



## Introduction

This tip sheet is for employers and employees in the home deliveries and courier service sector as an overview of recommended controls to help reduce the risk of exposure to COVID-19 in the workplace.

Home deliveries and courier businesses deliver goods and products across Canada. Due to increases in online orders, many home deliveries and courier companies are experiencing a higher demand for their services during the pandemic.

For general COVID-19 prevention practices, both employers and employees can refer to the CCOHS resource [Protect Yourself and Others](#).

## Consider the Risks

- The risk of contracting COVID-19 increases in situations where people are in closed spaces (with poor ventilation) and crowded places when with people from outside their 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., during exercising).
- As a home delivery or courier employee, potential sources of exposure include:
  - having close contact with a customer or co-worker who has COVID-19, and
  - touching surfaces or items that have been touched or handled by a person with COVID-19, and then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes.
- Each workplace is unique. It is important for employers to assess the risks of COVID-19 for their specific workplace (including each vehicle) 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) and non-medical masks). Use a layered approach by combining multiple measures to maximize safety and reduce the risk of COVID-19. Physical distancing, proper ventilation, good hand hygiene, the wearing of non-medical masks, and active screening are some of the measures that can help prevent the spread.
- Employers should consider the following:
  - How will employees be screened? It is recommended that employees are screened before each work shift.
  - Where do employees interact with customers and co-workers? Controls (e.g., use of non-medical masks) need to be implemented when in a shared space with people outside your immediate household or when required by your public health authority.
  - How close are the physical interactions? The risk of transmission increases with close and frequent contact.
  - How long are the interactions? Evidence indicates that the person-to-person spread is more likely with prolonged contact.
  - How will shared surfaces be cleaned and disinfected? Ensure that all supplies are available, and that the disinfectant used has a drug identification number (DIN) from Health Canada.
  - What tasks are conducted at the workplace? Assess the risk of COVID-19 exposure for activities conducted by all job tasks or roles.
  - Has a COVID-19 safety plan been developed? The safety plan should be specific to the workplace. It should identify potential exposures to COVID-19 and the controls implemented to protect employees.

## Communication to Employees

# Home Deliveries and Couriers



- Provide clear information and instruction to employees about the hazards of COVID-19 and what they need to do to protect themselves and others.
- Encourage employees to report any concerns about COVID-19 to their supervisor or employer. Employees can also report concerns to their health and safety committee or representative.
- Provide regular communications so that employees are informed of updates and have an opportunity to discuss their questions and concerns.
- Provide mental health support resources for all employees.

## Information for Customers

- Use all available means (e.g., website, social media, e-mail) to remind customers about the preventive measures being taken to reduce the risk of exposure to COVID-19.
- At shipping centres, place signs with information about COVID-19 control measures (e.g., hand hygiene, use of non-medical masks, proper coughing/sneezing etiquette) where it is clearly visible to customers.

## Screening

- Consider asking screening questions to employees, before each work shift, using a [checklist](#) from the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (CCOHS) or your local public health authority.
- Some jurisdictions require active screening of employees everyday before they come into work. Active screening steps may involve a self-assessment (e.g., using a web-based tool, having a person complete a questionnaire, or having a designated person asking direct questions). Consider the size of your workforce, the number of worksites, shifts, and activities when choosing your screening method.
- Employees who have COVID-19 symptoms should stay home. If they are at work and develop symptoms, they need to wear a medical mask (or if unavailable a well constructed and well fitting non-medical mask) and return home immediately (preferably not by public transit). They should also contact their health care provider and local public health authority.
- The most common symptoms are:
  - New or worsening cough
  - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
  - Temperature equal to or over 38°C
  - Feeling feverish
  - Chills
  - Fatigue or weakness
  - Muscle or body aches
  - New loss of smell or taste
  - Headache
  - Gastrointestinal symptoms (abdominal pain, diarrhea, vomiting)
  - Feeling very unwell
  - Skin changes or rashes (young children)
- Symptoms can vary from person to person and within different age groups.
- Symptoms may take up to 14 days to appear after exposure to COVID-19. Some people have mild or no symptoms.
- Older adults, people of any age with chronic medical conditions or who are immunocompromised, and those living with obesity are at risk for more severe disease and outcomes from COVID-19.
- Develop procedures for contacting [local public health authorities](#) for further advice in the event of a positive COVID-19 case. If the case is work-related, additional notifications may be required (e.g., the [government health and safety regulator](#) and [worker compensation board](#) for your province or territory).

