INFECTION PREVENTION AND CONTROL PLAN

Establish an infectious disease preparedness and response plan. The plan should follow recommendations in [guidance notes](#) from the [Ministry of Health](#) and directives from [Public Health Ontario](#). The plan should consider and address levels of risk associated with the workplace and job tasks within Entertainment, Museum and Galleries sectors and any office staff. This includes how the specific organization within these sectors will operate during and throughout the recovery phase following the pandemic including sanitization of the workplace, equipment and resources, how workers report illness, how to ensure physical distancing and how work will be scheduled.



To access the most recent Ministry of Health guidance notes please visit and scroll down to find your relevant sector information:

http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/2019_guidance.aspx

A list of activities and links to relevant resources to provide support in this area are listed below:

- Place posters or other signage in high traffic areas:
 - Asking clients or customers to stay home if they have symptoms (fever, cough or difficulty breathing)
 - Request client where a face covering ([non-medical mask](#) such as a cloth mask) to protect those around them Encouraging good respiratory hygiene, hand hygiene, and other healthy practices at the entrance to the workplace. Consider hand sanitizer stations at these locations where possible. Consider remote work wherever and whenever possible.
- Institute measures to physically separate or impose physical distance of at least 2 metres between persons. This could be done by use of physical partitions, visual cues or signage to limit close contact.
- Provide training to workers on COVID-19, how it spreads, risk of exposure, including those who may be at higher risk (i.e. have underlying health conditions) and procedures to follow including reporting process, proper hand washing practices and other routine infection control precautions.
- Actively encourage workers with symptoms to stay home, ensure that sick leave policies are flexible and consistent with public health guidance and the [Employment Standards Act, 2020 on job protected leaves](#). Communicate these policies to workers.
- Based on risk of exposure, consider implementing a process for containing and laundering work clothing. Alternatively, advise workers to practice good laundry hygiene practices with their clothing as it could potentially be a source of contamination. Example; changing out of work clothes, immediately bagging and washing immediately.
- Have a system for reporting probable and confirmed cases to the local [Public Health](#) unit. Communication about who will take responsibility, ensuring proper documentation, and implementing any advice given by the Public Health unit is critical for containing the spread of COVID-19.
- Assign staff to dedicated work areas as much as possible. Discourage them from sharing phones, desks, offices and other tools and equipment.
- Limit the exchange of papers (e.g. signing contracts). If documents must be exchanged, leave them on a clean surface while maintaining a two-metre distance. Avoid sharing pens and office equipment. Disinfect after each use.
- Schedule visits to eliminate people gathering in reception areas.

PHYSICAL DISTANCING

As advised by the Chief Medical Officer of Health, [public health officials](#), [Ministry of Health](#) and as outlined throughout government communications, physical distancing is required to control the spread of COVID-19. Physical distancing generally means maintaining a distance of at least 2 metres (6 feet) or more between persons. By maintaining physical distancing, people are less likely to be exposed to a respiratory



virus like COVID-19 as the virus can be spread before symptoms appear (pre-symptomatic) and when persons may have contracted the virus but are minimal or no symptoms (asymptomatic).

In order to ensure physical distancing in the workplace, employers should consider:

- Restricting access to buildings and offices to only essential personnel
- Limiting interactions with outside service providers and visitors
- Using plexi-glass dividers between workers and the public at service counters
- Changing work schedules to have staggered start time, lunches and breaks.
- Making work schedules flexible
- Allowing workers to telecommute if the job allows
- Implement measures to ensure physical distance and separation between people. If physical distance and separation cannot be maintained, workers should have personal protective equipment (PPE) consisting of surgical/procedure mask and eye protection (goggles and face shield)
- Workers must use personal protective equipment (PPE) as required by their employer. Workers should be trained on the proper use, care and limitations of any required PPE.
- Limiting the total number of staff at the workplace and where they are assigned to work
- Implementing a system for virtual and/or telephone consultations when and where possible
- Postponing non-essential face-to-face appointments or converting them to virtual appointments
- Having staff work from home whenever possible (i.e. administrative staff)
- Suspending all group activities and gatherings
- Altering the workplace layout of the floor by moving furniture or using visual cues such as tape on the floor to enhance physical distancing
- Arranging lunchrooms and break rooms to follow physical distancing practices.

