



## Introduction

This tip sheet is for employers and managers of night life establishments such as nightclubs, party boats, game cafes, comedy and music venues, breweries, bowling alleys, escape rooms, and strip clubs. It provides an overview of potential workplace risks and hazards due to COVID-19 and recommends control measures. This document can also be informative to workers and patrons.

In all cases, guidance from [local public health authorities](#) and your jurisdictional [occupational health and safety regulator](#) must be followed.

For general COVID-19 prevention practices, refer to these CCOHS documents:

- [COVID-19 Health and Safety Resources](#)
- [Protect Yourself and Others from COVID-19](#)
- [COVID-19 Health and Safety Planning for Employers](#)
- [COVID-19 Prevention for Workers](#)
- [COVID-19 FAQ](#)

For industry-specific guidance refer to these tip sheets:

- [Cinemas \(includes drive-in theatres\)](#)
- [Live Performances: Singing, Music, and Theatre](#)
- [Restaurants \(includes bars, pubs, taverns, food services etc.\)](#)
- [Events and Gatherings During the COVID-19 Pandemic \(concerts, parties, raves, music festivals, magic shows, etc.\)](#)
- [Casinos, Racetracks and Bingo Halls](#)

## Consider the Risks

The risk of [COVID-19 transmission](#) is increased with:

- Longer and more frequent person-to-person interactions, especially when less than 2 metres apart.
- Crowded places and large gatherings.
- Generation of respiratory droplets and aerosols (e.g., when speaking, coughing, singing etc.).
- Poor ventilation.
- Inadequate hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette or access to cleaning facilities and products.
- Contaminated high-touch surfaces and shared objects.
- High number of COVID-19 cases in the local community (or an outbreak).
- Low levels of COVID-19 vaccination among workers and patrons.
- COVID-19 variants which are more transmissible.

Workers and patrons may be exposed to a combination of these risks. Consider all possible COVID-19 exposure scenarios in your setting when performing a COVID-19 [risk assessment](#). Develop or use an existing [risk assessment checklist](#) to document and evaluate all work setting characteristics, activities, job roles, and the impacts of patrons (including vulnerable populations such as those unable to be vaccinated).

Here are sample questions to ask during a COVID-19 risk assessment:

- What are the local COVID-19 conditions in the community?
- What percentage of people are vaccinated?
- Is the setting indoors, outdoors, or a combination of both? Is ventilation in the space adequate?
- Is the space crowded? Does your local public health authority require occupancy limits?
- What activities are workers involved in? For example, greeting and screening patrons, customer service, serving food, cleaning and disinfecting, etc.

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- How frequent and physically close are interactions between people?
- Is there frequent contact with high-touch surfaces or objects? (e.g., washrooms, door handles, service counters, equipment, instruments, etc.)?
- Is there singing, shouting, or heavy breathing?
- Is there loud music that may cause people to shout to communicate?
- Are food and beverages served and if so, how (buffet, pre-packaged etc.)?

## Control Measures

To provide the highest level of protection to workers and patrons, use multiple [public health measures](#) and [workplace controls](#) in a [layered approach](#). No single measure is completely effective alone. Be careful not to create new workplace hazards or negatively impact existing safety controls. Review and adjust measures as necessary in consultation with the workplace health and safety committee or representative.

Create and implement a written workplace [COVID-19 safety plan](#), supported by the [risk assessment](#). The plan should document the control measures put in place to protect workers and patrons from exposure to COVID-19. A written plan may be legally required by the jurisdiction in which you operate. Refer to local authorities for details on what must be included in the plan, if it needs to be posted etc.

Meet your legal occupational health and safety obligations by doing everything reasonably possible in the circumstances to protect the health and safety of your workers. Implement policies and programs to [accommodate](#) workers who are at [high risk](#) of severe disease or outcomes (i.e., immunocompromised, have chronic medical conditions, or unable to be vaccinated) from a COVID-19 infection.