# Home Deliveries and Couriers



- Screen customers who are dropping off or picking up packages at shipping centres. They should be screened before entry into the workplace through self-screening posters or by having an employee verbally screening at the entrance.
- To support contact tracing efforts, record the names and contact information of all workers and other persons who enter the workplace, as required by your local public health authority. Make sure that privacy is protected, and that the information is stored securely. Contact information must be destroyed in a timely manner according to local privacy requirements.

## Reducing Potential Exposure to COVID-19 in the Workplace

- Determine if any employees can work remotely. Provide ergonomic support and resources for employees setting up home offices.
- Eliminate non-essential work travel for all employees.
- Minimize sharing of vehicles. Assign workers to a vehicle for as long as possible. Clean and disinfect the vehicle between users.
- If possible, avoid travelling in a vehicle with co-workers.
- Avoid in-person meetings where possible. Use remote communications methods instead (e.g., teleconferencing, videoconferencing).
- When in-person meetings are unavoidable, use a large well-ventilated space, stay the greatest physical distance (at least 2 meters) apart from co-workers, and wear non-medical masks.
- Discourage unnecessary physical contact such as handshakes.
- At office and shipping centres:
  - Discourage employees from using other employees' phones, desks, offices, or other equipment, when possible.
  - Post capacity signs at the entrances to shared employee areas (e.g., kitchens, washrooms, conference rooms, photocopier room, and supply room).

## Physical Distancing

- Keep the greatest physical distance possible (at least 2 metres) from people outside your immediate household.
- Encourage on-line payments. If this is not possible, take contactless payment and place the payment machine on a paddle or stick to help maintain distance.
- Develop policies and technology options to encourage and prioritize contactless deliveries as much as possible. For example, leaving pre-paid packages at the customer's doorstep, and not requiring a signature.
- If verification of delivery is required (e.g., for 'proof of identify' or 'proof of age' items):
  - leave the delivery at the doorstep
  - ring the doorbell or call / text the customer
  - move back the greatest distance possible (at least 2 metres)
  - verify the delivery with the customer
  - try not to handle the customer's identification (ID)
  - if the customer is under quarantine or self-isolating, consider asking them to show their ID through a window, provided the ID is displayed clearly
  - try to do all interactions electronically (e.g., in an app or phone).
- Where access is restricted and the package cannot be dropped off (e.g., a secure building), call or text the customer. Leave the package on the ground, move back the greatest distance possible (at least 2 metres), and have the customer pick it up.
- For at home delivery of large items, develop policies that eliminate or reduce the amount of time spent inside a customer's home. For example:



- Provide clients with alternatives to in-home delivery. Offer a “doorstep” delivery option where the item is delivered to a location outside the home (e.g., front doorstep, porch, or garage) or outside the front door of a condominium or apartment building.
- For in-home delivery, ask screening questions to the customer before delivery. Ask the customer to stay the greatest physical distance possible (at least 2 metres) away from the delivery employee. Request that the customer open windows in the room where the item is to be delivered.
- Instead of having customers sign for the delivery, consider accepting verbal signatures. Verify the customer’s identity (if required) and document the customer’s acceptance of the delivery electronically.
- Where possible, avoid sharing scanners, pens, signature pads or other tools with customers.
- Avoid close contact with individuals as much as possible when picking up packages, food, groceries, or other items from warehouses, restaurants, shops, grocery stores, or businesses.
- At shipping centres, add markers (at least 2 metres apart) to floors to promote physical distancing for customers waiting in line.
- Examine the activities conducted in the workplace and determine if there are any situations where physical distancing cannot be maintained (e.g., heavy items that require two people for delivery). Create rules for any work that requires workers to work within two metres of each other and include precautions such as the use non-medical masks or personal protective equipment.

## Physical Barriers

- Install transparent barriers where physical distancing is not feasible (e.g., customer counters at shipping centres, and between driver and passenger seats in delivery vehicles).

