COVID-19 POLICY AND WORKPLACE SAFETY PLAN

# POLICY STATEMENT

 Insert company/organization name(the “Business”) is committed to the health, safety, and well-being of its employees and of all individuals who enter its workplace.

COVID-19 is a respiratory viral infection which has infected millions of individuals across the globe, including Canada.

The Business aims to dispel fears and misconceptions regarding COVID-19 through this COVID-19 Prevention and Control Policy (the “Policy”) by educating its employees on the symptoms, infection prevention and control, and compliance with hand hygiene guidelines. In addition, this Policy sets out the Business’ legal obligations under applicable legislation, as well as steps the Business will take to limit the risk of infection by COVID- 19 in the workplace.

# PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to develop a prevention and response policy for COVID-19, as part of an emergency preparedness and response plan at the workplace. The aim is to clearly identify the requirements and procedures required to control the spread of the infection at the workplace, while also maintaining business operations. The policy is based on information available at the time of its development and is subject to change based on further information provided by the government, health authorities, and the latest evidence.

# DEFINITIONS

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| Active Screening vs. Passive Screening | Screening is a process for surveilling and identifying probable cases to help guide response actions. Active screening involves tests, examinations, and interviews. Passive screening involves posting signage and messaging. |
| Alcohol-Based Hand Rub (ABHR) | Waterless hand hygiene product that is available as a rinse, gel or foam and consists of a minimum of 60% alcohol. The effectiveness of alcohol is inhibited by the presence of organic matter. |
| COVID-19 | Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by a newly discovered coronavirus. The virus is |

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|  | causing an outbreak of respiratory (lung) disease. The World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a pandemic on March 11, 2020. |
| COVID-19Symptoms | Many indicators of COVID-19 resemble cold and flu symptoms. Common symptoms of COVID-19 include fever, new or worsening cough, and shortness of breath. A list of symptoms will be provided in the following pages. |
| Emergency Preparedness Plan | Emergency preparedness is a cyclic approach that includes prevention activities, preparing a plan for emergencies, testing out the plan or the response, and establishing procedures and activities to bring the organization back to a routine or acceptable level of operation following an emergency. |
| Hand Hygiene | A general term referring to any action of hand cleaning. Hand hygiene relates to the removal of visible soil and removal or killing of transient microorganisms from the hands. Hand hygiene is best accomplished by washing hands with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds. |
| Hand Hygiene Station | A dispensing location for waterless, ABHR product that is applied to reduce the number of microorganisms present on the hands. |
| Physical Distancing | Maintaining a distance of at least 2 metres (6 feet) between individuals. |
| PPE | Personal protective equipment such as gloves and face masks, which protect against the spread. |

# GENERAL ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

**EMPLOYER**

COVID-19 presents a risk to the health and safety of employees, and as a result, employers have a legal obligation to take reasonable steps to address this risk. What is appropriate and reasonable may vary depending on the nature of the Business and its workforce. The Business is responsible for making sure that the workplace is safe, and that employees’ health and safety are not put at risk. The goal of the Business is

to prevent and reduce transmission among employees, maintain a healthy business operation and work environment. While the following are subject to change, at present, reasonable steps to ensure the work environment is safe may include the following:

* Ensure a hazard assessment is conducted to evaluate the risk of COVID-19 transmission in the workplace.
* Review this COVID-19 policy with all employees.
* Require employees to immediately inform their supervisors or managers if they or someone they have been in close contact with has tested positive for COVID-19 or has been directed to quarantine by public health authorities.
* Direct employees who exhibit symptoms of COVID-19 to quarantine themselves.
* Implement a system for screening employees, contractors, visitors, and volunteers who may enter the work premises for COVID-19.
* Provide training to all workplace parties on the reporting procedures of COVID-19.
* Provide appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) including, but not limited to face masks, gloves, face shields, and goggles to the employees who may have exposure to COVID-19.
* Advise employees to practice social distancing while at work.
* If possible, provide physical barriers between workstations (plexiglass or cubicles).
* Encourage good hygiene practices in the workplace.
* Ensure that appropriate steps are being taken to ensure the cleanliness of the workplace.

**SUPERVISORS AND MANAGERS**

Supervisors will be held responsible for the health and safety of the employees under their supervision. Some specific duties of supervisors include:

* + - Ensure this COVID-19 policy is implemented and adhered to in the workplace.
		- Monitor the employees for possible signs of COVID-19 symptoms.
		- Request that any persons who exhibit symptoms of COVID-19 leave the worksite and seek medical advice.
		- Ensure employees use appropriate PPE as required.
		- Advise employees of any existing or potential risks of exposure; and,
		- Protect the privacy of any employee who may have to leave the worksite due to COVID-19 related symptoms or diagnosis.