## Ventilation

- [Ventilate](#) indoor spaces appropriately, according their size and occupancy level. Maintain ventilation systems and seek advice from a Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning ([HVAC](#)) professional on possible improvements (e.g., increasing air exchanges per hour, reducing or eliminating recirculated air, or upgrades to air filtration and disinfection).
- Open windows and doors, if possible.
- Run washroom and kitchen exhaust fans that vent to the outside at low speed to help remove contaminated air.
- Make sure that air circulation or cooling fans do not direct air flow from person to person.
- If ventilation cannot be improved, consider portable air filtration units with high-efficiency particulate (HEPA) filters.
- Keep humidity between 30% and 50% for indoor settings. Lower humidity may cause the virus to stay suspended in the air longer.

## Physical Barriers

Install [barriers](#), such as plexiglass, to separate workers from patrons where possible.

Barriers should be positioned to block respiratory droplets in situations where workers may directly interact with patrons, such as at reception desks. Clean and disinfect barriers at least daily. Carefully plan the placement of barriers to reduce interference with air movement (ventilation) and make sure not to block aisles or exits (i.e., emergency escape).

## Physical Distancing

Physical distancing requires people to:

- Maintain a safe distance from others (at least 2 metres in all directions).
- Avoid non-essential in-person interactions.
- Keep interactions as few and as brief as possible.



For general physical distancing recommendations, refer to [CCOHS COVID-19 and Physical Distancing](#).

Consider the following tips for additional safety:

- Follow occupancy limits and physical distancing requirements defined by the local public health or government authority and the applicable fire code. Adjust limits according to each space (e.g., washrooms, elevators, etc.). Occupancy limits include workers and patrons combined.
- Encourage reservations to help manage occupancy levels.
- Maximize the distance between people, at least 2 metres if possible:
  - Modify queuing (line-ups) and waiting areas. Install stanchions or floor markings to keep people apart and indicate where to stand.
  - Arrange seating or standing areas to maintain maximum distance between each person or each unrelated group (cohort). For fixed seating, consider blocking access to seats to create the required spacing.
  - Limit access to sinks, seating, urinals, etc. which are close to each other.
- Consider how people will use or travel through shared spaces, such as hallways and staircases. Establish one-way routes where appropriate, using floor markings, signage, and other visual cues.
- Modify tasks to minimize close physical contact.
- Allow exceptions to distancing guidance in certain circumstances such as rescuing a distressed person, providing first aid, or performing Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR).

## Hygiene Measures

- Encourage good [hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette](#).
- Provide hand washing stations or hand [sanitizer](#) dispensers (always with minimum 60% alcohol content) in high traffic areas such as entrances, exits, service counters, breakrooms, elevators, kitchens, vehicle loading areas, washrooms (including portable toilets), and throughout the venue.
- Encourage everyone to sanitize or [wash their hands](#).
- Periodically check and restock soap or sanitizer.
- Replace soft surfaces with hard surfaces which are more easily disinfected (i.e., change carpet to tile, cushioned benches to wooden or plastic benches).
- Reduce the number of shared objects. Avoid sharing equipment (such as clipboards, pens etc.) if possible.
- Reduce the number of high-touch points by having:
  - Motion activated doors, faucets, toilets and urinals
  - Hand motion or foot pedal activated soap, paper towel, sanitizer dispensers, and plastic lined waste containers
  - No touch methods of tracking worker attendance such as key cards or electronic messaging
  - Optional contactless payment methods (minimize cash payments).
  - Menus that are easily disinfected after each use; available online by smart phones (e.g., QR code or website); disposable after each use
- Have everyone store their personal items (such as jackets) in separate lockers, in labelled and sealed bins/bags, or spaces which do not allow physical contact between each person's belongings.
- Clean payment pin pads, touch screens, and any other shared devices or equipment between users.
- Avoid self-serve options for food.
- Cooking and serving staff should wear masks and follow good food safety requirements (never cough or sneeze over food).
- Request that workers wear freshly cleaned uniforms or clothes for each shift.
- Discourage singing, yelling, and chanting. Keep noise and music levels low allow people to communicate without shouting.



