



Introduction

This tip sheet is for employers and workers in the hospitality industry as an overview of potential hazards due to COVID-19 and related control measures.

In all cases, guidance from [public health authorities](#) must be followed. Also refer to current guidance from the [Public Health Agency of Canada \(PHAC\)](#), your jurisdictional [health and safety regulator](#), and other applicable business associations.

Consider implementing general COVID-19 prevention practices as outlined in "[Protect Yourself and Others from COVID-19](#)".

Consider the Risks

The risk of contracting COVID-19 increases in situations where people are working in closed spaces (with poor ventilation), crowded places and around people from other households. Risk is higher in settings where these factors also include activities such as close-range conversations, singing, shouting or heavy breathing (i.e., during exercise).

Working in the hospitality industry exposes workers to many of the above situations. COVID-19 transmission during these activities depends on the setting, the number and characteristics of people, physical proximity, duration and type of interactions, and the effectiveness of health measures put in place.

Employers should consider the following:

- How to protect guests and employees? Conduct risk assessments of all job tasks and interactions with public. Implement solutions to make the workplace safer for employees and patrons.
- What type of setting is it? Indoor settings can accumulate viruses when crowded or poorly ventilated. Large spaces with high ceilings and good ventilation will be lower risk.
- How many people will employees interact with and how close are the physical interactions? Transmission risks increase with close and frequent contact.
- What kind interactions will employees have? Employees may not be able to avoid non-essential in-person interactions with people from outside their immediate household, train staff to keep the greatest distance possible.
- How long are the interactions? Evidence indicates that the person-to-person spread is more likely with longer contact. Train employees to keep interactions as short as possible.
- Do employees and guests frequently have contact with high touch surfaces or objects? Remove objects from service or modify processes to be contactless and increase the frequency of cleaning and disinfection.
- Are face masks required for patrons and employees in your jurisdiction, if so when and where must masks be worn (e.g. required unless drinking or eating)? Check local public health restrictions and enforce them in your facility.
- How many people are allowed in the facility at one time? Follow the current public health restrictions of your local jurisdiction for total number of patrons.
- Are you anticipating or observing crowds in your facility? Reduce your maximum capacity or make operational changes to avoid crowds as much as possible. For additional information consult [federal](#) and provincial public health websites.
- Does the workplace have multiple employers? Site owners should make sure that all employers follow local public health requirements. Owners should make sure employers understand their responsibilities.

Each workplace is unique. It is important for employers to assess the risks of COVID-19 transmission for their specific workplace and implement appropriate hazard controls using the [hierarchy of controls](#) (i.e., elimination, substitution, engineering controls, administrative controls, personal protective equipment (PPE)). Use a layered approach when implementing the chosen combination of risk controls.

Consider implementing a workplace safety plan to identify and implement solutions for COVID-19 associated risks. The plan should address as many aspects as possible. Review and update plan continuously.

When implementing solutions use change [management methods](#) to assess and track the potential impacts to existing infrastructure, processes, worker health and safety. Using this process will help avoid creating new workplace hazards or negatively impacting existing safety controls.

Elimination and Engineering Controls

Implement these controls to help prevent the transmission of COVID-19 in the workplace. The priority should be having as few people as possible in the workplace while maintaining safety protocols.