ENVIRONMENTAL CLEANING AND DISINFECTION

While employers always have an obligation to [maintain clean workplaces](#), that obligation is under sharper focus during the COVID-19 outbreak.

The COVID-19 virus can survive for several days on different surfaces and objects. Frequent cleaning and disinfection is important to prevent spread of the disease. Many common household and commercial disinfectant products will destroy the COVID-19 virus. Some disinfectants will have an eight-digit Drug Identification Number (DIN). These products are approved for use by Health Canada. Refer to the Public Health Ontario [Fact Sheet for Environmental cleaning](#) for more details.

Employers should focus on:

- Easy access to soap and water (ways to properly clean hands) or alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available
- Frequent cleaning and disinfecting of washroom facilities.
- Posting signage on hygiene in English and majority languages in the workplace so everyone can understand how to do their part respecting hygiene practices.



- Sanitizing of commonly touched surfaces or areas (e.g. door handles, light switches, toilet handles, counters, work surfaces, equipment) twice a day and when visibly soiled

REPORTING ILLNESS

The symptoms of COVID-19 are shared with many other illnesses including the cold and flu. At this time, it is recommended that anyone who begins to feel unwell (fever, new cough or difficulty breathing) should return home and [self-isolate](#) immediately. If you are a caregiver to, have a household member with, or are otherwise a close contact of someone who has COVID-19, you should follow the guidance from public health on [self-isolation](#).

People who are self-isolating should seek clinical assessment over the phone - either by calling their primary care provider's office or Telehealth Ontario at 1-866-797-0000. If you need additional assessment, your primary care provider or Telehealth Ontario will direct you to in-person care options.

Anyone who has travelled outside of Canada within the last 14 days should self-isolate upon return from travel and should not go to work.

MINISTRY OF LABOUR, TRAINING AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AND WORKPLACE SAFETY & INSURANCE BOARD REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

The OHSA requires an employer to provide a written notice within four days of being advised that a worker has an occupational illness (including COVID-19) from exposure in the workplace 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, to the:

- Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development;
- Joint health and safety committee (or health and safety representative); and
- Trade union, if any.

For more information:

- [Occupational Illness: Requirements to Report to the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development](#)

Any instances of occupationally-acquired illnesses shall be reported to [WSIB](#) within 72 hours of receiving notification of said illness.

SHARE INFORMATION

It is important that all parties in a workplace understand their roles and responsibilities. Employers need to ensure occupational health and safety policies are updated and posted for all to see. Using industry resources, including this one and those produced by [Public Services Health and Safety Association](#) (PSHSA), the Ministry of Health, and Public Health Ontario will improve workplace understanding.



POST YOUR POLICIES

All employers need to post and communicate COVID-19 policies to all workplace parties. These policies should cover how the workplace will operate, including but not limited to:

- The sanitization of workplaces
- How to ensure physical distancing
- How work will be scheduled
- How workers and contractors report illnesses

All businesses should have a workplace illness policy. If a policy does not currently exist or does not align with COVID-19 recommendations, the following should be included: Workers with symptoms of a respiratory illness should stay home or be sent home from work; For workers housed in workplace accommodations, be confined to their rooms until cleared for re-entry into the workforce; should use the self-assessment tool for COVID-19 and follow the subsequent directions; When workers go home sick, their work areas should be cleaned and disinfected.

MINISTRY OF LABOUR, TRAINING AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT (MLTSD) REQUIREMENTS

The MLTSD is focused on providing enhanced protections for workers. Effective March 19, 2020, the Employment Standards Act, 2020, was amended to provide job-protected leaves for employees affected by COVID-19.

TRACK AND MONITOR YOUR WORKFORCE

Due to the latency period of COVID-19, it is important to track where workers have worked, if possible. If a worker tests positive for COVID-19, the local public health unit will ask employers to provide information on where the worker worked as well as the contact information of any other worker who may have been exposed.



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



MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

- Government of Canada, COVID-19 Taking Care of Your Mental Health:
<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/diseases-conditions/taking-care-mental-health.html>

PUBLIC SERVICES HEALTH AND SAFETY ASSOCIATION RESOURCES

- [Occupational Illness: Infectious Disease Reporting Form:](#)
- [COVID-19 Resources](#)
- [Ontario Association of Art Galleries – COVID-19 Response](#)
- [Canadian Museums Association](#)

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.