

**COVID-19 and
health and safety responsibilities**

Employers, workers, owners or prime contractors, and other people at the workplace all have a responsibility to prevent exposure to COVID-19 in the workplace.

The employer is responsible for:

- The health and safety of their workers, and all other workers at their workplace
- Completing and posting the COVID-19 Safety Plan
- Training and providing education on the contents of that plan
- Having a system in place to identify the hazards of COVID-19, control the risk, and monitor the effectiveness of the controls

The worker is responsible for:

- Taking reasonable care to protect their own health and safety and the health and safety of other people at workplace.
 - Includes personal self-care, e.g., frequent hand washing and staying home when sick
- Reporting unsafe conditions to their employer
- Following the procedures put in place by the employer to control the risks associated with COVID-19

The owner or prime contractor is responsible for:

- Coordinating health and safety at a workplace where workers of two or more employers are working at the same time
 - Doing everything that can reasonably be done to establish and maintain a system or process to ensure compliance with WorkSafeBC laws and regulations
 - Ensuring an effective system to control the risks associated with COVID-19

The contractor:

- Might be a worker, employer, or independent operator and have the corresponding responsibilities

**Developing your COVID-19 Safety Plan
to control the risk of exposure in the workplace**

Requirements of the employer

Every employer is required to have a **COVID-19 Safety Plan** that assesses the risk of exposure at their workplace and implements measures to keep their workers safe.

- WorkSafeBC will not review or approve the plans of individual employers in advance, but will review them during our inspections of your workplace.
- We will ask employers about the steps they have taken to protect their workers and to see the plan if it has been developed.
- By order of the Provincial Health Officer, your plan must be posted to your worksite.

Orders, notices, and guidance

Follow the **orders, notices, and guidance** from the **provincial health officer** and the **BC Centre for Disease Control**.

The basics

- Physical distancing (2 metres / 6 feet)
- Cleaning and disinfecting
- Personal hygiene:
 - Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue or use your elbow.
 - Wash your hands.
 - Avoid touching your face.
 - Do not share food, drinks, or items.



COVID-19 Safety Plan steps

Follow these steps to create your COVID-19 Safety Plan:

1. Assess the risk at your workplace
2. Implement measures to reduce the risk
3. Develop policies
4. Develop communication plans and training
5. Monitor your workplace and update your plans as needed
6. Assess and address risks from resuming operations

Step 1: Assess the risk at your workplace

- Assess workplace to identify where risk of transmission is introduced.
- Involve frontline workers, supervisors, JHSC/worker representatives
- Consider questions like:
 - Where do people congregate?
 - What job tasks or processes require workers to come into close proximity with one another or members of the public?
 - What tools, machinery, and equipment do people come into contact with?
 - What surfaces are touched often?