**EMPLOYEE**

Under the law, employees must protect their own health and safety by working in compliance with the law, any established health and safety policies and safe work practices and procedures. Some specific responsibilities include:

* + - Follow the requirements of this COVID-19 Policy.
		- Become familiar with the symptoms of COVID-19.
		- Inform supervisors and managers if diagnosed with COVID-19 or exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19.
		- Quarantine and stay away from work until completely free of COVID-19 symptoms.
		- Use appropriate PPE when required; and,
		- Practice good hygiene protocols.

**JOINT HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE (JHSC)/HEALTH AND SAFETY REPRESENTATIVE (HSR)**

The JHSC or HSR must work together with the employer to ensure the health and safety of all workplace parties. Some of the responsibilities of the JHSC/HSR include:

* + - Ensuring employees are aware of the symptoms of COVID-19.
		- Ensuring employees have been trained on the contents of this COVID-19 Policy.
		- Conducting workplace inspections and investigations; and,
		- Making recommendations for the improvement of the health and safety of employees.

# EDUCATION

**COVID-19 SYMPTOMS**

People with COVID-19 have had a wide range of symptoms reported – ranging from mild symptoms to severe illnesses. Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. People with these symptoms may have COVID-19:

* Fever
* Chills
* Cough or worsening of chronic cough
* Shortness of breath
* Sore throat
* Runny nose
* Loss of sense of smell or taste
* Headache
* Fatigue
* Diarrhea
* Loss of appetite
* Nausea and vomiting
* Muscle aches

Coughing may persist for several weeks following a COVID-19 diagnosis.

COVID-19 symptoms can range from mild to severe. Sometimes people with COVID-19 have mild illness, but their symptoms may suddenly worsen in a few days.

COVID-19 is mainly spread from person to person through close contact, such as in a household, workplace, hospital, or health care facility.

If an employee is experiencing any of the symptoms listed above, they should contact a primary care provider or 8-1-1 anytime to talk to a nurse at Alberta Health Services and get advice about what to do next. The employee also has the option of going to a COVID-19 assessment center for testing. An employee with symptoms related to COVID-19 is not allowed to return to work until all symptoms have subsided.

# HEALTH AND SAFETY REQUIREMENTS

If feasible given the nature of the Business and the duties of certain employees, as well as the individual circumstances and needs of certain employees, the Business will consider, in its sole discretion, requiring or permitting certain employees to work from home.

The Business will conduct on-going risk assessments as needed and adjust its practices and procedures as required to adhere to public health official orders, OHS authority guidelines, and recommendations for best practices to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace.

**EMERGENCY AND PUBLIC HEALTH ORDERS**

The Business will comply with all emergency orders made by the government or public health officials in respect of implementing physical distancing and other measures designed to prevent the transmission of COVID-19 in the workplace, as well as in respect of any business closures ordered by the government or public health officials.

Employees who are subject to any emergency or public health order, including any order to quarantine or self-isolate because of recently returning from international or interprovincial travel, or having close contact with any individual(s) confirmed or suspected to have COVID-19, must comply with any such order, and must immediately inform the Business that they are subject to such order.

In these circumstances, the Business will consider whether it is possible and practical for the employee to work from home while subject to the order, and, if the Business determines in its sole discretion that it is not possible for the employee to work from home, the Business will place the employee on a leave of absence subject to the applicable employment standards legislation.

**MASK OR FACE COVERING REQUIREMENTS**

As of September 4, 2021, wearing face masks or face coverings in indoor public spaces and workplaces has been made mandatory.

Employees must wear a mask in all indoor work setting except while working alone at desks or workstations.

**PERSONNAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT**

Where necessary to protect an employee from the risk of contracting COVID-19, the Business will provide the appropriate PPE, including rubber gloves, masks, or gowns, as needed.

When an employee has medical concerns regarding wearing certain PPE, the employer will request a medical note from a certified health care practitioner or provide alternative PPE or duties for the employee to comply with public health bylaws and protocols.

**PHYSICAL DISTANCING**

The requirement to remain 2m physically distanced is no longer legally mandatory.

As per this Policy, the Business will complete a hazard assessment to determine the level of risk associated with the transmission of the COVID-19 virus in their workplace. The business may continue to require all its workers to practice social distancing and consider implementing measures to increase the spacing between workers, patrons, and members of the public.

**SANITATION**

The Business will implement a workplace-specific plan for restricting the spread of COVID-19 and protecting employees in accordance with applicable OHS guidelines.

