

# Communication and Training for Respiratory Infectious Diseases (RIDs)



## Introduction

Communication and training are essential to help prevent the spread of respiratory infectious diseases, also known as RIDs. Employers are responsible for making sure workers are made aware of the transmission hazards for their workplace and job activities, and how to protect themselves. Workers have the '[Right to Know](#)' about workplace hazards, including those associated with respiratory infectious diseases and about control measures they are required to follow. This tip sheet provides recommendations for how and what to communicate training for respiratory infectious diseases.

Tailor the communication and training to the workplace setting:

- Use accessible formats and languages appropriate for workers and visitors, to make sure they understand the information provided
- Use many communication methods available to make sure that the information is understood by workers and visitors:
  - Signs and infographics
  - Video slide displays
  - Announcements on speakers
  - Worker e-learning, training sessions, and safety or toolbox talks
  - Websites, apps, texts, e-mails, social media platforms, blogs, etc.
  - Verbal reminders from supervisors and workers
- Choose high-traffic locations to share relevant information such as the front entrance, reception or waiting rooms, breakrooms, bulletin boards, washrooms, and at hand sanitizer dispensers

## Developing a Respiratory Infectious Diseases Training Program

The goal of an effective respiratory infectious diseases training program is to provide workers with the information they need to work safely.

When developing the content of the training, make sure that the source information is current and accurate. Refer to trusted sources of information such as your local public health authority, occupational health and safety regulator, government, and industry experts.

Determine how you will evaluate how well the workers understand the information and requirements (e.g., with tests, observations, inspections). Document worker attendance at training sessions as well as the evaluation results.

Update and repeat the training as often as needed (e.g., when new information on respiratory infectious diseases becomes available, there are changes to public health or workplace control measures, when policies and procedures are updated, or when lack of compliance is observed).

Train workers on respiratory infectious diseases topics, including:

### Characteristics and health effects of respiratory infectious diseases

- A description of the respiratory infectious disease and common symptoms
- Possible short or long-term medical outcomes
- How they spread (e.g., respiratory particles, direct contact, touching contaminated surfaces and objects)

### Exposure risk factors

- At work
  - Assign responsibility for completion of a [risk assessment](#). Consult with the health and safety committee or representative, workers that perform the tasks being evaluated, the union (if applicable), and other individuals competent in completing risk assessments

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- Outside of work (e.g., at home and in the community)
  - Some workers may be at greater risk of exposure to respiratory infectious diseases because of their household factors, public locations they frequent, transportation methods, and activities they participate in. These factors could increase the risk that they bring illness into the workplace

## Control measures

- Describe the control measures being used in the workplace. These controls may include public health preventive measures for individuals and communities, and other workplace control measures the employer has implemented
- The strengths and limitations of each different control measure. No single control measure alone is 100% effective against respiratory infectious diseases. Using a [layered approach](#) with multiple control measures is important
- How to correctly and safely put on and take off, wear, care for, and store a face [mask or respirator](#)
- How to correctly use, wear, inspect, clean, store and replace [personal protective equipment](#) (e.g., respirators, gloves, gowns, face shields)
- How to safely use [cleaning and disinfection](#) products (e.g., following manufacturers safe-use instructions or [Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System](#))
- Proper hygiene practices (e.g., hand washing technique and frequency, coughing and sneezing into elbow or tissue, etc.)

## Other topics

- Company policies (e.g., sick leaves, leave of absences, remote or hybrid work)
- What to do if a worker becomes sick while at work
- How to self-monitor for symptoms of respiratory infectious diseases
- How to stay up to date on current legal requirements and resources from the local [public health authority](#) and [jurisdictional Occupational Health and Safety \(OHS\) regulator](#)
- Worker rights and responsibilities

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

**Disclaimer:** As public and occupational health and safety information may continue to change, 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.