Involve your workers

Joint health and safety committees

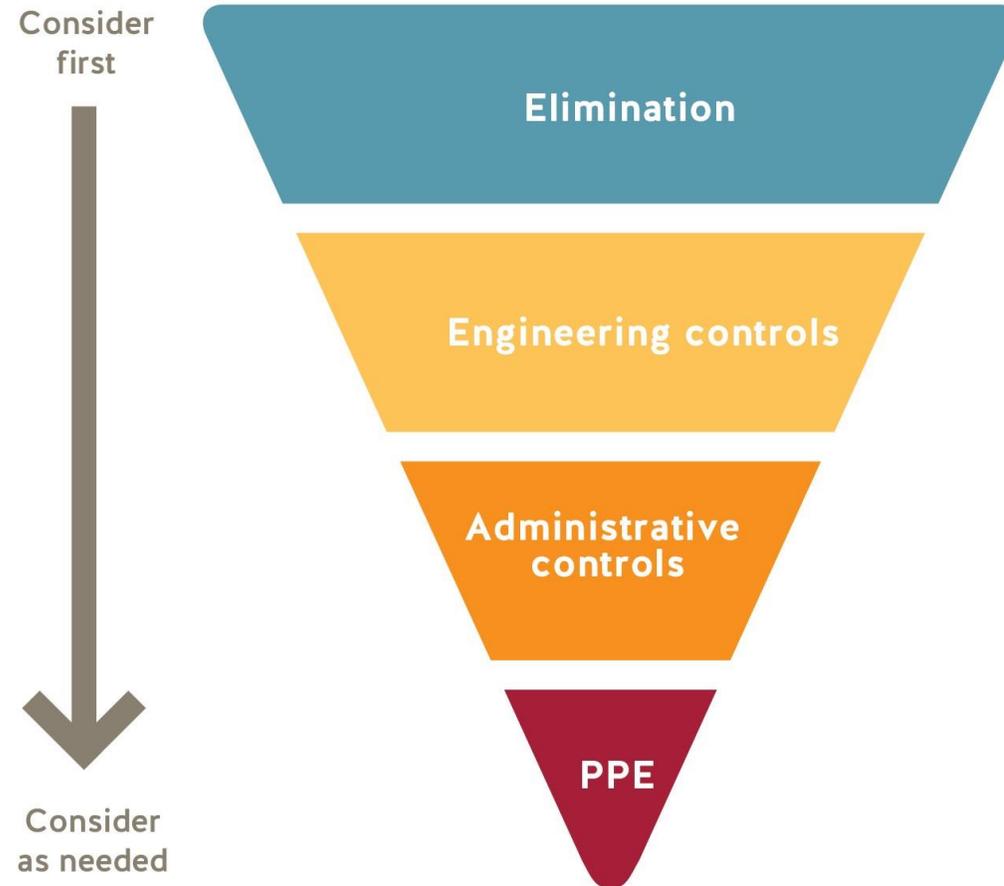
- Work with joint occupational health and safety committee (JOHSC) members or worker representatives to:
 - Identify and find solutions to workplace health and safety issues.
 - Includes concerns about exposure to COVID-19.
 - Joint committees must continue to meet regularly as required under the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation.



Step 2: Implement protocols to reduce the risk

- You must select and put protocols in place to minimize the risk of transmission, with an emphasis on:
 - Maintaining physical distance
 - Other measures where physical distance cannot be maintained
 - Cleaning and hygiene

Selecting protocols for your workplace



Protocols for workers in vehicles

- Limit essential work travel and ban non-essential travel.
 - For instances where work travel is required, consider practices to encourage physical distancing between workers.
 - Follow other preventative measures related to cleaning and hygiene.



Protocols for cleaning and hygiene

- Enhance cleaning and hygiene measures:
 - Provide adequate handwashing facilities.
 - Put up reminders for personal hygiene practices.
 - Provide supplies.
 - Disinfect high-contact areas and items.
 - Remove shared items.
 - Train, supervise, and document.
- ** No definition for “enhanced” cleaning – refer to your own workplace risk assessment and the BCCDC guidelines.



Step 3: Develop policies

- Develop the necessary policies to manage your workplace, including policies around:
 - Who can be at the workplace
 - Rules and policies for working remotely
 - How to address illness that arises at the workplace
 - How workers can be kept safe in adjusted working conditions

Step 4: Communication plans and training

- Ensure that everyone entering the workplace, including workers from other employers, knows how to keep themselves safe while at your workplace.
 - Train everyone on the measures and policies you have put in place.
 - Post signage.
 - Ensure supervisors have been trained on monitoring workers and workplace to ensure policies and procedures are being followed.

Step 5: Monitor workplace and update plans

- Update policies and procedures as needed, involving workers in this process.
- Ensure workers can raise safety concerns.

Step 6: Assess and address risks from resuming operations

- Have you had any staff turnover, or are workers being required to change or adapt job roles, or to use new equipment? Consider training or new employee orientation.
- Will workers need time or training to refresh their skills after having been out of the workplace?
- Have you changed anything about the way you operate, such as the equipment you use or the products you create?
- Are there any processes required for start-up that might introduce risks? Consider the impact of restarting machinery, tools and equipment, or clearing systems and lines of product that may have been left when your business was closed.

COVID-19 Safety Plan Template

- Fillable PDF you can download and save with the details of the plan for your workplace.
- This tool will guide you through a six-step process to help you create your plan.
- Visit www.worksafebc.com/covid-19-resources to access.

WORK SAFE BC COVID-19 Safety Plan

Employers must develop a COVID-19 Safety Plan. To develop your plan, follow the six-step process described at [COVID-19 and returning to safe operation](#).

This planning tool will guide you through the six-step process. Each step has checklists with items you need to address before resuming operations. You may use this document, or another document that meets your needs, to document your COVID-19 Safety Plan.

