

APPENDIX E1

City of Toronto Public Health, COVID-19 Guidance
for Workplaces and Businesses

COVID-19 Guidance for Workplaces and Businesses

As health authorities around the world take action to contain the spread of COVID-19, businesses and employers must also play a role in stopping the spread of this disease. This guidance provides simple strategies to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in your workplace to keep everyone safe. The strategies can be adapted to meet the unique needs of each workplace.

New bylaw on use of masks or face coverings

The use of non-medical masks or face coverings is required in all indoor public spaces, as per a new City of Toronto [bylaw](#). More information about the bylaw is available [here](#). The mask bylaw has a set fine of \$1,000 for each offence.

For businesses with indoor spaces that are open to the public, employers are required to develop a policy and protocols on the wearing of masks. Refer to the [guidance on mask and face covering bylaw](#) for a sample policy your company can adapt. Train staff on the new bylaw policy, including who is exempt and the [proper use of a cloth mask or face covering](#).

General Guidance

- Stay informed through our website at toronto.ca/COVID19, as information changes frequently.
- Develop strategies to minimize exposure to the virus that causes COVID-19.
- Provide staff training on the required public health measures.
- Limit number of staff, clients or customers in indoor settings to allow for physical distancing.
- Inform staff, clients and customers about actions you are taking to keep everyone safe.
- Schedule frequent cleaning and disinfection of high-touch items, surfaces, and washrooms.

Public Health Measures to Minimize Exposure

- Conduct health screening for COVID-19 symptoms for staff, clients and customers.
- Restrict admission, to allow ease of movement while maintaining physical distancing.
- Use posters, floor markers and furniture to encourage everyone to maintain two metres/six feet.
- Modify service provision to avoid prolonged close contact or install barriers (e.g. plexiglass).
- Encourage hand hygiene by providing hand sanitizer (70-90% alcohol concentration) at the entrance.
- Conduct enhanced cleaning and disinfection of high-touch surfaces, and washrooms.

Staff Health Screening and Attendance

- Inform staff about the changes being made to protect them against COVID-19 by posting signs, updating information to the organization website, sending emails, etc.
- Make plans to operate with different levels of employee absenteeism due to illness, ill-dependants, or for child care during school closures.

Revised August 17, 2020

- Plan business functions, jobs, roles and critical elements within your business that are essential or critical when public health restrictions are in place, or if staffing levels are reduced.
- Ensure all staff complete a [health screening questionnaire](#) before each shift. The questions can be completed on paper, online or by asking staff directly.
- Stagger or adjust working hours and shifts to reduce the number of staff on your premises at any one time.
- Have a flexible sick policy so staff do not come to work when they are ill. Remind staff about the importance of reporting illness to their supervisor/manager.
- If staff become sick with [COVID-19 symptoms](#), while at work, they should go home right away and [self-isolate](#). Instruct them to call Telehealth at 1-866-797-0000, their health care provider or an [Assessment Centre](#) to get tested.
- In general, staff can return to work 14 days after their symptoms began if they had COVID-19.
- There are no clearance tests required for staff to return to work. Be flexible about requirements for a doctor's note.
- For other illnesses, or if a staff has tested negative for COVID-19, they should not attend work until they are symptom-free for at least 24 hours.
- Non-essential work travel should be avoided.
- Travellers entering Canada must self-isolate for 14 days after they return from travel anywhere outside of Canada, including the United States.
- Healthy individuals that cross the border and are deemed essential employees are exempt from self-isolation, but they must [self-monitor for symptoms](#).

Establish Health Screening of Clients and Customers

- Screen all clients and customers for COVID-19 symptoms prior to entry to your workplace or business.
- If this is not feasible, display self-screening [posters](#) at entrances informing people that they must not enter if they have symptoms.

Staff Training

- Staff should receive clear instructions on the new mask policy, and understand who is exempted from wearing a mask. Proof of exemption by customers is not required.
- Educate staff on the [proper use of masks/face coverings](#). Change masks away from customers when moist or dirty. Staff may remove their mask in an area not accessible by the public (e.g. lunch room, private office). More information on use of non-medical masks or face coverings can be found [here](#).
- Educate staff on proper [hand hygiene](#) and [respiratory etiquette](#).

Maintain Physical Distancing

- Consider reducing the number of employees present at the same time, such as:
 - Offering teleworking options, if available.

- Staggering work shifts and breaks.
- Enabling flexible work hours and schedules.
- Hosting virtual meetings.
- Staff should keep two metres/six feet from other staff and clients as much as possible.
- Ensure staff maintain physical distancing while in the lunch room, change rooms, meeting rooms, and other common areas.
- For staff who are carpooling, encourage them to limit the number of passengers in their car, not to drive or ride if they are sick, and to follow public health [guidance for taxis and ride-share](#) vehicles.
- Post [Physical Distancing](#) signs at all entrances, in employees rooms, in elevators, and in public areas (e.g. cashiers, service counters).
- Manage entrance flow and limit the number of staff, clients and contractors at any given time by:
 - Posting signs on number of people allowed into the premise at one time.
 - Move or tape off furniture in lunch rooms, change rooms, meeting rooms to maintain physical distancing.
 - Use visual markers (e.g. tape on the floor, pylons, signs) to remind everyone where to stand to keep two metre/six foot distance between staff (e.g. on a production line).
 - Install protective barriers (e.g. plexiglass) if there may be close contact between staff or between staff and clients (e.g. check-out lines).
 - Remove surplus furniture and supplies from rooms and walkways to allow ease of movement while maintaining physical distancing.
 - Provide online services or by phone whenever possible.
 - Use outdoor space whenever possible.
 - Assign workstations to a single user if possible, or limit the number of users.
 - Maintain line management. Use public announcement systems or have employees remind everyone to stay two metres/six feet apart.
 - Use tap features at checkout instead of cash.
 - For mail, product or curbside delivery, follow contact-less delivery.

