COVID-19 WORKPLACE SAFETY PLAN

# PLAN STATEMENT

Insert [Business Name Here] (the Business hereafter) is committed to the health, safety and wellbeing of its workers 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 Workplace Safety Plan (the “Plan”) by educating its workers on the symptoms, infection prevention and control, and compliance with hand hygiene guidelines. In addition, this Plan 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 plan is to develop prevention and response for COVID-19 as part of an emergency preparedness and response plan at the workplace. The aim is to clearly identify requirements and procedures required to control the spread of infection at the workplace while also maintaining business operations. The plan is based on information available at the time of its development and is subject to change based on further information provided by government, health authorities, and the latest evidence.

# DEFINITIONS

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| "Active Screening” | Screening is a process for surveilling and identifying probable cases to help guide response actions. Active screening involves tests, examinations, and interviewing.  |
| “Alcohol Based Hand Rub (ABHR)” | Waterless hand hygiene product that is available as a rinse, gel or foam and consists of a minimum of 70% 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 causing an outbreak of respiratory (lung) disease. The World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a pandemic on March 11, 2020. |
| "COVID-19 Symptoms"  | Many symptoms 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.  |

# roles and responsibilities

## 4.1 Employer

COVID-19 presents a risk to the health and safety of workers 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 workers’ health and safety are not put at risk. The ultimate goal of the Business is to prevent and reduce transmission among workers, maintain healthy business operations, and maintain a healthy work environment. While the following are subject to change, at present the reasonable steps to ensure the work environment is safe may include the following:

* Maintain this COVID-19 Workplace Safety Plan;
* Train all workers on the measures and protocols in the plan;
* Require workers to follow face masks or face covering requirements when inside the work premises and around others (co-workers, clients, etc)
* Require workers 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 workers who exhibit symptoms of COVID-19 to quarantine themselves;
* Implement a system for active screening workers, contractors, visitors and volunteers who may enter the work premises for COVID-19;
* Collect COVID19 related information and reports for contact tracing purposes;
* Provide appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) including, but not limited to face masks, gloves, face shields, and goggles to the workers who may have exposure to COVID-19;
* Implement physical distancing in the workplace;
* Ensure the number of persons occupying any room that is open to the public in the business does not exceed 50% of the capacity of the particular room.
* 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; and
* Provide signage for workers highlighting physical distancing, capacity limits, wearing masks, breaks, hand hygiene, screening and self-assessments.

## 4.2 Supervisors and Managers

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

* Ensure this COVID-19 Workplace Safety Plan is implemented and adhered to at the workplace;
* Monitor the workers for possible signs of COVID-19 symptoms;
* Request that any person who exhibits symptoms of COVID-19 to leave the worksite and seek medical advice;
* Request workers to practice physical distancing in the workplace;
* Ensure workers use appropriate PPE, as required;
* Advise workers of any existing or potential risks of exposure; and,
* Protect the privacy of any worker who may have to leave the worksite due to COVID-19 related symptoms or diagnosis.

## 4.3 Worker

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

* Follow the requirements and protocols of this COVID-19 Workplace Safety Plan;
* 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;
* Wear face mask or face covering when at the worksite;
* Wear PPE when required; and
* Practice good hygiene protocols.

## 4.4 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 workers are aware of the symptoms of COVID-19;
* Ensuring workers have been trained on the contents of this COVID-19 Workplace Safety Plan;
* Conducting workplace inspections and investigations; and,
* Making recommendations for the improvement of the health and safety of workers.

# education

COVID-19 is mainly spread from person to person through close contact. People with COVID-19 have had a wide range of symptoms reported – ranging from mild symptoms to severe illness. Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. People with these symptoms may have COVID-19:

* Fever or chills, with temperate of 37.8 degrees Celsius
* Cough or barking cough (croup)
* Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
* Fatigue
* Muscle or body aches that are unusual or long lasting
* Headache that are unusual or long lasting
* Decrease or loss of taste or smell
* Sore throat
* Difficulty swallowing
* Congestion or runny or stuffy nose
* Pink eye
* Digestive issues like nausea or vomiting, diarrhea, stomach pain
* Falling down often

# Reporting & covid-19 cases Procedure

In the event that an worker is experiencing symptoms associated with COVID-19, he or she should immediately inform a manager/supervisor. The supervisor and manager will take down relevant information (time, date, worker name and contact information) and advise the worker to self-isolate and contact their local Public Health Unit for further guidance.