WorkSafeBC will not be reviewing or approving the plans of individual employers, but in accordance with the order of the Provincial Health Officer, this plan must be posted at the worksite.

Step 1: Assess the risks at your workplace

The virus that causes COVID-19 spreads in several ways. It can spread in droplets when a person coughs or sneezes. It can also spread if you touch a contaminated surface and then touch your face.

The risk of person-to-person transmission increases the closer you come to other people, the more time you spend near them, and the more people you come near.

The risk of surface transmission increases when many people contact the same surface and when those contacts happen over short periods of time.

Involve workers when assessing your workplace

Identify areas where there may be risks, either through close physical proximity or through contaminated surfaces. The closer together workers are and the longer they are close to each other, the greater the risk.

- We have involved frontline workers, supervisors, and the joint health and safety committee (or worker health and safety representative, if applicable).
- We have identified areas where people gather, such as break rooms, production lines, and meeting rooms.
- We have identified job tasks and processes where workers are close to one another or members of the public. This can occur in your workplace, in worker vehicles, or at other work locations (if your workers travel offsite as part of their jobs).
- We have identified the tools, machinery, and equipment that workers share while working.
- We have identified surfaces that people touch often, such as doorknobs, elevator buttons, and light switches.

Step 2: Implement protocols to reduce the risks

Select and implement protocols to minimize the risks of transmission. Look to the following for information, input, and guidance:

- Review industry-specific protocols on worksafebc.com to determine whether any are relevant to your industry. Guidance for additional sectors will be posted as they become available. If protocols are developed specific to your sector, implement these to the extent that they are applicable to the risks at your workplace. You may need to identify and implement additional protocols if the posted protocols don't address all the risks to your workers.
- Frontline workers, supervisors, and the joint health and safety committee (or worker representative).
- Orders, guidance, and notices issued by the provincial health officer and relevant to your industry.
- Your health and safety association or other professional and industry associations.

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What workers should do

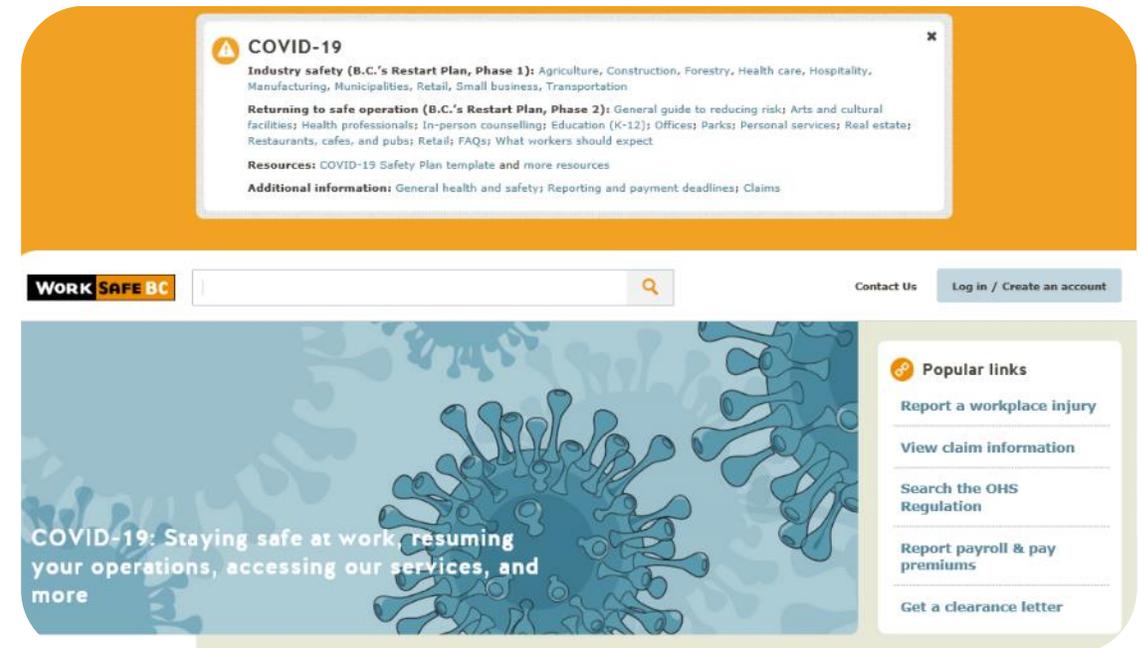
- Know when not to come to work.
- Follow preventative measures while at work:
 - Comply with the employer's instructions around minimizing exposure.
 - Practice physical distancing, cleaning and disinfecting, and personal hygiene.
- Report hazards and refuse unsafe work.
- Take steps to minimize exposure to COVID-19 while away from work.