## Ventilation

- Verify that the heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) system(s) for each facility is working properly.
- Ensure preventative maintenance for the HVAC system(s) is conducted according to manufacturer's instructions (e.g., regular filter changes and inspection of critical components).
- If possible, consult a heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) professional to determine whether your HVAC system:
  - can be adjusted to increase air exchange rates if needed
  - is using filters of the highest Minimum Efficiency Reporting Value (MERV) rating the system can sustain
  - can be kept running for longer hours at maximum outdoor airflow.
- For additional information on indoor ventilation, please refer to:
  - [COVID-19: Guidance on indoor ventilation during the pandemic](#) (Government of Canada), and
  - [Indoor Ventilation: Guidance During The COVID-19 Pandemic](#) (CCOHS).
- If it is necessary for co-workers to travel in vehicles together, increase the amount of fresh air entering the vehicle by opening the windows (weather permitting) and setting the ventilation to outside air.

## Personal Hygiene

- Provide hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol for all employees.
- Encourage frequent and proper hand washing with soap and water, for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water aren't available, use a [hand sanitizer](#) containing at least 60% alcohol.
- Wash hands at the start of shift, before eating or drinking, after touching shared items, after using the washroom, after handling cash, credit/debit cards or ID, after touching common items, after each delivery if contact was made, after refueling vehicles, and at the end of the shift.

# Home Deliveries and Couriers



- Encourage clients to use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer when entering the shipping centre. The hand sanitizer for clients should be placed in a location that is on their path and is away from areas where employees are working.
- Discourage individuals from touching their eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Remind workers not to touch the outer surface of their non-medical mask while wearing or handling it as it may be contaminated. Promote hand washing or use of hand sanitizer after putting on, touching, or removing non-medical masks.
- Promote good respiratory hygiene. Provide disposable tissues and remind individuals to cough or sneeze into the bend of their arm or a tissue and to dispose of tissues immediately, followed up with hand washing or use of hand sanitizer. Verify that all necessary materials are readily available (e.g., hand sanitizer, garbage disposal, disposable tissues).
- Encourage workers to minimize contact with frequently touched surfaces during pickups and deliveries, such as doorbells, door handles, countertops, and elevator buttons. Consider contactless methods of delivery (as discussed previously in the Physical Distancing section above).

## Cleaning and Disinfecting

- Viruses can remain on objects for a few hours to days depending on the type of surface and environmental conditions.
- To promote consistent disinfecting practices, create and provide a routine cleaning and disinfecting [procedure](#), schedule and checklist.
- For shipping centres, clean and disinfect:
  - high touch surfaces regularly, paying close attention to surfaces frequently touched by customers or employees (e.g., door handles, counters, staff room surfaces, washrooms, etc.).
  - work surfaces (desk, computer keyboard, mouse, phone, drawers etc.) before and after each shift.
- Clean and disinfect each vehicle and its contents before and after use. This cleaning includes the steering wheel, seat belts, radio, cargo door handles, gear shift, and control knobs.
- Use household or commercial disinfectants to destroy or inactivate viruses and bacteria. The disinfectant used should have a drug identification number (DIN), meaning that it has been approved for use in Canada.
- Employees should be trained on the safe use of the cleaning and disinfecting products. Always follow the manufacturer's instructions when using, handling, or storing the product. Review the product's label, and (if applicable) safety data sheet to determine what precautions to follow.
- Provide employees with adequate supplies and access to any required personal protective equipment.

## Non-Medical Masks

- Employers should develop policies regarding non-medical mask use.
- It is strongly recommended that employees wear a well-fitted and well-constructed non-medical mask whenever they are in a shared space (indoors or outdoors) with people from outside of their immediate household (e.g., when with co-workers or customers).
- Ensure the requirements for non-medical mask use set by your local public health authority are followed.

## COVID Alert App

- Encourage employees to install the COVID Alert App on their phone. This app is designed to let Canadians know whether they may have been exposed to COVID-19.
- The app maintains your privacy; it does not record or share your geographic location.
- To download the app, and to learn more, please go to the [Government of Canada](#) website.



## Evaluate Controls

- Regularly review the adequacy of the controls implemented and make improvements as necessary.
- Determine if there are any new hazards created by any of the changes implemented at the workplace. For example, if drivers are required to clean and disinfect their work vehicle, have they been trained on how to safely use the cleaning and disinfecting chemicals? Review and adjust programs as necessary.

## Additional Considerations

- This tip sheet provides examples of controls that can be implemented to reduce the risk of COVID-19 exposure in the workplace.
- Additional controls will also be required depending on the workplace and specific types of tasks performed by workers.

**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.