If the worker is tested for COVID-19 and the test result is positive, the worker must immediately inform the employer.

If the Business is located in the Toronto or Peel region and the employer becomes aware of **two or more people** who test positive for COVID-19 within a 14-day interval in connection with the workplace premises, the employer must:

* Immediately notify the local Public Health unit and report the positive cases.
* For Toronto Public health, call 416-338-7600
* For Peel Public Health, call 905-799-7700.
* Provide contact information for a designated contact person at the workplace premise and ensure that person is readily available to communicate with the local Public Health and implement any additional measures immediately as required by the local Public Health.
* Ensure that accurate and updated contact information for all workers is available to be produced to the Public Health Unit within 24 hours of request in support of case management and contact tracing requirements for COVID-19.
* Notify the Ontario Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development in writing within 4 days if an worker has tested positive for COVID-19 due to an exposure at your workplace or if a claim has been filed with the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB).
* Cooperate with infection prevention and control personnel from the local Public Health Unit including allowing entry into the workplace premise for inspection and to support enhanced infection prevention and control measures and recommendations.
* Advise the workplace's joint health and safety committee, health and safety representative, and, if applicable, the worker's trade union.

Any confirmed cases of COVID-19 that could reasonably be assumed to be work-related should be reported to the Workplace Safety & Insurance Board (WSIB) within 72 hours of receiving notice of the illness. The worker compensation case manager will make a determination on whether the worker’s COVID-19 case is work-related or not.

**Other workers will be informed of the presence of a positive COVID-19 case at the workplace. Workers will be informed about the date and time of potential exposure and where it took place, without revealing the identity of the infectious person. The Business will follow their local public health unit’s instructions, including request to undertake contact tracing activities.**

**Additional measures to take include:**

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

## **Sick workers to stay home**

**Workers who have symptoms should notify their supervisor and stay home. Workers should not return to work until they are symptom-free or they have quarantined for 14 days from the last unprotected exposure and are symptom-free. Absence of cough is not required for those known to have chronic cough or who are experiencing reactive airways post-infection.**

**Workers who have mild or moderate illness must isolate for 10 days after symptoms started, and people who have severe illness or are severely immuno-compromised must isolate for 20 days. Close contacts must continue to isolate for 14 days after their last contact with someone who is diagnosed with COVID-19.**

**Workers who are well, but who have a sick family member at home with COVID-19 should notify their supervisor. Workers who cannot completely 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 from the last unprotected exposure and is free of symptoms.**

**Under any scenario, the worker cannot come to work if he or she exhibits symptoms of COVID-19 unless the symptom is a chronic cough.**

## Sick Workers at Work

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

## Worker in Close Contact of COVID-19

Workers who come in close contact of COVID-19 will take different precautionary measures as a result of their COVID-19 immunization status and/or their medical history and existence of any prior medical conditions.

Fully Immunized with No Symptoms

A fully immunized worker who comes in contact with COVID-19 but experiences no symptoms, is not required to self isolate unless directed to do so by a Public Health Unit. Testing is still recommended but the worker is not required to self isolate while awaiting the test results.

If someone in the worker’s household is fully vaccinated but is tested for COVID-19, the worker is not required to self isolate.

**Fully Immunized (Final Dose More Than 14 Days Ago) but Symptomatic**

A fully immunized worker who comes in contact with COVID-19 and starts having symptoms will need to self isolate and test for COVID-19 as soon as possible. The worker will remain in isolation while waiting for the test results.

If the test result comes back negative, the worker can return to work as long as his or her gastro symptoms have subsided for at least 24 hours. If there are any concerns on the validity of the test result, the worker should be re-tested as soon as possible.

**Partial Immunization With High-Risk Exposure**

A worker with partial immunization who has high-risk exposure to COVID-19 – close contact for a prolonged period – should self isolate for ten (10) days. If the worker tests positive for COVID-19, he or she will need to self isolate until cleared to end isolation.