## Food and Drinks Safety

Preparing, serving, and consuming food and drinks pose risks of COVID-19 transmission. Follow the guidance for [restaurants](#).

## Communication and Training

For general recommendations, refer to CCOHS [COVID-19 Communication and Training](#).

Communicate the workplace controls and the public health measures that are in place to all workers and patrons in languages they understand. Use [posters or infographics](#) where they can be easily noticed.

COVID-19 specific training for workers should include the following:

- [COVID-19 symptoms](#) and how to respond when symptoms are identified.
- What to do if sick, and how to [get tested for COVID-19](#).
- How and when to report COVID-19 illness.
- Benefits and options for [vaccination](#).
- How to [prevent the spread](#) of COVID-19 and [protect themselves](#) at work.
- Ways to stay informed using [reputable sources](#).
- Policies, plans, and procedures (such as mask policy, vaccination policy, cleaning and disinfection schedule, COVID-19 safety plan). Alert workers whenever changes are made.
- Ways to diffuse difficult situations with workers or patrons.
- The Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System ([WHMIS](#)). Make sure workers understand how to protect themselves from the products they use (including cleaning products).

Post signs and infographics where they can be seen by workers and patrons, such as:

- [Take the Time to Wash Your Hands](#): Kitchens, washrooms.
- [Prevent the Spread of Infections](#): Entrances, high-touch surfaces.
- [How to Choose, Use and Care for a Mask](#): Entrances.
- [About coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\)](#): Entrances.
- Screening poster (obtained from your [local public health authority](#)): Entrances.
- Signs indicating the maximum occupancy for rooms or spaces, especially those which should have few occupants such as washrooms or elevators.
- Floor markers or posters which encourage physical distancing.

## Vaccination

- Create and implement a COVID-19 [vaccination policy](#), make sure it follows applicable government vaccination requirements.
- Encourage workers to get vaccinated.
- The employer, health and safety committee or representative, and union (if applicable) should discuss any concerns surrounding mandatory COVID-19 vaccination requirements. Make sure to include a list of valid exemptions and need for accommodation.
- Request proof or attestation of vaccination as required by your local legislation or as guided by your vaccination policy. Keep in mind that a company policy should not conflict with the law.
- Provide support for workers to attend local vaccination clinic appointments if these times occur during work hours. Additional time away from work may be required by workers experiencing temporary side effects from vaccination.
- Maintain COVID-19 workplace controls and public health measures, even if the majority of workers are vaccinated. Follow local public health authority guidance on easing or reimposing controls.



- For additional information on the vaccines refer to:
  - [Vaccines for COVID-19](#) – Government of Canada
  - [COVID-19 Vaccines](#) – CCOHS
  - [COVID-19 Vaccines: What it Means for Employers](#) – CCOHS

## Screening and Contact Tracing

- Request proof of vaccination as required by your local legislation or as guided by your vaccination policy. Keep in mind that a company policy cannot be less than what is required by law.
- Evaluate the need for passive screening (where individuals self-monitor and report possible illness or exposure to COVID-19) and active screening (where the employer gathers data on employees via screening questionnaires, rapid tests, etc.). Implement as necessary.
- Administer health [screening](#) questions to all workers and patrons before they are allowed into the establishment. Include current symptoms and potential exposures to COVID-19.
- Create your own list of questions, use a generic [checklist](#) form, or use one provided by your local public health or government authority.
- Consider having workers complete a self-assessed screening using a company portal or app before coming into work.
- [Rapid testing](#) may be performed in addition to the screening questionnaire and, in jurisdictions where permitted, in place of COVID-19 vaccination verification for vaccine-exempt persons. Ensure that all safety protocols for rapid testing (training, Personal Protective Equipment, etc.) are in place and legal requirements are followed.
- Collect the contact information (name, phone number) of all persons entering the venue, the date, and time. This information should be provided to the local public health authority if requested for the purpose of [contact tracing](#). All information must be safely stored and destroyed as required by privacy legislation.
- Workers or patrons that pass the screening can enter the facility. Anyone who does not pass the screening should be denied entry.
- Workers who do not pass the screening should contact their supervisor. The supervisor should instruct them to stay (or return) home and monitor themselves for symptoms. Workers should contact their health care provider or local public health authority if they develop symptoms or symptoms worsen.