- Implement a work from home program and make participation mandatory for employees that do not physically need to be on site. They should work from home as often as possible.
- Provide hand washing stations or hand sanitizer dispensers (with minimum 60% alcohol content) in high traffic areas such as entrances (employee and public), exits, service counters, breakrooms, elevators, front desk, restaurant entrances, and vehicle loading areas.
- [Ventilate](#) indoor spaces appropriately, the more enclosed the space the more ventilation will be necessary. Seek advice from an HVAC specialist on ways to increase indoor/outdoor air exchanges per hour, reduce or eliminate recirculated air, and on available options for air filtration and disinfection (e.g., room or system UV germicidal lighting). Ensure that air circulation or cooling fans are not directing air flow from person to person.
- Modify queuing areas. Place stanchions or floor markings, at least 2 metres (minimum safe distance) apart in all directions to keep people apart and indicate where to stand.
- Remove from service any high-touch interactive information screens, crowd promoting entertainment displays and games, or disinfect between users.
- Install barriers to separate employees from visitors where possible and appropriate, make sure not to block work paths or exits (i.e., emergency escape). Barriers should be appropriately sized and positioned to block respiratory droplets from being carried from person to person. Clean and disinfect barriers at least daily.
- Facility renovations and upgrades to consider:
 - Install motion activated automatic doors.
 - Install hand motion activated automatic faucets.
 - Automatic flushing toilets and urinals.
 - Hand or foot activated soap, towel, and sanitizer dispensers.
 - Upgrade water fountains with bottle refill stations.
 - Replace soft surfaces with hard surfaces which are more easily disinfected (i.e., change carpet to tile, cushioned benches to wooden or plastic benches).

Administrative Controls

These types of controls reduce risk through policies, procedures, and training. They rely on personnel management and compliance to be fully effective. Applied properly they can minimize coronavirus transmission. It is possible for COVID-19 to be spread by people who do not have any symptoms. When setting up controls, consider that everyone is potentially infected. Implementing and enforcing policies to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in hotels, motels, and other accommodations is critical to protecting employees and the public. Make sure to continue to review and update administrative controls as the pandemic evolves.

Physical distancing and staff related changes

- Create and enforce a physical distance policy for your operations. Communicate these requirements to all employees, businesses, and visitors.
- Remind staff and visitors to minimize non-essential in-person interactions with people from other households (to decrease potential COVID-19 exposures). Interactions should be kept brief and at the greatest distance possible (at least 2 metres).
- Meeting rooms, if in use, should be configured to comply with physical distance policy i.e., space out or remove chairs, mark minimum distances on walls or floors.
- Wherever possible designate one-way routes (e.g., front desk lines, separate staircases for up and down foot traffic, in restaurants, change rooms).
- Limit the number of people allowed in washrooms at one time. Configure the space to have alternating sinks, stalls, and urinals out of service if they are within 2 metres of each other.
- Minimize contact for employees reporting to work by simplifying the process as much as possible (e.g., prevent crowds at punch clocks by being flexible with clock in/out times).
- Adjust daily staff levels to have the fewest people in the workplace (where safe to do so).
- Make sure essential roles such as supervisors, and first aid or emergency response team members are on each shift.



- Cross-train employees so they are safely able to replace the duties of others.
- Stagger shift starts and break times to minimize crowding at employee entrances, change and break rooms.
- Consider having groups of employees (cohorts) that work the same shifts, and keep groups separate as much as possible.
- Comply with building occupancy limits recommended by public health authorities.
- Continue with safety and informational meetings but avoid gatherings of people where possible. Implement technology to conduct meetings virtually. If that option is not possible, gather in small physically distanced groups, preferably outdoors or in large well-ventilated locations.
- Reduce the number of shared objects. For example, assign cleaning tools to one employee for the full shift, and do not share radios.
- Minimize close physical contact for all job tasks or modify them so they can be performed by one person (if safe to do so). If that is not possible, train all employees to [properly wear masks](#) when they work within 2 metres of each other and keep the interaction as short as possible.
- Plan for how employees, guests and visitors will maintain physical distance while during emergency evacuations.
- Prepare for exceptions to distancing guidance such as for anyone rescuing a distressed person, providing first aid, or performing cardiopulmonary resuscitation.
- Provide laundry service for work uniforms or require employees wear freshly cleaned uniforms or clothes for each shift. Clothes should be bagged and washed after each shift.
- Implement flexible leave policies to accommodate worker who are at risk of more severe disease or outcomes (i.e., over 60 years old, immunocompromised, have chronic medical conditions).
- Adopt a supportive sick leave policy and consider providing support to employees who are off sick, encouraging them to stay home when they feel ill, even if symptoms are mild.
- Have a policy to protect workers from workplace violence and harassment.
- Do everything reasonably possible under the circumstances to protect the health and safety of your workers by providing information, training, cleaning, disinfecting, and personal protective equipment.