**Confirmation of Close Contact/Workplace Reporting**

If a worker has been in close contact – whether fully vaccinated or not – with a person who has tested positive for COVID-19, the worker should:

* Immediately inform their supervisor and follow any restrictions from work.
* Wear a face cover/mask and maintain social distancing when outside of the house to reduce risk.

Staff Member with Medical/Autoimmune/Immunocompromised System

Despite vaccination status, those staff members that have a known, confirmed medical/autoimmune/immunocompromised system and are exposed to COVID-19 need to immediately contact their family physician and/or Ontario Telehealth for further instruction.

## Work Related Travel

When possible, the Business should minimize instances of more than one individual in a vehicle for driving associated with work. If unavoidable, ensure appropriate PPE is worn and drive with the windows open.

## Emergency and Public Health Orders

The Business will comply with all emergency orders made by 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.

Workers who are subject to any emergency or public health order, including any order to quarantine or self-isolate as a result of recently returning from international or interprovincial travel, or having close contact with 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 worker 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 worker to work from home, the Business will place the worker on a leave of absence subject to the applicable employment standards legislation.

# HEALTH AND SAFETY REQUIREMENTS

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

## **Sanitation**

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

The Business will provide access to soap and water and ABHR to promote a health and safety work environment, including hand hygiene best practices.

The Business will maintain ventilation systems according to manufacturer’s instructions and adjust accordingly to increase the amount of fresh air and reduce recirculation. When applicable, windows and doors will remain open and are encouraged to use outdoor spaces.

## Physical Distancing

The Business will observe all public health orders and OHS guidelines in respect of physical distancing by ensuring adequate spacing between workers and limiting the number of individuals on the Business’ premises.

The Business will implement reasonable business practices where necessary to minimize unnecessary physical contact among workers, including but not limited to communicating electronically where feasible, staggering breaks, limiting the sharing of work equipment, and scheduling only the minimum required number of workers to perform work in a given work location.

The Business will also restrict visitors to the workplace and take reasonable steps to ensure physical distancing between workers and customers, clients, and suppliers by limiting the number of customers, clients, and suppliers permitted in the workplace at a given time and restricting which workplace locations such customers, clients, and suppliers are permitted to go.

## Face Coverings

The business will use face coverings as source control. This means having workers, visitors and clients in the workplace wear a mask to protect those around them. This reduces the risk that the virus may be transmitted through the droplets of a potentially infectious person.

Reusable cloth mask as well as other types of mask are acceptable when used as source control.

The mask or face covering should cover the worker’s nose, mouth and chin, without gapping. With some exceptions that will listed below, all customers or visitors entering or remaining in indoor premises are required to wear a mask or face covering.

Those exempt from wearing a face mask or covering in indoor public spaces include, but not limited to additional exceptions in the *Reopening Ontario (A Flexible Response to COVID-19)* Act:

* Children under 2 years of age;
* Persons with medical conditions who are unable to safely wear a mask;
* Persons who cannot wear or remove a face covering without assistance; and,
* Persons who require accommodation under the Ontario Human Rights Code.

Mask must be worn at all times by the workers unless workers work in an area that is not accessible to members of the public and are able to maintain a physical distance of at least two metres from each other while in the indoor area.

## Personal Protective Equipment

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

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

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

**Using Mask as a PPE**

When workers are performing tasks that require them to work within two metres of another person without a barrier, then the mask is considered a Personal Protective Equipment.

When using masks as a PPE the type of mask used will be :

* A surgical mask, OR;
* A procedural mask.

Cloth masks are not suitable for use as PPE.

**Eye protection**

When workers are performing tasks that require them to work within two metres of another person without a barrier, they should wear eye protection such as:

* Face shield
* Goggles

## **Mandatory Pre-Entry Covid-19 Screening**

On Sep 26, 2020, The Province of Ontario made it mandatory for employers to implement a pre-entry COVID-19 screening test on all their workers and essential visitors.