## COVID-19 Response Plan

- Refer to the infographic [Responding to COVID-19 in the Workplace](#) for what to do if a worker or other person is identified as having symptoms or has potentially been exposed to COVID-19.
- When any person experiences [COVID-19 symptoms](#) while already in the facility:
  - Immediately have them wear a mask (preferably a respirator or medical mask, or if not available, a well-constructed and well fitting non-medical mask). A respirator used in this way (source control) may not need to be fit tested.
  - Ask them to leave as soon as it is safe for them to do so. If needed, have them isolate in a designated area, away from other workers, until they can leave.
- Call 911 for medical assistance if symptoms are life threatening. Notify their emergency contact.
- If the case is work-related involving a worker, additional notifications may be required. Contact your jurisdictional [OHS regulator](#) and [workers' compensation board](#) for guidance. Complete an incident report and begin an investigation.
- Adopt sick leave policies that are flexible and consider providing support to workers who are off sick (i.e., do not penalise workers that do not come to work when they feel sick).

## Cleaning and Disinfection

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Develop a [cleaning and disinfecting](#) schedule and follow a [standard operating procedure for touch points](#). The schedule should identify when cleaning needs to be done and record when it has taken place.

Use an [approved hard surface disinfectant](#), and follow the manufacturer's instructions or Safety Data Sheet (SDS). Focus on:

- Areas in which workers and patrons are expected to spend most of their time.
- High transmission risk objects and surfaces such as doors and handrails (should be disinfected multiple times a day).
- Washrooms, including faucets and flushing mechanisms which require touch to operate.
- Tables, chairs, eating surfaces (before and after each use).
- Barriers.
- Immediately clean vomit or other body fluids while wearing appropriate PPE.

After cleaning and disinfecting, consider:

- Used cleaning cloths, towels etc. must be properly handled to prevent contamination, and laundered or disposed of after every use.
- Deposit heavily contaminated or disposable items into plastic lined waste containers.
- Dispose of garbage at least daily and follow up with hand hygiene.

## Mask Wearing

Refer to the CCOHS [Get the Facts on Masks](#) tip sheet for information on how to properly wear and care for masks.

- Follow the mask wearing requirements of your local public health authority and jurisdiction. If not required, mask wearing should still be encouraged as an additional measure when there is higher risk for COVID-19 spread, or when physical distancing is not possible.
- 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.
- For some individuals, not being able to see a workers' face and mouth clearly may cause difficulties (e.g., hard of hearing, using lip-reading, needing to see facial expressions). Consider using [transparent masks](#).
- Workers may also wish to use eye protection (such as safety glasses, goggles, or face shield) in addition to a mask when in close physical contact with others. Note that face shields do not offer equivalent respiratory protection as masks.
- Implement or update the workplace [heat-stress program](#), as mask wearing may increase physiological stress during high-exertion tasks.
- 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. While non-medical masks are useful in reducing the spread of COVID-19, they are not considered Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) as they do not meet regulated testing and certification standards.

## Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Refer to the Government of Canada's [Personal protective equipment \(COVID-19\): Overview](#) and CCOHS' [Designing an Effective PPE Program](#) for more information about PPE.

- PPE includes such items as respirators, eye protection (e.g., goggles, face shield), gowns, gloves, and safety footwear.
- Continue to use PPE for existing occupational safety hazards and emergencies. COVID-19 PPE policies must not interfere when a higher level of protection is needed for the task.
- Employers should conduct a hazard assessment and make sure that workers have the correct PPE for the tasks and activities they are performing.



- Workers may need PPE for COVID-19 protection if they are:
  - Performing tasks that require them to be less than 2 metres from another person without a physical barrier (e.g., serving patrons),
  - Using cleaning and disinfecting products (refer to the manufacturers' safe handling instructions),
  - Providing emergency first-aid.
- Workers must be trained on how to properly use and care for their PPE.

**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.