

COVID 19 - Health, Safety and Wellness Checklist for Workplaces

Updated: June 16, 2020

When returning employees to the workplace, health, safety and wellness of employees and clients must be considered a first priority. Health and safety is the top reason for self-isolation and needs to be top of mind when returning and once returned to the workplace. Managers and employees must regularly assess safety procedures in the workplace and adjust as necessary.

This document provides managers/supervisors with considerations that help to ensure workplace health, safety and wellness. While returning to the workplace and once returned, ministries must operate according to the COVID-19 response guidelines as per [Taskroom](#) and saskatchewan.ca/COVID19. This checklist was developed using these Government of Saskatchewan public health requirements.

The following checklist provides basic guidance on key elements of COVID-19 pandemic hazard controls that all Government of Saskatchewan workplaces must follow. This document also offers guidance to assist managers/supervisors address specific health, safety and wellness needs. If you have any questions or require assistance, speak with your Ministry Safety Professional (where they are employed), Occupational Health Committee members or your Human Resource Business Partner.

1. Preventative Measures for Employees

Be proactive and begin assessing workplace needs before returning employees or making modifications. Consult expertise as needed.



- Practice physical distancing in the workplace:
 - Remain two-metres apart from others.
 - Avoid forming large groups/meetings.
 - Avoid handshakes and any other physical contact with others.
 - Avoid all unnecessary travel.
- Follow proper hand hygiene and coughing/sneezing etiquette:
 - Wash your hands frequently with soap and water. Scrub for 20 seconds.
 - If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer approved by Health Canada.
 - Avoid touching your face, mouth, nose and eyes.
 - Cough/sneeze into the bend of your elbow and then wash your hands with soap and water.

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- Hazard Assessments
 - COVID-19 is considered a biological hazard.
 - Hazard identification can be formal or informal and occur during regular inspections, assessment of a procedure or task, during pre-job planning etc.
 - The Government of Saskatchewan's [Guidelines for Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment](#) outlines the roles and responsibilities for the employer, managers, supervisors and employees.
 - The Hazard Identification and Assessment Simplified Worksheet (Appendix A) is a useful tool to provide assistance in formal hazard identification and to address areas with specific and unique needs.
 - The Safe Operating Procedure Worksheet (Appendix B) is a useful tool to identify the steps to perform a task and may assist in identifying hazards at each stage.
 - A Safe Operating Procedure can be applied to any portion of this checklist where no procedure exists currently. For existing procedures, ensure they are up-to-date and applicable to COVID-19.
- Supporting Mental Health
 - It is important to make mental health a priority right now. Reduced stress and anxiety supports a healthy workplace.
 - Recognize that employees may be returning to the workplace with heightened anxiety, during periods of mourning and/or under financial pressures and may need extra personal support.
 - Encourage employees to access the [Employee and Family Assistance Program](#) for support.
 - [Resources](#) for employees and their family members are available from Morneau Shepell, the Government of Saskatchewan's Employee and Family Assistance provider.
 - Managers are encouraged to access the Employee and Family Assistance Program for consultation support for employee mental health and workplace trauma or crisis.
 - Additional COVID-19 Mental Health Resources are available on [Taskroom](#).
 - If an employee's mental health is impacting a successful return to the workplace, contact your Human Resource Business partner to discuss options to support them.

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- Taking care of psychological health and safety in the workplace ~ Healthy Workplaces
 - The workplace plays an essential role in maintaining and promoting positive psychological health and safety.
 - Employees cannot refuse to come to work because of general fear and anxiety. Under the OHS legislation, employees may only refuse to work if they believe they are in “imminent danger”. If an employee is refusing to attend the workplace, contact your Ministry Safety Professional (where employed) and your Human Resource Business Partner.
 - Visit the [Healthy Workplaces](#) website on Staffroom for tools and resources to support building a Healthy Workplace, which also positively impacts mental health.

2. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Complete a Hazard Identification and Assessment Simplified Worksheet (Appendix A) to determine the need for PPE. PPE provision must meet Occupational Health and Safety [Regulations](#) requirements.



