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

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| "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 |
|  | causing an outbreak of respiratory (lung) disease. The World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a pandemic on March 11, 2020. |
| “Close Contact” | Someone that was less than two metres away from the person who has COVID-19 for at least 15 minutes, or multiple shorter lengths of time, while wearing mask/face covering or without personal protective equipment in the 48 hours before symptoms began or positive test result, whichever came first. |
| "COVID-19  Symptoms" | 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. |
| Fully Vaccinated or Fully Immunised | An individual is considered fully vaccinated if they have received:   * The full series of a COVID-19 vaccine authorized by Health Canada, or any combination of such vaccines, * One or two doses of a COVID-19 vaccine not authorized by Health Canada, followed by one dose of a COVID-19 mRNA vaccine authorized by Health Canada, or * Three doses of a COVID-19 vaccine not authorized by Health Canada; and * They received their final dose of the COVID-19 vaccine at least 14 days ago. |
| “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 ultimate 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:

* 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; and,
* Develop and implement a COVID-19 business continuity plan.

## 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.

## 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 as a result 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.

# HEALTH AND SAFETY REQUIREMENTS

The business will conduct a thorough hazard assessment to determine the risks of transmission of COVID-19 in the workplace, and determine what type of controls are needed for specific job duties. All employees must be informed of any general or specific hazards that were identified in the hazard assessments.

## WORKING FROM HOME

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.

## MANDATORY MASK OR FACE COVERING POLICY

Wearing face masks or face coverings in indoor public spaces is mandatory. Also, as per this policy, the Business requires all its workers to practice social distancing and when social distancing is a challenge, to wear face masks to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

Wearing covering is also mandatory in all indoor common areas of the workplace.

## WORKER HEALTH CHECKS

The employer will ensure that every worker conducts a daily check before entering the workplace.

Employers must confirm in a written or verbal format from their employees that they have reviewed the complete list of entry requirements included in the [Screening Questionnaire](https://peninsulacanada.com/covid-19-toolkit/).

Employers can use different methods to confirm with this assessment such may include:

* A written health check declaration completed by workers before entry
* An online health check form completed by workers before entry.
* A verbal check in, done either in person, virtually, or by phone with every worker, confirming that the worker has completed their daily health check.

In addition, employers will ensure that workers do not to enter the workplace if they meet the following requirements:

* Have any symptoms related to COVID-19;
* Have travelled outside of Canada within the last 14 days and are not exempted from quarantining;
* Been identified by Public Health as close contact of someone with COVID – 19.
* Been told to isolate by Public Health.

## PHYSICAL DISTANCING, SANITATION AND PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

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.

For buildings with heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems, the business will review available information on ventilation and air circulation and ensure, to the extent possible, that these systems are properly maintained and functioning as designed.

The Business will observe all public health orders and OHS guidelines in respect of physical distancing by ensuring adequate spacing between employees 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 employees, 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 employees 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 employees 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.

The business will consider installing barriers where workers can’t keep physically distant from co-workers, customers, or others.

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 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 employee to comply with public health bylaws and protocols.

## HYGIENE 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.

## 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 employees.

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

# REPORTING SYMPTOMS WHILE AT WORK PROCEDURES

In the event that an employee is experiencing symptoms associated with COVID-19 while at work, they should immediately inform a manager/supervisor. The Provincial health officer and the BC Centre for Disease Control has issued the following guidance in terms of workers displaying symptoms of COVID-19:

1. Send them home to recover for the prescribed self-isolation period
2. Ensure the worker’s work station and or the workplace/tools that they were using as part of their job are cleaned prior to anyone else using them, if they haven’t yet been cleaned as part of the workplace’s cleaning and disinfecting protocols
3. Ensure the worker takes the [BC Online Self-Assessment Tool](https://peninsulaca.lightning.force.com/lightning/o/Task/list?filterName=00B2K000009AnvJUAS) and gets tested if required.

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

## 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.

## CLOSE CONTACT TESTING & ISOLATION REQUIREMENTS

**Fully vaccinated workers or workers that have had a positive COIVD-19 test in the last 3 months** who have been identified as close contacts, either in their household or at work, should self-monitor for COVID-19 symptoms for 14 days.

**Not fully immunized workers** must self-isolate for 10 days since they last had contact with a person with COVID-19.

If the workers develop symptoms, must self-isolate right away as per the subsequent section of this policy.

## SYMPTOMATIC INDIVIDUAL TESTING & ISOLATION REQUIREMENTS

Workers who have symptoms must take the [BC Online Self-Assessment Tool](https://peninsulaca.lightning.force.com/lightning/o/Task/list?filterName=00B2K000009AnvJUAS) to establish if they should get tested or not.

**If testing is not recommended:**

Workers must self-isolate until they feel well enough to return to regular activities and no longer have fever (without the use of medicines that reduce fever-like Tylenol or Advil).

If they feel worse, they should call 8-1-1 or their medical care provider.

**If testing is recommended:**

They must make arrangements to get tested., continue to self-isolate until they get their test results and follow instructions from public health.

## ISOLATION REQUIREMENTS ONCE GETTING TESTS RESULTS

**Workers who test positive must:**

* **If fully vaccinated,** self-isolate for at least 5 days since the start of their symptoms. Wear a mask even in settings where a mask isn’t required and avoid higher risk settings, such as long-term care facilities and gatherings, for another 5 days after ending isolation.
* If unvaccinated or partially vaccinated, self-isolate for at least 10 days since the start of their symptoms.
* If not feeling better after the 5 or 10 days, keep self-isolating until they feel better and their fever is gone (without taking medicine that reduces fever).

**Workers who tested negative must:**

* Self-isolate until their symptoms improve and they feel well enough to return to regular activities.
* If they had a fever, stay home until the fever is gone (without taking medicine that reduces fever).

## EMPLOYER DUTY TO REPORT

The employer has a duty to report any confirmed cases to the following:

* Joint Health and Safety Committee/Health and Safety Representative.
* Union Representative if applicable.

Any confirmed cases of COVID-19 that could reasonably be assumed to be work-related should be reported to the Workers’ Compensation Board o/a WorkSafeBC within 72 hours of receiving notice of the illness. The employee compensation case manager will make a determination on whether the employee’s COVID-19 case is work-related or not.

Employers will be contacted by public health if there is a reason to investigate a COVID-19 case or cluster in their premises. Clear instructions will be provided to all workplace parties about the reporting procedure.

# REFUSING UNSAFE WORK

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

If an employee has a good faith and reasonable basis to believe that work is unsafe, including due to exposure to COVID-19, the employee must report it to the Business immediately. The Business will then take the following steps:

* + 1. Speak to the refusing employee 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 employee 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 employee 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 employee 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 employee, the Business will consider all relevant circumstances, including whether the employee or a member of their household is at particular risk of COVID-19 due to an underlying health condition, the nature of the employee’s work, and whether any risk can be reasonably attenuated through sanitation and/or use of PPE.

# 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

## COMMUNICATION OF A 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.

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

Note: Please submit this form to your immediate supervisor.