Workers, for the purpose of this requirement, include staff, students, contractors, or volunteers that conduct business or related activities for or on behalf of the Business. Essential visitors include individuals providing a service in the establishment who are not workers or patrons of the establishment (e.g: delivery, maintenance, contract workers).

As per the new requirement, the screening should occur before or when a worker enters the workplace at the beginning of their day or shift, or when an essential visitor arrives. Only workers or essential visitors who are free of COVID-19 symptoms, have not been outside of the Canada in the last 14 days, and have not been in close contact with a confirmed or probable case of COVID-19 can entre the workplace. Anyone who fails the pre-entry screening test will be advised to go home to self isolate immediately and contact his or her health care provider or Telehealth Ontario to find out if a COVID-19 test is needed.

Screening will be done by active screening to allow for a collection of documentation as proof that the screening was implemented. Active screening involves tests, examinations, and interviewing. A copy of the COVID-19 screening test along with a sign-off sheet can be found at the end of this document.

## **Traveling/Commuting measures**

All work trips and events – both domestic and international – will be examined and potentially cancelled to minimize the risk of COVID-19 to workers.

In-person meetings should be done virtually when possible, especially with non-company parties (e.g. candidate interviews and partners).

The Business will, at its sole discretion and when possible and practicable, consider allowing workers who normally commute to the office by public transportation and do not have other alternatives, to work from home as a precaution. The Business will ensure workers who do travel for essential work follow all provincial and federal requirements for self-isolation, quarantine and testing.

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## 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, workers 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 workers 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 workers to use as well as cleaning products to sanitize surfaces.

## Hand Hygiene Procedures

Follow these steps to maintain proper hand hygiene.

**Soap and Water**

* First, remove jewellery (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 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.

# **Refusing Unsafe Work**

Health and safety legislations give workers the right to refuse work they have reasonable grounds to believe is unsafe to themselves or another worker.

If an worker has a good faith and reasonable basis to believe that work is unsafe, including due to exposure to COVID-19, the worker must report it to the Business immediately.

The Business will take the following steps:

1. Speak to the refusing worker to understand the nature of their concern. If the situation cannot be resolved with this discussion, then proceed to step 2.
2. Conduct an internal investigation, with the participation of the worker and any health and safety representatives required by applicable legislation, to determine the validity of the work refusal.
3. If it is determined that there is no objective risk, but the refusing worker maintains his or her refusal, the Business must contact the applicable workplace health and safety agency/ministry to perform its own official investigation.
4. If the applicable workplace health and safety agency/ministry confirms the absence of risk and the refusing worker continues to refuse to return to work, then he or she may be disciplined.

In determining whether the risk from COVID-19 poses danger to an worker, the Business will consider all relevant circumstances, including whether the worker or a member of their household is at particular risk of COVID-19 due to an underlying health condition, the nature of the worker’s work, and whether any risk can be reasonably attenuated through sanitation and/or use of PPE.

# LEAVE OF ABSENCE

To help stop the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace, the business will allow employees to take up to three (3) paid sick days if they are feeling sick, need to isolate, or need to receive a COVID-19 vaccine as per the “Ontario COVID-19 Worker Protection Benefit Program”. The program does not require employees to provide sick notes and workers do not have to fill out any forms or applications to commence the leave. Additionally, the sick days do not need to be taken consecutively.

This temporary program will be retroactive to April 19, 2021 and has been extended to December 31st, 2021 and will not apply to independent contractors.

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 workers 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

## **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 workers, management, and visitors.

# Plan Review

This Plan 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 Worker Acknowledgment Form

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

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Name of Worker: | Date Plan was reviewed by the worker: |
| Worker Signature: | Worker’s Supervisor: |

Note: Please submit this form to your immediate supervisor.



**DO NOT ENTER IF ANY OF THE BELOW APPLY:**

**Fever**

**Cough**

**Shortness of Breath**

**Decrease or lost of taste or smell**

**Nausea, vomiting or diarrhea**

**Very tired, sore muscles or joints**

**Have been in close contact with someone who is sick or has confirmed COVID19 in the past 14 days.**

**Have returned from travel outside of Canada in the past 14 days.**

**If you have answered YES to any of the questions, go home and self-isolate right away, Call Telehealth or your health care provider.**