



Introduction

This document is intended for employers, workers, and customers/participants of daycares as an overview of potential hazards in the workplace due to COVID-19.

In all cases, guidance from local public health authorities must be followed and general COVID-19 prevention practices should be implemented as outlined in [Protect Yourself and Others from COVID-19](#).

Consider the Risks

- The risk of transmission increases when you are in closed spaces with poor ventilation, and crowded places with people outside of your immediate household. Risk is higher in settings where these factors overlap and/or involve activities such as close-range conversations, singing, shouting or heavy breathing (e.g., exercising). Consider how many people are present, age of the children, how long they will be there, how close they will be to each other, and whether interactions are occurring in a crowded or enclosed indoor setting.
- Ability of children to follow the recommended [personal preventative measures](#) based on their health, age, disability, developmental status, or other socio-economic and demographic circumstances. Is additional supervision required?
- Frequent contact with high-touch surfaces or shared items such as door handles, chairs, tables, faucets, etc.
- Availability of supplies and facilities necessary for frequent hand hygiene.
- Risk of severe illness, or if they live with a person who belongs to a [higher risk group](#).
- Maintaining confidentiality and [privacy protection](#) for the individual.

Control Measures

Each workplace is unique. It is important for employers to work with their health and safety committee or representative (if available) to [assess the risks](#) of COVID-19 for their specific workplace, and implement appropriate hazard controls using the [hierarchy of controls](#) (i.e., elimination, substitution, engineering controls, administrative policies, and the use of personal protective equipment (PPE)). Use a layered approach by including multiple [personal preventative measures](#) to protect yourself and others from COVID-19.

Physical Distancing

- Follow your jurisdictional occupancy limits to determine the number of people allowed in the same room.
- Maintain [the greatest physical distance possible](#) (at least 2 metres) wherever possible, including separating desks, tables, mats or beds for napping. Have children nap as far apart as possible. If space is limited have them nap “head to toe” or consider using dividers if it is safe to do so.
- For younger children when physical distancing is more difficult, consider keeping the children in smaller groups or cohorts, and maintain at least 2 metres between the cohorts.
- Have children face the same way for as many activities as possible. Stagger meal and snack times, if possible. Spend more time playing outdoors.
- [Clean and disinfect](#) or avoid climbing structures, shared swings, slides, and other equipment.
- Manage how individuals will travel through shared spaces such as hallways and washrooms. Mark one-way routes, and use floor markings, signs, and other visual cues. Stagger drop-off and pick-up times to reduce contact between parents/caregivers.
- Greet children outside as they arrive, while maintaining physical distance from parents/caregivers.



- Encourage parents/caregivers to designate the same person to drop off and pickup each day.
- Restrict non-essential visitors.
- Have administrative staff work from home whenever possible.
- Postpone visits to outside places, such as the library.

Ventilation

- Make sure that [heating, ventilation and air conditioning \(HVAC\) systems](#) operate properly.
- Increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible by opening windows and doors or other methods. However, do not open windows and doors if it poses a safety risk.
- Avoid blowing or circulating air from one person to another using powerful portable cooling fans as it might increase the spread of COVID-19. Adjust building ventilation systems and air conditioning units instead.
- Adjust ventilation systems to:
 - Increase filtration efficiency to the highest level appropriate for the system.
 - Increase fresh air flow/percentage of outdoor air (increase percentage of outdoor air in HVAC air supply, open windows, and doors, etc.).
 - Limit use of demand-controlled ventilation; keep system running at the optimal setting.
 - Explore the use of portable high efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filtration units.
- Consult an HVAC professional before making changes to the ventilation system(s).

