

# Workplace Protection Considerations

Employers should implement employee and workplace safety policies or procedures to help reduce or minimize exposure. Employers should keep in mind that these protocols should not only apply to employees, but should also be considered for interactions with customers, suppliers, patients, visitors and other members of the public entering your workplace.

Employers could consider the following measures for reducing COVID-19-related risks in the workplace:

Category	Key Considerations
Limiting the number of employees and others in the workplace	<p>Encouraging employees to continue working from home if they are able.</p> <p>Allowing only a minimum amount of staff to return to the physical workplace.</p> <p>Implementing staggered or rotating returns to the workplace to reduce the number of employees present at the workplace at any one time. For example, specifying which day(s) an employee or group of employees may come to the workplace.</p> <p>Controlling the number of customers and other third parties entering and exiting the workplace.</p>
Encouraging physical distancing at work	<p>Limiting entrance and exit points. Consider whether emergency evacuation plans need to be updated to address changes to access points.</p> <p>Rearranging workspaces and floor plans, including increasing separation between desks, workstations, and furniture or fixtures in common spaces such as lunchrooms, meeting rooms, waiting rooms, and washrooms. Examples include taping off every second urinal in a men's washroom and removing chairs in common spaces to ensure adequate physical distance.</p> <p>Controlling access to elevators and areas within the workplace, including updating key cards to limit access and limiting the number of people who may ride in an elevator at a time.</p> <p>Adjusting scheduling, such as start/end times and breaks to reduce the number of people using common spaces (such as break rooms, kitchens, and bathrooms) and elevators at the same time.</p> <p>Implementing signage to ensure distance is maintained, for example using taped arrows to indicate "one way" traffic in hallways, taping off waiting areas to prevent bottlenecks</p>

	<p>in small spaces such as washrooms, taping off areas around workstations, appliances, machines, photocopiers, etc. to indicate appropriate two-metre spacing.</p> <p>Discouraging or cancelling all non-essential activities, social events and in-person meetings.</p> <p>Staggering appointments and meetings with customers or other meeting attendees.</p>
<p>Limiting physical contact and minimizing interpersonal interactions</p>	<p>Installing physical barriers between workers or between workers and third parties. A common example of a physical barrier is the plexiglass partitions currently found in many grocery stores and pharmacies.</p> <p>Removing all communal items that cannot be easily cleaned, such as newspapers, magazines, and candy bowls.</p> <p>Reducing or eliminating the sharing of tools and equipment (such as keyboards, pens and other tools) between employees, or if sharing is required, providing solution for employees to disinfect tools and equipment between uses.</p> <p>Using technology to minimize interactions, such as using technology to share documents and going “cashless”.</p>
<p>Worker and workplace hygiene</p>	<p>Promoting regular and thorough hand-washing and good hygiene by employees and other individuals present in the workplace. For example, by ensuring employees have access to soap and water or alcohol-based sanitizer, putting hand sanitizer dispensers in prominent places around the workplace, ensuring these dispensers are regularly refilled, and placing informational posters throughout the workplace.</p> <p>Developing procedures for regularly scheduled enhanced cleaning and disinfecting of the workplace, particularly high-contact items such as doors, handles, faucet handles, keyboards, and shared equipment. Various provincial governments have provided guidance on cleaning practices and workplace hygiene, that can be found in the below list of Return to work Resources for Employers.</p> <p>Evaluation of workplace environments as to whether ventilation and filtration provided by heating, ventilating, and air-conditioning systems can reduce the risk of transmission through the air.</p>
<p>Preventing sick employees from being at work</p>	<p>Preventing symptomatic employees from attending the workplace by developing written policies and procedures employees must follow if they are sick or suspect they have come into contact with someone diagnosed with COVID-19. This could involve requiring employees to complete a daily “fit for work” questionnaire or COVID-19 self-assessment prior to attending the workplace. An example of Alberta Health Service’s “fit for work” questionnaire, can be found <a href="#">here</a> and the Ontario self-assessment can be found <a href="#">here</a>.</p>

	<p>Requiring employees to take a temperature test before entering the workplace. Note that this type of precaution is not without risk and care should be taken to ensure that employees' rights are respected (as discussed in our <a href="#">Quick Reference Guide</a>). It is also important to keep in mind the limitations of temperature checks; employees can be contagious prior to having a fever, so this measure will only be partially effective and should only be used as part of a more comprehensive screening program.</p>
<p>Implementing appropriate policies</p>	<p>Developing policies and practices to:</p> <p>Limit nonessential travel to other locations or worksites.</p> <p>Ensure that all employees are trained on all COVID-19 related policies and procedures, including up-to-date education and training on COVID-19 risk factors and protective behaviours (for example, transmission points, equipment cleaning processes, cough etiquette and handwashing).</p> <p>Retain the names and contact details of stakeholders attending the worksite to assist public health authorities trace people who may have been exposed to COVID-19 at the worksite. Such action should only be taken after carefully considering and adequately addressing the privacy related concerns this may raise.</p> <p>Ensure that policies are kept up to date and being followed, for example through regular audits to ensure employees are maintaining appropriate physical distance.</p> <p>Respond appropriately to employee concerns or refusals to work due to workplace health and safety concerns, including providing advance policy for consultation with employers' joint workplace health and safety committees and appropriately implementing additional policies and controls to address hazards identified by employees on an ongoing basis.</p> <p>Check with vendors, suppliers and landlords on measures they have implemented to manage COVID-19 related risks.</p>
<p>Evaluate policies and procedures regularly</p>	<p>Review policies, practices and procedures regularly and assess whether they are achieving the desired outcome.</p>