Mask wearing

- Implement a mask wearing policy. Communicate these requirements to all employees, visitors, and guests. Make sure the policy complies with local public health authority recommendations.
- The policy should include when, where, and which type of mask is required to be worn.
- Require employees to properly wear well-constructed and well-fitting masks. Masks should cover the nose, mouth, and chin without gaps.
- Masks should not be worn by anyone who is unable to remove the mask without assistance.
- Inform employees, guests and visitors of the limitations with masks. Communicate that improper mask use and disposal can increase the risk of infection.
- For some guests, not being able to see the other person's face and mouth clearly may cause difficulties. Consider using a transparent mask, if appropriate, or use written directions.
- Train staff and post signs reminding visitors to:
 - Change their mask if it becomes wet or soiled
 - Carry additional fresh masks
 - Store soiled reusable masks in a moisture wicking container (launder masks before re-use)
 - Avoid touching the outside of the mask while wearing and removing it (touch straps only)
 - Wash (or sanitize) their hands with soap and water before and after putting it on or taking it off

Proper mask wearing reduces the number of viruses released into the surrounding environment by infected individuals. Having physical distancing and mask wearing policies in place is an effective way to minimize the spread of COVID-19.

Employee training



- Provide COVID-19 specific training to your employees, at minimum include the following:
 - [COVID-19 symptoms](#) and what to do if they start having symptoms
 - How to prevent the spread of COVID-19
 - How to protect themselves
 - Ways to stay informed (using reputable sources)
 - Good [respiratory etiquette and hand hygiene](#)
 - Changes to policies/procedures due to safety plan findings
 - About the [COVID-19 vaccine](#) and its availability
- Teach employees to avoid unnecessary physical contact such as hugs, handshakes, and high fives, as well as after-work gatherings.
- Train conflict resolution techniques to front line employees that might interact with guests who may react aggressively to COVID-19 public health measure or limited services.
- Avoid sharing equipment and train employees on proper technique for cleaning and disinfecting equipment such as controls, screens, keyboards, tools, radios, personal devices (e.g., cellphones). Give them time to disinfect their workstation at the start of each shift.
- Discourage the sharing of personal items such as cellphones, lighters, etc.
- Train employees to wash or sanitize hands before and after touching shared items (e.g., checklists, clipboards, pens, tablets, trays, carts).

Worker and visitor screening and contact tracing

- Administer health screening questions for every employee, visitor and guest that enter the building. Include current symptoms (if any), recent travel and potential COVID-19 exposures (templates are available from your local public health authority or [OHS organizations](#)). Consider having employees completing the screening using a company portal or app.
- Employees that pass the screening should be allowed to work. Employees who do not pass the screening should contact their supervisor. The supervisor should recommend that they stay (or return) home and monitor themselves for symptoms. Suggest that they contact their health care provider or local public health authority if they develop symptoms or symptoms worsen.
- Visitors and guests that pass the screening should be allowed into the building, and those that do not should be denied access or be asked to immediately isolate in their rooms for the remainder of their stay (see more details in the COVID-19 response plan section below).
- Log all employee, visitor and guest access to the building. This record is critical for contact tracing. If requested, provide the information only to local public health authorities. Make sure that privacy is protected, and that the information is stored and destroyed in a safe and secure manner, as required by privacy laws.
- Promote the use of the national [COVID alert app](#) by guests and employees.

Communication

- Managers should keep up to date and comply with orders from their local public health authorities or regulators.
- Communicate to employees and guests all new practices and policies that will affect their experience. Communicate these changes at entrances, on websites, by email, and during the room booking process. Consider providing training sessions for employees.
- Post signs to inform guests and employees of any closures or current COVID-19 protocols at entrances, elevators, front desk, break rooms, gyms, change rooms, pools, and meeting rooms. Update your website with the same information.
- Post information in high traffic areas informing and constantly reminding people about appropriate behaviours such as hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette, and self screening. Continuously keep posted information, guidance, and government orders up to date.
- Indicate room occupancy limits at the entrances to meeting rooms, elevators, offices, kitchens, laundry rooms, and break rooms.
- Communications should be written using easy to understand terms, in official and local languages.