Encourage hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette

- Download and post [Wash your Hands](#), [Cover your Cough](#), [Protect Yourself](#) signs in high traffic areas.
- Provide hand sanitizers dispensers (70-90% alcohol concentration) by entrances for everyone to use.
- Ensure an adequate supply of liquid soap, paper towel, hand sanitizer, tissues, and waste receptacles throughout the workplace, and in washrooms.

Enhanced Cleaning and Disinfection

- Educate staff on the proper use of cleaning agents and disinfectants, including required disinfectant contact times (amount of time that the product will need to remain wet on a surface to achieve disinfection). Understand safety precautions and requirement for use of mask and gloves.

Revised August 17, 2020

- Ensure adequate ventilation when using products (e.g. open windows, doors, or use fans).
- Ensure ventilation systems are operating properly, and replace filters as scheduled or sooner.
- Schedule enhanced environmental cleaning and disinfection practices.
- Clean and disinfect all high-touch surfaces at least twice a day and more frequently as needed. High-touch surfaces include items such as door handles, counters, cabinet doors, elevator buttons, light switches, faucets, toilet handles, hand rails, touch screen surfaces, and keypads.
- Ensure washrooms are always stocked with liquid soap and paper towels.
- Disinfectant kills germs on surfaces. Remove surface dirt first in order for the disinfectant to work.
- Most regular household cleaning products are effective at eliminating the virus.
- Look for cleaning and disinfectant products with an 8-digit Drug Identification Number (DIN) to confirm it is approved for use in Canada. Check the expiry dates of products and always follow manufacturer's instructions.
- Cleaning/disinfection wipes should only be used for surfaces, and according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- Equipment and tools that must be shared should be cleaned and disinfected regularly, including between users (e.g. cashier's stations, machinery).
- Thoroughly wash hands with soap and water immediately after cleaning the setting.

Note: Disinfectant wipes may have a combined cleaning and disinfectant in one solution, but depending on how dirty the surface is it may need to be pre-cleaned as disinfectants may become ineffective when dirt is present. Check instructions on the product's label.

Masks/Face Coverings for Clients/ Customers

- Masks or face coverings must be worn by clients at all times when indoors and/or receiving service.
- Not all clients or customers are able to tolerate a mask and may be [exempted](#). For example, masks or face coverings should not be used by children under the age of two, and anyone who has trouble breathing.
- If possible, provide disposable masks for clients or customers who have not brought their own.
- Consider alternative ways to provide services to clients or customers who are unable to wear a mask. For example, providing services at the end of the day, without other clients present, or using barriers (e.g. plexiglass), and maintain physical distance when possible. Staff providing close contact services to clients should wear a surgical/medical mask and eye protection.

Role of employer during a workplace COVID-19 outbreak

- Develop a preparedness and response plan in the event someone becomes ill with symptoms of COVID-19.
- Communicate with employees and business partners early and often to ensure accurate information is being shared.

Revised August 17, 2020

- Keep a list of the names and contact information of all participants at in-person meetings or events. Toronto Public Health will use this list to notify and provide instructions for close contacts to self-isolate or self-monitor for [COVID-19 symptoms](#).
- Any personal information that is collected for COVID-19 contract tracing can only be used for this purpose, unless an individual provides their consent. Records should only be kept for 30 days, and then shredded.
- Contact Toronto Public Health at 416-338-7600 for guidance if you have been notified that an employee has tested positive and/or you have concerns that employees may have been exposed to a person with COVID-19 in the workplace.
- Provide Toronto Public Health with contact information of exposed employees and customers to assist with contact tracing.
- If a staff member, client or customer has tested positive for COVID-19, Toronto Public Health will interview the person to determine if he/she was contagious while on your premises. Consent is obtained from the employee before disclosing personal health information to the employer.
- Clean and disinfect surfaces that may have been touched by the sick employee as soon as possible.
- Additional public health advice in the event of an outbreak may include additional cleaning and disinfecting measures to reduce the risk of spread in the setting.
- Follow public health guidance on additional preventive measures.
- Support employees who need to be absent from work due to illness or being a close contact of a confirmed case of COVID-19.
- Maintain confidentiality of employees' personal health information.
- Report to the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development and Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) if you have been advised that one of your employees has tested positive due to exposure at the workplace.
- Encourage staff to download the [COVID Alert app](#) so they can be notified directly if they have been in close contact with someone who was contagious with COVID-19.

Other Resources

Toronto Public Health: [COVID-19: Community & Workplace Settings](#) (for sector-specific guidance)

Province of Ontario: [Develop Your COVID-19 Workplace Safety Plan](#)

Province of Ontario: [Guidance to Prevent COVID-19 in the Workplace](#) (for sector-specific guidance)

Province of Ontario: [COVID-19 Support for Businesses](#)

Government of Canada: [COVID-19: Your Rights and Responsibilities as an Employee](#)

Government of Canada: [Risk-informed decision-making guidelines for workplaces and businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic](#)

Canadian Centre for Occupational Health & Safety: [COVID-19 Tip Sheets](#)

More Information

As information changes frequently, please visit toronto.ca/COVID19 to stay up to date.