- If PPE is required, written protocols for training in donning and doffing the equipment, as well as instructions for disposing of it are required. Additional information can be found at [Saskatchewan.ca/COVID19](https://www.saskatchewan.ca/COVID19).
 - Homemade cloth masks are not PPE. Follow [directions](#) related to the use of [Cloth Mask Guidelines](#).
 - A request to obtain PPE should be directed to the Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency (SPSA) by the ministry Emergency Operations Committee representative at the following email address: spsa@gov.sk.ca with the subject: “**Non-Health PPE Requests**”.

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3. Workspace Considerations

- Keep hand sanitizer dispensers in plain view with signs indicating to use upon entry. Central Services provides hand sanitizer in common spaces.
- Promote a clean desk policy and limit items in the work space, including non-work items (e.g. memorabilia, personal items, etc.) to enable the proper cleaning.

We each have individual responsibility to ensure we are also disinfecting our own workstations.

Items that employees are responsible to clean include:

- any surfaces in an employees' cubical or office;
 - items such as keyboards, computer accessories, phones; and
 - personal items.
- Remove items not necessary in the workspace in order to increase maximum capacity.
- In workstation layouts without any dividers/baffles provide two-metres of space between employees. Where space cannot support this, consider options such as rotational staffing, workflow, orientating workstations so employees do not face each other etc.
- For cubicles with dividers/baffles, the workstations should provide a two-metre separation between workers. If due to operation demands, those cubicles with dividers/baffles cannot maintain the two-metre separation, dividers/baffles/shields are considered an effective engineering control, and acceptable physical barrier for infection control by the Public Health Agency of Canada.
- The [Public Health Agency of Canada](#) suggests that dividers/baffles are at head height. If cubicles are not at head height, consider other options such as rotational staffing or workstation re-orientation (placing the employee's workstation on a different wall that would allow for two-metres physical distancing). For example, if dividers/baffles are lower than head height for an employee standing at a sit-stand desk, re-orientation of the workstation may be used as an alternative control measure to provide the two-metres for physical distancing. Where re-orientation of workstations is not possible, the [Public Health Orders](#) deem [self-monitoring](#) of symptoms as an option.
- If dividers/baffles/shields between workstations are required, please work with Central Services to ensure proper sourcing and installation.

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- Supervisor/managers may seek the assistance of Safety Professionals or Occupational Health Committee members/representatives from within their Ministry, when they conduct individual assessments regarding the workstation layouts of their employees.
- Limit unnecessary visits to other offices, common spaces or public areas.
- Collaboration areas must comply with the maximum gathering requirements, distance chairs and remove extra chairs to ensure distancing, and install signage with instructions.
- Control access to the workplace, such as locked entry, access by appointment, rearranging a client waiting room to reduce the number of people or have clients wait elsewhere (e.g. their car until called), and remove reading materials and shared pens from the reception space.
- Building Operators are monitoring cleaning practices to ensure compliance and advising on-site cleaning staff of any deficiencies on a daily basis. Issues are to be brought to the attention of Building Managers who are responsible for working with managers/owners of the cleaning contractors for correction.

4. Cleaning and Disinfecting

The COVID-19 virus can survive up to several days on different surfaces. Frequent cleaning and disinfection are necessary.



- Work with your building manager to follow [Cleaning and Disinfection for Public Facilities](#).
 - Ensure commonly touched areas and shared equipment is cleaned and disinfected at least twice daily, or when visibly soiled. These include light switches, door handles, toilets, taps, handrails, countertops, mobile devices and keyboards.
- Assign employees to dedicated work areas as much as possible. Discourage them from sharing phones, desks, offices and other tools and equipment.
- Clothing and fabric items should be laundered and dried on the highest temperature setting possible. Ensure items are thoroughly dried.
- Work with your building manager to ensure employees are provided access to tissues, trash receptacles, hand soap, alcohol-based hand sanitizers (approved by Health Canada), disinfectants and disposable towels.