- Use graphics and pictograms to clearly inform visitors and guests about desired and undesired actions.

COVID-19 Response plan

- When a person reports having [COVID-19 symptoms](#), immediately have them wear a mask (preferably a respirator or medical mask, if not available a well-constructed and well fitting non-medical mask).
- If the person is in immediate distress, call 911 for medical assistance.
- For guests, ask them to:
 - Immediately check out or self-isolate in their room.
 - If symptoms worsen, contact to local emergency health clinic or public health authority and follow their instructions.
 - Stay in their room as much as possible, only leave for essential reasons. Wear a medical mask (preferably a respirator or medical mask, if not available a well-constructed and well fitting non-medical mask).
 - Checkout using a contactless method, avoiding in-person contact with the front desk or other employees.
- For employees:
 - Immediately isolate the employee from others in a designated area or room. (**Note:** After the person leaves, clean and disinfect all surfaces/objects that the symptomatic person may have touched or been close to).
 - Send the employee home so they can begin their self-isolation as soon as possible. Ask them to avoid public transit, taxi, and ridesharing, if possible.
 - Instruct them to seek medical care, if necessary, and follow instructions from their local public health authority (information is available on their websites).
- If an employee, visitor or guest informs you of a positive COVID-19 test result, report it to your local public health authority and cooperate with any contact tracing efforts. You may also be required to inform employees who might have been exposed unless that is the responsibility of your public health authority. Advise all those that were potentially exposed to carefully monitor themselves for COVID-19 symptoms.
- If the case is work-related involving a worker, additional notifications may be required, contact your **jurisdictional OHS regulator** and **worker compensation board** for guidance. Complete an incident report and begin an investigation.

Supporting Guests in Self-Isolation

- Encourage guests to avoid leaving their room for non-essential reasons, if they must leave their room ask them to wear a mask (preferably a respirator or medical mask, if not available a well-constructed and well fitting non-medical mask). Inform them to avoid specific facilities including ice machines, vending machines, pools, gym facilities, hotel bar or restaurant.
- Discourage visitors and employees from having in-person interactions with self-isolating guests.
- Provide information on local pharmacies that offer medication delivery, upon request.
- Provide contactless room service for all meals. If on-site food service is not available, provide information on local grocery or meal delivery services.
- Encourage guests to open their windows whenever possible to help increase air ventilation in their room.
- Provide contactless checkout options.
- Provide garbage and laundry pick-up service, when requested. Have staff wear personal protective equipment (PPE) when handling materials.

Specific Guidance

- Use touchless interfaces wherever possible (e.g., processing payments, access to rooms or facilities).

Hotels, Motels and Other Accommodations



- Consider suspending valet and porter services, or make sure staff wash or sanitize their hands after each service.
- Limit the number of guests allowed in shared living accommodations (e.g., chalets, lodges, cabins, hostel rooms, short term rentals). Check with your local public health authority for guidance.
- Provide single use items in guest rooms (e.g., soaps, shampoos). Encourage guests to take those items with them when they check out or replace between guests.
- Consider consulting with regional or national hotel associations to learn about innovative solutions and ideas to reduce coronavirus transmission.
- Place requested fresh towels and linens outside the room.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- Continue to use PPE for existing occupational safety hazards and emergencies, as directed by applicable laws and the employer.
- Wear gloves when using cleaning products as recommended by the product's safe use instructions or safety data sheet.
- Wear disposable gloves when cleaning blood or body fluids.
- If workers are required to wear PPE, make sure they are trained on how to wear, remove, work with, and care for the equipment, and to understand their limitations.
- Clean and disinfect any shared PPE after each use, as per manufacturer recommendations.
- Hands should be washed before and after using PPE.