The Business will take reasonable efforts to ensure the sanitation of workplace surfaces that are commonly used or touched by employees, customers, or other individuals and which might transmit COVID-19, including but not limited to door handles, light switches, tabletops, microwaves, and telephone equipment.

**PERSONNAL HYGIENE PREVENTION PRACTICES**

To prevent and control the spread of COVID-19, health officials recommend that all individuals practice good hygiene and/or observe commonly advised precautionary measures.

To prevent exposure to a range of diseases, including COVID-19, employees are encouraged to perform the following in and outside the workplace:

* + - Wash hands often with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
		- Avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
		- Avoid close contact with people who are ill.
		- Stay home when ill.
		- Cover coughs or sneezes with a tissue, and then immediately throw the tissue in the garbage and wash hands.
		- If a tissue is not available, sneeze or cough into a sleeve or arm, not a hand; and,
		- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

The Business will ensure that there is an adequate supply of liquid soap in the bathroom and kitchen areas and post signage reminding employees to regularly wash their hands with warm water and soap for a minimum of 20 seconds. The Business will also ensure there is an adequate supply of hand sanitizer (if available) for employees to use as well as cleaning products to sanitize surfaces.

# RESPONDING TO COVID-19 CASE AT WORK

If an employee of the Business tests positive for COVID-19, the Business must immediately inform the local Public Health authorities and fully cooperate with any investigation that they deem necessary. The Public Health Unit may ask for the names of all the other employees of the Business that may have been exposed to COVID-19 to complete contact-tracing and test anyone else they suspect of being exposed to COVID-19.

Other employees should be informed of the presence of a positive COVID-19 case at the workplace. When communicating about the positive COVID-19 case, the name of the sick employee must not be shared with others to protect the individual’s privacy.

Additional measures to take include:

* + - Clean all surfaces that may have been touched by the sick employee with soap and water before disinfecting them; and,
		- Open outside doors and windows to increase air circulation in areas where the sick employee may have been.

Encourage any employee who may have been exposed to the sick employee to get tested.

**REPORTING PROCEDURES**

If an employee is experiencing symptoms associated with COVID-19 while at work, they should immediately inform a manager/supervisor. The supervisor and manager will take down relevant information (time, date, employee name and contact information) and advise the employee to self-isolate and call a primary care provider or the local COVID-19 Public Health for further guidance.

If the employee is tested for COVID-19 and the test result is positive, the employee must immediately inform the employer. The employer has a duty to report any confirmed cases to the following:

* Call 8-1-1 to make a report to Alberta Health Services.
* Any confirmed cases of COVID-19 that could reasonably be assumed to be work-related should be reported to the Workers’ Compensation Board of Alberta (WCB) within 72 hours of receiving notice of the illness. The employee compensation case manager will decide on whether the employee’s COVID-19 case is work-related or not.
* Joint Health and Safety Committee/Health and Safety Representative.
* Union Representative if applicable.

**SYMPTOMATIC OR EXPOSED EMPLOYEES**

Employees who develop symptoms of COVID-19, or who have been in close contact (including living in the same residence) with individuals who are confirmed or suspected to have COVID-19, who have recently returned from international or interprovincial travel, or who are at a high risk of exposure (e.g., due to being a healthcare provider at a healthcare location with confirmed cases of COVID-19) must inform the Business of these facts immediately.

The Business has an obligation to protect its employees from the risk of COVID-19 infection, including by prohibiting employees who may be at high risk of spreading COVID-19 from entering the workplace. Accordingly, all employees must report if they are experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19 to the Business immediately. Any employee who fails to disclose facts relevant to an assessment of their risk as outlined above may be subject to discipline, up to and including termination of employment.

**EMPLOYEE TESTS POSITIVE FOR COVID-19**

As of Sep 17, 2020, any person who has a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the Province of Alberta is required to be in isolation for a minimum of 10 days from the start of their symptoms. The same 10-day requirement applies if the ill person does not have any symptoms.

Any employee who tests positive for COVID-19 is required to speak with his or her supervisor following their successful self-isolation and prior to returning to work. A follow-up test with a negative result may be required for returning to work.

 **EMPLOYEE TESTS NEGATIVE FOR COVID-19**

An employee who tests negative for COVID-19 might still need to self-isolate if any of the following scenarios occur:

* + - The employee is in contact or has been exposed to a case of COVID-19 and is not fully vaccinated: the employee will need to continue to self-isolate for 14 days from the last contact with a case of COVID-19. (Duration if quarantine may be reduced based on vaccinated status)
		- The employee has arrived in Alberta from outside of Canada: In this scenario, the employee must continue to self-isolate for 14 days from the day he or she landed back in Canada.