Use of Masks

- Follow [the recommendations for types of masks and ages](#) as issued by your [public health authority](#). Children under the age of 2 should not wear a mask or face covering. Children between the ages of 2 and 5 may be able to wear a mask if supervised. Children older than the age of 5 should follow the same advice for adults on when to wear a mask.
- Masks should be well constructed and well fitting, covering the nose, mouth, and chin. Encourage people not to touch their face or mask with unwashed hands.
- Masks should not be worn by anyone who is unable to remove the mask without assistance (e.g., due to their age, ability, or developmental status).
- Be aware that non-medical masks have limitations, and improper mask use and disposal can increase the risk of infection.
- Stay informed as guidance is evolving regarding the use of [face shields](#). They are not a suitable replacement for face masks but can provide eye protection.
- Change your mask if it becomes wet or soiled. For example, you may wish to bring a second mask, and store in a clean paper bag, envelope, or container that does not trap moisture. Store reusable soiled masks in a separate bag or container. Do not touch the outside of the mask while removing it and wash your hands when you are finished.
- For some children, not being able to see an adults' face and mouth clearly may cause difficulties. Consider using a transparent mask. Staff may also opt for eye protection (such as face shields) when in close physical contact with children. Guidelines or recommendations from your local government or [public health authority](#) may also apply within the daycare.
- Do not allow the mask to be a hazard to other activities, such as getting caught on moving machinery or playground equipment.

Use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- Continue to use PPE for existing occupational safety hazards and emergencies, as directed by applicable laws



and your employer.

- Situations where PPE may be considered for protection from COVID-19 include:
 - Wearing gloves when cleaning as recommended by the product's safe work instructions or safety data sheet
 - Wearing disposable gloves when cleaning blood or bodily fluids (e.g., runny nose, vomit, stool, urine)
- If workers will be required to wear PPE, they must be trained on how to wear, work with, care for the equipment, and understand its limitations.
- Clean and disinfect any shared personal protective equipment before you wear it.
- Wash hands before wearing and after removing gloves.

Personal Hygiene

- Promote [good hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette](#):
- Cough and sneeze into your sleeve and not your hand. Provide tissues, and dispose of used tissues in plastic-lined receptacles.
- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water or use an at least 60% alcohol-based hand sanitizer when soap and water is not available:
 - at the start of shifts
 - before eating or drinking
 - before preparing food
 - after cleaning up meal and snack times
 - after touching shared items
 - after using the washroom, changing diapers, or helping others with toileting
 - after handling garbage, and
 - before leaving your workspace
- Set up hand hygiene stations near the entrance of the facility so children and staff can clean their hands before entering.
- Designate a clean and disinfected area for storing food or other items brought from home.
- Employees should change out of work clothes before going home, and clothes should be [laundered](#) as soon as possible after every shift.
- Include infection prevention as part of daily lessons and activities, while making sure that content is age appropriate.
- Train all staff on how COVID-19 spreads, the risk of exposure, and the infection control practices in place. Post signage at entrances and other areas as reminders.

Daycare Hygiene

- Develop a [cleaning schedule](#) and document when cleaning has taken place.
- Clean and disinfect washrooms frequently and stock with soap and paper towels.
- Disinfect diaper changing areas after each use.
- Choose toys that can easily be cleaned and disinfected.
- Disinfect commonly touched surfaces, shared toys, tables, chairs, plates, cups, door handles, light switches, etc.
 - [Use approved hard-surface disinfectants](#) that have a Drug Identification Number (DIN). This number means that it has been approved for use in Canada.
 - Read and follow manufacturer's instructions for safe use of cleaning and disinfection products (e.g., wear gloves, use in well-ventilated area, allow enough contact time for disinfectant to kill germs based on the product being used).



- If approved household or commercial disinfectant cleaning products are not available, hard surfaces can be disinfected using a mixture of 5 mL of bleach (5% sodium hypochlorite) and 250 mL of water. Test surfaces before using a bleach solution. Bleach can be corrosive. Follow instructions for safe handling of bleach.
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions for cleaning high touch electronics (e.g., touch screens, pin pads, keyboards, tablets). If liquids can be withstood, disinfect with alcohol or disinfectant wipes containing 60% alcohol.
- Use disposable cleaning cloths and gloves.
- Regularly wash and thoroughly dry blankets, face cloths, towels, smocks, bibs, etc., before reusing.
- Promote individual activities or increase the number of toys available to minimize sharing.
- Safely dispose of garbage at least once a day.
- Provide workers with adequate supplies, training on cleaning protocols, and personal protective equipment as needed.

