

COVID-19 PUBLIC HEALTH PRINCIPLES FOR PUBLIC SPACES

This document will provide guiding principles that will help ensure public health and safety during the COVID-19 pandemic for public spaces, including non-health care workplaces, businesses, or public gathering venues.

Strategies can be adapted to meet the needs of different environments, but these principles should underly all efforts and work.

Screen Staff, Volunteers, Customers, Clients, and Visitors for COVID-19-like symptoms

- All staff and volunteers complete a health screening questionnaire before each work shift. The questions can be completed on paper-based questionnaires or completed electronically.
- For customers, clients or visitors, at a minimum it is recommended that signage be placed at the door informing people that they should only enter the public space if they do not have COVID-19-like symptoms. Customers, clients, or visitors may also be asked questions regarding their symptoms prior to entry, especially if service is provided and individual will be in close contact with others.
- Where service is provided in a one-on-one or small group environment, consider maintaining client logs with contact information.

Review employee attendance policy

- Employers should ensure staff do not come to work sick.
- Have a clear procedure to notify a supervisor if a staff is sick.
- Consider not routinely requiring sick notes.
- If employees become sick with COVID-19 symptoms while at work, they should go home right away and self-isolate.
- Employees can use the self-assessment tool on the SWPH website, call Telehealth or their health care provider or call an Assessment Centre to see if they need testing.
- Establish criteria for returning to work.
 - If employee tested negative for COVID-19 AND they have no known exposure, they can return to work 24 hours after their symptoms subside.
 - Employees can return to work 14 days after their symptoms start if they had COVID-19. There are no tests of clearance that are required to return to work.
- Maintain flexible policies so employees can stay home to care for a sick family member, or if they must quarantine because they were in close contact with a person with COVID-19.

Maximize physical distancing

- Everyone should keep two metres/six feet from other staff and customers as much as possible.
- For staff and volunteers:
 - Use telework or remote work options if available.
 - Stagger shifts or offer flexible work hours and schedules.
 - Where shifts are established, attempt not to mix staff between shifts.
 - Discourage employees from congregating.
 - Ensure physical distancing while in lunchrooms and meeting rooms.
 - Limit use of meeting rooms to only those that can provide adequate distancing.
 - Maximize fresh air exchange where possible.
- For customers and clients:
 - Increase your online or phone services.
 - Plan for curb side delivery.

Modify the physical environment

- Consider installing plexiglas or other barriers where there will be close contact between staff and customers or clients.
- Remove surplus furniture and supplies from walkways to allow ease of movement while maintaining physical distancing.
- Use tape or floor markings to help people maintain two metres/six feet between one another
- Maintain line management and keep everyone two metres apart.
- Use tap features at checkout instead of cash where possible.
- Implement a 'unidirectional' flow of traffic through the facility.

Keep hands clean

- Clean hands by washing with soap and water or using an alcohol-based (70%) hand sanitizer.
- Washing with soap and water is recommended, if hands are visibly dirty.
- Hand sanitizer should be available at facility entrances and exits.
- If gloves are being used, place them in the garbage after removing them, then wash hands.
- Ensure adequate supplies are maintained.

Cleaning and disinfectants

- Commonly used cleaners and disinfectants are effective against COVID-19.
- Ensure frequent cleaning and disinfecting of high-touch surfaces and common areas such door handles, counters, cabinet doors, elevator buttons, light switches, faucets, toilet handles, handrails, touch screen surfaces and keypads.
- Soap, hand sanitizer and/or disinfectant wipes should be available in common areas. If wipes are not available, general disinfectants can be used.
- Only use disinfectants with a Drug Identification Number (DIN) that confirms they are approved for use in Canada. Follow manufacturer's instructions and check the expiry date of products.

Face Coverings

- Face coverings must be used by staff, volunteers, customers, or clients in enclosed public spaces.
- Train staff on proper use and how to safely put them on and take them off.
- Face coverings do not replace other important public health measures, such as hand hygiene and screening for symptoms.
- Not everyone will be able to tolerate a face covering; those who cannot wear a face covering should not be denied service. Please refer to the letter of instruction for more information regarding exemptions.

Responding to a case of COVID-19 in a public space

- People who are sick with COVID-19 are reported to public health by healthcare providers and laboratories. Public health will then investigate to determine if the person may have been exposed, or exposed others to the virus, while in a public space.
- Public Health will advise a workplace or public space of any additional measures needed to reduce the risk of transmission. This may include instructions for staff to self-isolate or self-monitor for COVID-19 symptoms, and/or increase cleaning and disinfecting practices.
- Employers are only informed of a COVID-19 case if there is a public health need, such as the identification of close contacts in the workplace.