WorkSafeBC's support

Accessing WorkSafeBC services

- WorkSafeBC has been deemed an essential service.
- Check worksafebc.com for regular updates and announcements.
- We are committed to continuing to provide core services for workers and employers around the province, which includes helping employers prevent workplace injury, illness, and disease.



WorkSafeBC's prevention efforts

Prevention field officers and occupational health and safety consultants are still performing **inspections, education, and consultations.**

Online resources:

- [Inspections during the COVID-19 pandemic: Frequently asked questions for employers](#)
- [Prevention Services data for COVID-19](#)

Refusal of Unsafe Work:

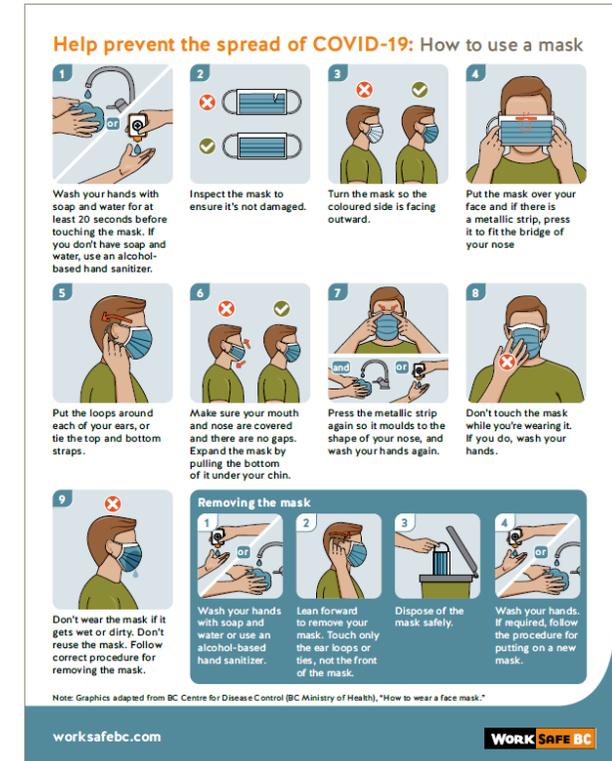
Process found in Occupational Health and Safety [Guideline G3.12](#)

Prevention Information Line:

- Workers and employers can speak to a prevention officer to get answers to questions.
- If required, a prevention officer will be assigned to assess the health and safety risk at your workplace.
- Call **604.276.3100** in the Lower Mainland or **1.888.621.SAFE** toll-free within B.C.

Key WorkSafeBC health & safety resources

- [COVID-19 safety plan template](#)
- [Selecting and using masks info sheet](#)
- [How to use a mask poster](#)
- [Designing effective barriers resource](#)
- [Cleaning and disinfecting info sheet](#)
- [Handwashing poster](#)
- [Occupancy limit poster](#)
- [Entry check for visitors poster](#)
- [Entry check for workers poster](#)
- **Coming soon:** Community Social Services industry specific guidance & YouTube Safety Plan walk-through



Find these and other COVID-19 resources at www.worksafebc.com/covid-19-resources. Translations of resources are also available in Chinese (simplified), Chinese (traditional), French, Punjabi, Spanish, and Vietnamese.

**Psychological health and safety
during a pandemic**

Mental Health: Helping your workers cope

Psychological health is of equal importance to physical health.

Here's how you can help:

- Support the mental well-being of workers by helping them manage stress, anxiety and uncertainty created by the COVID-19 outbreak.
- Leverage existing resources
 - [Managing COVID-19 Stress, Anxiety and Depression](#) (Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions)
 - [Mental Health and Psychosocial Considerations During COVID-19 Outbreak](#) (World Health Organization)
 - [Coronavirus: Managing Stress and Anxiety](#) (Canadian Mental Health Association)
 - [Mental Health and COVID-19](#) (Conference Board of Canada)
 - [Taking Care of Your Mental Health \(COVID-19\)](#) (Public Health Agency of Canada)