Screening and Care

- Encourage employees to stay home if they are sick or might be sick. Follow self-assessment steps from the [Public Health Agency of Canada](#) or your [local public health authority](#).
- Screen your employees and others before they enter your workplace, following the recommendations provided by your local public health authority. [Active screening](#) may be legally mandated in some jurisdictions and involves asking questions about a person's health and possible exposures. Use a [checklist](#) or questionnaire provided by your local public health authority. Follow your organization's protocols when using [rapid antigen detection tests \(RADTs\)](#) as part of your active screening process.
- Anyone who does not pass screening should not enter the facility, should immediately wear a mask (preferably a respirator or medical mask, if not available a well-constructed, well fitting non-medical mask), return home (while avoiding public transit as much as possible), contact their health care provider or local public health authority, if required, and follow their advice.
- If a designated person is screening individuals in person, the screener should maintain the greatest physical distance possible (i.e. at least 2 metres) and wear personal protective equipment (gloves, masks, facial or eye protection, etc.) as appropriate.
- Information will also be required to support contact tracing. At a minimum, ensure that employee, children and essential visitor names and contact information is collected, updated, accurate and available. Be prepared to identify the location where individuals were working and who they may have come into contact with before the onset of any symptoms or a COVID-19 test.
- Review your procedures for responding to a sick person at work:
 - Continue to encourage workers and others to self assess and report any symptoms, even if mild.
 - Ask workers to self isolate, wash or sanitize their hands, and immediately wear a mask (preferably a respirator or medical mask, if not available a well-constructed, well fitting non-medical mask) (preferably a medical mask) until they can return home.
 - If the sick person is a child, contact their parent/caregiver to take them home immediately and to seek appropriate medical attention. In an emergency, individuals may need to be sent directly to the hospital.
 - Consider preparing a separate area away from others in advance, such as the first aid room, an empty office, or a seat behind a barrier if space is limited.
 - Call 911 for assistance if the sick person is severely ill (such as difficulty breathing or chest pain).
 - Clean and disinfect any surfaces or items that the sick person has contacted. Close off all areas the person used or was in. Consider common areas (e.g., washrooms), and any shared items (e.g. touch screens).
 - Increase air circulation in those areas by using the ventilation system or by opening doors and windows.



- Wait 24 hours, if possible, before cleaning the areas.
- Continue to follow routine procedures for cleaning and disinfecting.
- Additional cleaning and disinfecting are not necessary if seven or more days has passed since the person who is sick or tests positive for COVID-19 was in the facility.
- Provide information to workers on employer leaves of absences, sick benefits, and [alternate government benefits](#).
- If a person at the school is confirmed to have COVID-19, contact your public health agency for guidance.
- Continue to use appropriate precautions and procedures for safety, providing assistance for minor injuries, or emotional distress.

General Recommendations

- In the event of an emergency, follow established emergency response procedures.
- Perform regular inspections and hazard assessments to identify potential ways individuals may be exposed to COVID-19. Evaluate new COVID-19 preventative measures before using them to make sure new health and safety risks are not created. (e.g., propping fire doors open).
- Regularly communicate COVID-19 news and measures to all parties to help manage stress and anxiety.
- Understand that in some situations, recommendations and measures may change or vary depending on the current stage of the pandemic, as well as the child's age and their abilities.
- Develop a business continuity plan to minimize disruptions including increased staff absenteeism, and procedures for periods of higher restrictions based on public health measures.
- Promote mental health services for staff and families.

If you or someone you know is in crisis, please contact your local hospital, call 911 immediately, or contact a [Crisis Centre in your area](#).



It is important that mental health resources and support are provided to all workers, including access to an employee assistance program, if available.

For further information on COVID-19, refer to the [Public Health Agency of Canada](#).

Note that this guidance is just some of the adjustments organizations can make during a pandemic. Adapt this list by adding your own good practices and policies to meet your organization's specific needs.

Disclaimer: As public and occupational health and safety information is changing rapidly, local public health authorities should be consulted for specific, regional guidance. This information is not intended to replace medical advice or legislated health and safety obligations. Although every effort is made to ensure the accuracy, currency and completeness of the information, CCOHS does not guarantee, warrant, represent or undertake that the information provided is correct, accurate or current. CCOHS is not liable for any loss, claim, or demand arising directly or indirectly from any use or reliance upon the information.