

Food Processing

Employers must:

- Make sure workers know about the virus and how to minimize its spread.
- Set a clear policy for what is expected of workers if they get sick, have symptoms, or if an exposure is reported.
- Do everything reasonably possible under the circumstances to protect the health and safety of workers by providing adequate information, training, sanitation, and personal protective equipment.
- Provide reminders about COVID-19 prevention, signs and symptoms.
- Adjust production and schedules to reflect any necessary changes.
- Make sure workers are trained to work safely, including when replacing duties of others.

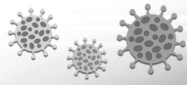
Workers must:

- Practice physical distancing by working more than 2 metres (6 feet) apart from co-workers whenever possible.
- Continue to follow all safe work procedures. If it is unsafe to work, they should talk to their supervisor, health and safety committee or representative, and/or union.
- Stay home if they are sick or might be sick. Follow the Public Health Agency of Canada's steps for self-assessment: <https://www.canada.ca/coronavirus>
- Follow hand hygiene and cough and sneeze etiquette and avoid touching their face.
- Wash their hands at the start of their shift, before eating or drinking, after touching shared items, after using the washroom, after handling cash, and before leaving the worksite. Remove jewellery while washing.
- Not share cigarettes or vaping equipment.
- Not share communication devices or personal protective equipment unless they can be cleaned between users.
- Be aware of early signs and symptoms of COVID-19.

Sanitation

A touch point is any surface that can be touched by bare hands by multiple people multiple times. While it's always critical to follow the four key steps of food safety – clean, separate, cook, and chill – to prevent foodborne illness, employers should also:

- Make sure that any person required to clean has received the appropriate training plus any required personal protective equipment.
- If handling food directly, continue to use precautions as required, including the use of deli tissue, spatulas, tongs, single use gloves, or dispensing equipment.
- Use a disinfectant or bleach solution to destroy or inactivate the virus.
 - Use a disinfectant with a drug identification number (DIN). This number means that it has been approved for use in Canada.



Food Processing

- If 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.
- If liquids can be withstood, disinfect high-touch electronic devices (keyboards, tablets, smartboards) with alcohol or disinfectant wipes.
- Use a dedicated cloth for cleaning.
- Create a checklist of all surfaces that must be cleaned, including door and sink handles, paper towel dispensers, counter tops, wheelchair access buttons, turnstiles, kitchen equipment, elevator buttons, vending machines, and printers/copiers.
- Clean all areas, including offices, cafeterias, change rooms, washrooms, and laundry rooms.
- Determine the frequency of cleaning and disinfection based on your organization's needs. Clean at least once per day but more frequent cleaning (every 2 to 3 hours) may be necessary.
- Record when cleaning and disinfection has occurred.

Disinfectants

- Clean visibly dirty or soiled surfaces with soap and water before disinfecting.
- Follow the product's manufacturer's instructions, including any need for personal protective equipment such as gloves.
- Apply the disinfectant to a clean dry cloth. Saturate the cloth before treating touch points. Reapply as needed.
- Apply enough disinfectant to leave a visible film on the surface. Allow the surface to air dry.
- Reapply disinfectant to the cloth between surfaces.
- Change the cloth daily or when it becomes visibly soiled.

Physical Distancing

- As much as possible, maintain a distance of at least 2 metres (6 feet) from others within the facility.
- Evaluate if changes can be made to increase worker separation, such as using plexiglass or other barriers.
- Stagger shifts to minimize the number of workers in one place.
- Control foot traffic patterns to reduce gathering at meeting points, washrooms, and other shared spaces.
- Designate travel paths so workers do not have to pass each other closely (e.g., one set of stairs for up, another for down) or have workers call out before entering shared spaces.
- Non-medical masks can be used when physical distancing is not possible or difficult to maintain.
 - Non-medical masks must be worn correctly. Educate workers that non-medical masks are not protective to themselves, but will help slow the spread of the virus by reducing the spread of their own respiratory droplets (when they talk, sneeze, or cough).