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- Promote no-touch options where possible, such as hands-free faucets, soap and paper towel dispensers, and self-open doors and garbage/recycling bins. Offer paper towels to manage these items where not touch-free.
- ☐ Refer to the [Guidelines for Addressing Allergies and Sensitivities in the Workplace](#) to address allergies and sensitivities in the workplace caused by certain cleaning products.
 - Managers and supervisors are responsible for collaborating with affected employees and removing products known to cause allergic and sensitivity health responses and replace them with acceptable alternatives.

5. Elevators and Base Buildings

A base building refers to the part of a multi-tenant building that directly serves and affects all tenants. Work with building managers to:



- ☐ Display posters by elevators indicating capacity and to ensure regular cleaning and sanitizing of elevators.
- ☐ Discuss information on heating, ventilation and air condition (HVAC) systems for air flow, filtration, etc.
- ☐ Posting relevant information in common areas and other base building locations on all necessary COVID-19 pandemic measures.

Refer to [Taskroom](#) for more information.

6. Shared Spaces



- ☐ If meals are provided to employees, follow the guidance outlined on [Saskatchewan.ca](#).
- ☐ Lunchrooms and break rooms must be arranged to follow physical distancing practices.
 - Consider staggered lunch and break times to reduce the number of employees gathering.
 - Remove or determine enhanced cleaning protocols for use of shared appliances (coffee maker, water cooler, fridge, etc.).

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- Inform employees that shared snacks and treats cannot be brought into the workplace.
- Work with your building manager to increase the cleaning and disinfecting of essential shared facilities and equipment, such as telephones, computers, washrooms and laundry rooms.
- **When utilizing washrooms:**
 - Be considerate of other users and practice physical distancing (two-metres) while in the washroom.
 - Wash hands thoroughly and vigorously with soap and warm water.
 - Use paper towel to open exit door handles.
 - Refer to [Taskroom](#) for signage.

7. Employee Health



- All employees must self-monitor for symptoms – use the COVID-19 [Self-Assessment Tool](#) – and follow the subsequent directions.
 - Employees with symptoms must be supported to leave work, and stay home.
 - When employees with symptoms leave work, their work areas must be cleaned and disinfected.
 - If there is concern that other employees may have been exposed, contact 8-1-1 for guidance. Also contact your Human Resources Business Partner.
 - If an employee requires a medical accommodation, contact your Human Resource Business Partner to discuss HR Manual [PS 705 – Employment Accommodation](#).
- For employees housed in workplace accommodations (e.g. work camps), employees with symptoms must be confined to their rooms until cleared for re-entry into the workforce. Contact 8-1-1 for guidance. Also contact your Human Resource Business Partner.
- Ensure managers/supervisors, Occupational Health Committees or Occupational Health Representatives are informed and engaged in keeping up to date on the [latest COVID-19 protocols, practices and guidelines](#).
- Align COVID-19 responses with the HR Manual [PS 809 – Communicable Disease](#) policy requirements.

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8. Client-Based Workplaces, Visitors and Contractors

Workplaces where clients visit or reside and contractors work, must modify operations to follow screening for symptoms, physical distancing and hygiene requirements.



- This may include information for clients on:
 - Distancing in lines.
 - Direction of movement through the building.
 - Limitations on the number of clients in the building.
 - Waiting rooms closed and signage for clients and visitors (e.g. waiting process, use of sanitizer, etc.).
- For clients housed in custody accommodations, clients with symptoms must be confined to their rooms until cleared for re-entry into the mainstream. Contact 8-1-1 for guidance. Also contact your Human Resource Business Partner.
- Ensure visitors and contractors are made aware of workplace protocols and follow them.

9. Work-Specific Information Delivery and Mail



- Employees who handle mail and deliveries do not require special protection; however, frequent hand washing with soap and water after handling all materials is encouraged.
- Employees delivering and receiving products must minimize contact with people and surfaces at their delivery locations. Contactless drop-off and pick-up procedures should be implemented.
- Clean and disinfect delivery and transport vehicles regularly.

