

Keeping Workers and Customers Safe During COVID-19

The COVID-19 public health crisis has created an 'evolving new normal' around occupational health and safety. Throughout this pandemic, new information as well as decreases or increases in regional rates of infection have created the need for workplaces to remain responsive and agile based on the information at hand and provincial health directives.



20% of Canadians identify as having some type of disability,
A FACTOR WHICH MAKES MANY MEMBERS OF THIS GROUP MORE VULNERABLE TO THE EFFECTS OF COVID-19

* approximately

The safety needs of customers and workers with disabilities can serve as a benchmark for businesses in their efforts to keep all workers and customers safe during this pandemic.

Safety, Business Continuity and Response

Accessing information from recognized experts in public health and occupational health and safety can help us build the knowledge, strategies and confidence required to maintain safety and remain operational during these very difficult times. The resources currently available through such organizations are extensive and user-friendly. Much of the COVID-safety information for Canadian business is broken down by both province and industry sector.



COVID-19 Safety Plan

Developing and implementing such a plan is an important step in keeping your workplace safe for everyone. It also helps to diminish the threat this pandemic poses to your workplace while supporting business continuity.

A good COVID-19 safety plan outlines the ways in which your business and its workers will minimize the risk of COVID-19 transmission in your workplace, including:

- Communication needs – How will changes and precautions be communicated to everyone in the workplace, including customers, workers and suppliers?
- Physical distancing needs – How can your workplace be organized and arranged for physical distancing? (Spacing of workstations, traffic flow, curbside service, etc.)
- Operations and processes – What changes can your business make to ensure safety and business continuity during COVID? (Work-from-home policies, virtual meetings, etc.)
- Sanitation and reduced contagion – What cleaning and hand sanitation protocols will you put in place? What mask protocols will keep your staff and customers safe?

Tip: Employers should consider communication accessibility and how information is being shared.

Government restrictions and mandates have legal priority. To ensure compliance, your COVID safety plan will need to take provincial and municipal directives into consideration.

Sources

1. “COVID-19 Tool Kit.” Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety, [CCOHS: COVID-19 Health and Safety Resources](#). Accessed 16 December 2020.
2. “Flu and Infectious Disease Outbreaks Business Continuity Plan.” Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety, [CCOHS: Flu and Infectious Disease Outbreaks Business Continuity Plan](#). Accessed 16 December 2020.
3. “How businesses and employees can stay safe while operating during COVID-19.” Government of Canada, [COVID-19: How businesses and employees can stay safe while operating - Canada.ca](#). Accessed 16 December 2020.
4. “Develop your COVID-19 workplace safety plan.” Ontario, [Develop your COVID-19 workplace safety plan | Ontario.ca](#). Accessed 16 December 2020.
5. “Digital government response to COVID-19.” Government of Canada, [Digital government response to COVID-19 - Canada.ca](#). Accessed 16 December 2020.
6. “Vulnerable population and COVID-19.” Government of Canada, [Vulnerable populations and COVID-19 - Canada.ca](#). Accessed 16 December 2020.
7. “Accommodation and Compliance: Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19).” Job Accommodation Network, [Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) \(askjan.org\)](#). Accessed 16 December 2020.