If an employee does not have symptoms of COVID-19 and has not been in contact with a known case of COVID-19 **or** has not travelled outside of Canada within the last 14 days, he or she does not need to self-isolate and can return to work.

If the employee has concerns or questions about when to return to work following a negative test, he or she should contact Alberta Health Services at 8-1-1 and a direct supervisor or manager for guidelines.

**SICK EMPLOYEES TO STAY HOME**

Employees who appear to have symptoms upon arrival at work or who become sick during the day should immediately be separated from other employees, customers, and visitors, and sent home.

Employees who have symptoms should notify their supervisor and stay home. Employees should not return to work until they have either tested negative for COVID-19 and are symptom-free or they have quarantined for a minimum of 10 days and are symptom-free.

Employees who are well but have a sick family member at home with COVID-19 should notify their supervisor. Employees who cannot separate themselves physically from the sick relative should not come to work until the relative either tests negative for COVID-19 or has quarantined for 14 days and is free of symptoms.

# LEAVE OF ABSENCE

The Business will provide employees with an unpaid leave of absence for reasons relating to COVID-19, including leaves of absence due to mandatory quarantine, illness, caring for dependent family members due to their illness, and due to the closure of schools and daycares, as required by the applicable employment standards legislation.

The Business will not require a medical certificate for COVID-19 related leaves of absence; however, the Business reserves the right to require other reasonably sufficient proof of the stated reason for taking the COVID-19 related leave of absence.

Please consult the applicable employment standards legislation for more information on COVID-19 related leaves of absence.

# COMMUNICATION PLAN

Management of the Business will ensure regular communication with employees to keep them informed of hazards and appropriate hazard-control measures. Management of the business will communicate as often as necessary and every time there is a change regarding the hazards or hazard-control measures.

**COMMUNICATION CHANNELS**

Management of the Business will decide which communication channel is the most effective, including but not limited to:

* Letters to staff
* Company emails
* Small group toolbox talks meetings
* Post communication materials at worksites
* Worksite television monitors
* Social media
* Company text messaging programs

# POSITIVE CASE

Should a confirmed COVID-19 case be deemed to be infectious while in the workplace or work-related, other employees should be informed.

When communicating about the positive COVID-19 case, the name of the sick employee must not be shared with others to protect the individual’s privacy. Any additional hazard-control measures implemented by the employer to mitigate the risk associated with the positive COVID-19 case should also be communicated to employees.

# WORKERS

All workers are required to attend and participate to safety toolbox talk meetings. Workers are also required to read and understand all safety communications and documentation communicated by the management of the business.

Any questions or concerns workers may have must be raised to their immediate supervisor.

# DOCUMENTATION

Records of all safety toolbox talks, and communications shall be recorded and kept on file. Current communications can be posted on the Business’ safety board for review at any time by employees, management, and visitors.

# POLICY REVIEW

This Policy is intended to be temporary, and shall be monitored, reviewed, and amended as necessary, in the Business’ sole discretion, in accordance with official federal and provincial government announcements, information, and orders.

**COVID-19 EMPLOYEE ACKNOWLEDGMENT FORM**

I acknowledge that I have read and fully understand my company’s COVID-19 Policy and agree that I must follow all safety measures outlined in the Policy to reduce and prevent the risk of spreading COVID-19. I understand that failure to comply with the requirements of this Policy could result in disciplinary action.

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| Name of Employee: | Date Policy was reviewed by the employee: |
| Employee Signature: | Employee’s Supervisor: |

Note: Please submit this form to your immediate supervisor.

# HAND HYGIENE PROCEDURES

Follow these steps to maintain proper hand hygiene.

## SOAP AND WATER

* + - First, remove jewelry (rings).
		- Next, wet your hands.
		- Then apply soap.
		- Vigorously clean or rub all parts of your hands, including the palms and backs of your hands, thumbs, fingers, nails, and wrists, for a minimum of 20-30 seconds (sing “Happy Birthday” twice).
		- Rinse and dry your hands properly with single-use paper, a cloth towel, or a blow air dryer.
		- Try to turn off the tap with a paper towel after you dry your hands.

**ALCOHOL-BASED HAND RUB (ABHR)**

* + - Apply 1 or 2 pumps of the product (about the size of a loonie) into your hands.
		- If the ABHR dries before 15 seconds of rubbing, apply more product.
		- Rub vigorously, applying friction to all skin surfaces and paying particular attention to fingertips, webbing between fingers, palms, back of hands, nail beds, and each finger.
		- Rub for a minimum of 15 seconds until the product is dry before touching anything. This ensures that the ABHR is effective and eliminates the extremely rare risk of flammability in the presence of an oxygen-rich environment.