Cleaning and Disinfection

- Avoid cleaning guest rooms during their stay. If cleaning is requested, ask the guest to leave their room during the cleaning.
- Train employees on proper cleaning and sanitization techniques. Employees should understand how to safely use 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.
- Use cleaners with a [Drug Identifying Number](#) assigned by Health Canada.
- Follow instructions on labels to ensure disinfection is effective. Clean visibly dirty surfaces before disinfecting.
- Have daily cleaning and disinfection protocols in place for all common areas, equipment, and surfaces.
- For suites or rooms that have kitchens, clean and disinfect all dishware and kitchen equipment between guests.
- Replace room information binders with disposable paper, or laminate materials that can be disinfected between guests.
- Disinfect payment devices between uses. If employees handle cash, train them to avoid touching their face with unwashed hands. They should also frequently wash or sanitize (with 60% alcohol content) their hands. Wearing gloves is not recommended.
- Clean and disinfect high touch common area surfaces at least twice daily:
 - Front desk/check-in counters
 - Bell desks
 - Elevators and elevator buttons
 - Door handles
 - Public bathrooms
 - Vending machines
 - Ice machines



- Staircase handrails
- Room keys and locks
- Automated Teller Machines (ATM)
- Escalator and stair handrails
- Gym equipment and shower areas (if in use)
- Pool seating and surrounding areas (if in use)
- Dining surfaces and all seating areas
- Clean and disinfect high touch guest room objects and surfaces:
 - Door and furniture handles
 - Television remote controls
 - Toilet seats and handles
 - Faucet handles
 - Nightstands
 - Telephones
 - In-room control panels
 - Light switches, including lamps
 - Temperature controls
 - Alarm clocks
 - Luggage racks and flooring
- For guest rooms after a presumed or confirmed COVID-19 case:
 - If possible, open windows to increase ventilation as soon as the guest leaves.
 - Designate the room as unavailable for a minimum of 24 hours or as directed by local health authority after the guest checks out. No employees should enter during this time.
 - Conduct intensive cleaning and disinfection of room using [Public Health Agency of Canada guidelines](#) and [approved cleaners](#).
 - Require cleaning staff to use appropriate PPE.
 - Cleaning materials (e.g., paper towel, mops, cloths, detergent, powders, liquids, foams) should be bagged and disposed of or decontaminated according to local public health guidance.

Room Service

- Wear masks when delivering room service.
- Wash hands before and after delivering and picking up food trays or carts.
- Disinfect carts and food delivery equipment between uses.
- Keep returned dirty dishware separate from clean dishware.

Laundry

- Bag all linens and towels before transporting to the laundry facility.
- Avoid shaking dirty linens and towels.
- Wash laundry using the warmest permissible water setting and following any manufacturer's instructions.
- Dry all washed items thoroughly.
- Consider using bleach or other disinfectants if laundry is contaminated with bodily fluids.
- Keep dirty and clean laundry separate to avoid cross-contamination.

Hotels, Motels and Other Accommodations



- Clean and disinfect laundry hampers, carts, and bags frequently.

Engineering and Maintenance

- Avoid performing any non-emergency room maintenance. Complete the work once the room is unoccupied and cleaned and disinfected thoroughly.
- Clean and disinfect any surfaces that were touched after the maintenance has been completed.
- If servicing an occupied guest room, instruct maintenance staff to maintain physical distance from others, wear masks, and sanitize shared tools between users.
- Check and maintain (i.e., service and change filters) ventilation systems according to manufacturer's recommendations. For additional information on indoor ventilation read the following guidance:
 - [COVID-19: Guidance on indoor ventilation during the pandemic](#), Government of Canada
 - [Indoor Ventilation: Guidance During The COVID-19 Pandemic](#), CCOHS
- Consider upgrading to more efficient system filters. Consult with a ventilation system specialist.
- For visits by external services such as deliveries, contractors (maintenance, repair, construction), and others:
 - Maintain greatest possible physical distancing, minimize exposure of employees and guests by restricting access to work area, wear masks, and provide hand washing facilities.
 - Clean and disinfect the work area before and after the external service provider does their work.
 - Communicate with service providers about your requirements, and work with those services to assist with their requirements.

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.