General Site Management

- Notify workers in advance if there are changes to screening measures and facility entrance policies.
- Make sure washrooms are cleaned frequently, have running water, and are stocked with soap, paper towels, and plastic lined waste containers. Visibly dirty hands must be washed with soap and water.
- Maintain an updated list of workers that are currently working in each area.
- Evaluate if any worker can perform their job from home (e.g., administrative staff).
- Perform regular inspections and hazard assessments to identify potential ways workers may be exposed to COVID-19 and other hazards.
- Consult with the health and safety committee or representative when putting new measures into place.



Food Processing

- Stagger meetings, breaks, team talks, and orientations to minimize the number of workers in one place.
- Hold in-person meetings outdoors or in large areas that allow for physical distancing.
- Communicate corporate information electronically, or wash hands after handling papers.
- Hold worker orientations verbally to avoid touching papers.
- Minimize contact during sign-in. Have the supervisor sign in for people (or provide separate pens), or have people text the supervisor. Clean any sign-in devices between users.
- Submit documents and forms electronically, or wash hands after handling papers.
- Remove shared cutlery and tableware from lunchrooms.
- Remove communal coat check areas and shared footwear or clothing. Have workers store their personal items in separate lockers or in sealed bins/bags. Provide designated uniforms that are laundered by a service or encourage workers to wear clothes that can be washed frequently.
- Dispose of used tissues, wipes, gloves, and other cleaning materials in a plastic lined waste container.
- Replace garbage cans with no-touch receptacles or remove lids that require contact to open.
- When putting preventative actions in place, always consider the hierarchy of controls, continue to evaluate how effective they are, and make changes when needed.
- In the event of an emergency, follow established emergency response procedures.

Assembly Line / Plant Operations

- Increase the air intake of the ventilation system or open doors and windows to provide more fresh air in the plant. Avoid central recirculation where possible.
- Wherever possible and safe, rearrange work areas to allow 2 metres separation between employees.
- Install physical barriers, such as plexiglass, between work areas and operators where 2 metre separation is not possible, and if it is safe to do so.
- Use floor markings, signage and other visual cues in appropriate areas to encourage physical distancing.
- Limit or reschedule non-essential visits to the site by contractors, supply chain partners, vendors or other visitors.
- Schedule for any additional time that may be needed due to reduced staff, performing risk assessments, physical distancing measures, hygiene measures, cleaning and disinfecting, and following other protocols to perform work safely.
- Stagger shifts, break times, etc., where possible to reduce interactions between staff.
- Establish zones in the facility and restrict employees from entering zones they do not perform work in or need to access (does not apply in emergency situations).
- Assign workers to the same crew and work area, and limit the number of workers allowed in an area at the same time.
- Review processes such as material pick up and delivery or maintenance activities. Determine methods that will help avoid having workers congregate or work in the same area.
- Consider reviewing policies on the use of personal cell phones in the plant. When done safely, using mobile phones can promote physical distancing while allowing effective communication (avoid sharing phones).
- While respecting physical distancing measures, supervisors are still required to make sure that workers are performing their tasks safely.
- Have workers wash hands or use hand sanitizer when entering and exiting production areas, and before and after using equipment.
- If wash stations with soap and water are not close or accessible, provide hand sanitizer stations.
- Sharing of equipment, tools, instruments, etc. should be avoided where possible. Consider purchasing additional equipment if required.
- Clean and disinfect equipment and touched surfaces that must be shared before and after each use.



Food Processing

- Develop a cleaning schedule that is followed for each work area, especially between shift changes, that includes cleaning and disinfecting all touched surfaces and equipment.
- Perform meetings and check-ins by phone, video conference, or in areas where physical distancing can be maintained.
- When selecting the correct personal protective equipment (PPE) to use, it is important to perform an assessment of all the activities that will be performed and products that will be used to ensure appropriate protection is provided and additional hazards are not created.
- Develop procedures and train workers on the selection, use, putting on/removal, disposal, cleaning, maintenance, and storage of PPE.
- Proper procedures and training for PPE use is important to prevent inadvertent contamination and exposure. Improper use of PPE can increase the risk of infection.
- Wash hands before putting on and after removing PPE.

Provide mental health support to all workers, including access to an employee assistance program (EAP) if available.



This tip sheet was developed with the assistance of Maple Leaf Foods

<https://www.mapleleaffoods.com/>

For further information on COVID-19, refer to the Public Health Agency of Canada

<https://www.canada.ca/coronavirus>

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.