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10. Transportation



- When taking a taxi or rideshare vehicle, employees should sit in the back seat only.
- Limit contact with taxi or rideshare drivers – load your own luggage, preferably in the trunk of the vehicle.
- Use debit or credit cards for payment to limit the handling of cash.
- Air flow in the vehicle should not be set to recirculating – set the vents to fresh air.
 - If a passenger is being transported to/from a health care facility and is displaying respiratory symptoms, keep the windows open. Maintain masks in the vehicle for these passengers to wear.
- Discourage carpools or sharing rides to work. If carpooling must occur, physical distancing should be maintained as much as possible, including having people sit in the backseat.
- In situations where it is impossible to maintain a two-metre distance between employees in a vehicle, follow these adaptations:
 - Encourage the same employees to ride in the same company vehicle every shift.
 - Employees should occupy the same seats in a vehicle for the entire shift.
 - Avoid physical contact and sharing materials or equipment.
 - Vehicles should be frequently cleaned and disinfected during the shift, as well as between each shift. This includes commonly touched surfaces, such as the steering wheel, gear shift, dash, radio, door handles (interior and exterior), rearview mirror, armrest and seatbelts. Maintain disinfecting supplies in the vehicle.
 - Work with your lease operator to place signage with information on proper coughing/sneezing etiquette and hand hygiene where it is clearly visible to passengers.
 - Maintain hygiene supplies in the vehicle, such as tissues and alcohol-based hand sanitizer approved by Health Canada, and use individual use garbage bags.

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11. Fostering a Culture of Health, Safety and Wellness

Fostering a culture of health, safety and wellness is more important than ever in the workplace. The following guidance will support managers/supervisors to help employees feel supported:



- Start each shift with a safety talk. This could include discussing changes, reminders, and/or allowing employees to ask questions about things they might be concerned about.
- Model the desired and required behaviours and enforce control measures.
- Manage by walking around and be seen to show employees you are there for them and care about their well-being.
- Keep communication channels open and encourage employees to bring concerns forward. Communicate regularly even if there are no updates in order to reduced stress and anxiety related to COVID-19.
- Be mindful of any stress that employees may be dealing with at work and at home and offer ways workplace policies can support them, and reminding them of the [Employee and Family Assistance Program](#).
- If an employee raises a concern:
 - Respond calmly and with assurance.
 - Ask questions, such as what ideas and solutions the employee may have to offer?
 - Be flexible and seek ways to support their success at work. This may require an accommodation – contact your Human Resource Business Partner to discuss these individual needs.
 - Implement changes that need to be made promptly. If employees do not feel safe, it will lead to stress and anxiety.
- Managers/supervisors may contact the Ministry Safety Professional (where they are employed), Occupational Health Committee members, and Human Resource Business Partner for additional support.

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Appendix A: Hazard Identification and Assessment Simplified Worksheet

Work with supervisors, Occupational Health Committee members, and employees to identify COVID-19 hazards in workplace. These could be situations about how the workplace is set up, workplace procedures, equipment, PPE needs, visitors and contractors, etc. Write them down in the template below and develop actions that can be taken to remove the hazard, or reduce the hazard to a minimum. If assistance is required in contact the Ministry Safety Professional (where they are employed), Occupational Health Committee members, and Human Resource Business Partner for additional support.

Ministry, Division, Branch, Work Unit, Location:			
Assessment Completed By (Names and Positions):		Assessment Completion Date:	
Hazards Identified	Hazard Control Actions Recommended	To be completed by who and in what timeline	Completion Date

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Appendix B: Safe Operating Procedure Worksheet

Position: _____	
Task: _____	
Task Description: _____	
Equipment and Tools Required:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• _____• _____• _____
Personal Protective Equipment Required:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• _____• _____• _____
Training Requirements:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• _____• _____• _____
Emergency Procedures:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• _____• _____• _____
Relevant Legislation	For more information or to report an error or deficiency please contact:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• _____	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• _____
<u>SAFE OPERATING PROCEDURE:</u>	

