

SAFETY PLAN Resource Guide

Ontario's [COVID-19 Response Framework: Keeping Ontario Safe and Open](#), updated on Nov. 22th of this year, requires that **the following workplaces** have a [safety plan](#) if they are in communities in the Protect (yellow), Restrict (orange) or Control (red) zone:

- Restaurants, bars, and food or drink establishments;
- Sports and recreational facilities;
- Meeting and event spaces;
- Malls;
- Personal care services;
- Casinos, bingo halls, and other gaming establishments;
- Cinemas; and
- Performing arts facilities.

All businesses that are open during Lockdown (grey zone) are required to have Safety Plans.

Your safety plan helps you to organize and carry out all the actions necessary to keep your workplace as safe as possible and deal with COVID-19 cases that may occur in your employees or customers.

Your safety plan is required by law under the *Reopening Ontario Act*, and there are potential financial penalties for not having one.

There are key elements to all safety plans:

Active Screening

Active screening involves making sure every employee and customer is asked a series of questions about COVID-19 symptoms and any travel or exposure to COVID-19 cases they may have. If someone has one or more COVID-19 symptoms or exposure to a COVID-19 case, they should not be allowed to work (if an employee) or come into your business (if a customer, supplier or contractor). A number of workplace outbreaks have been the result of employees with mild symptoms not being detected and continuing to work, emphasizing the importance of active screening.

Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) Measures

These are the well-recognized steps to prevent the spread of COVID-19 infections, and involve wearing masks, physical distancing, hand hygiene and what's called respiratory etiquette – coughing or sneezing into tissues or your sleeve. Why are these important? While active screening is vital, it will not identify:

- individuals with asymptomatic COVID-19 infections, i.e. people who are infectious but who have no symptoms of infection;
- individuals with pre-symptomatic COVID-19 infections, i.e. people who are infectious for two or three days before they develop COVID-19 symptoms.

IPAC measures are vital steps to protect you, your employees and your customers.

Cleaning and Disinfection

While the most likely route of COVID-19 transmission is from person-to-person spread of infected respiratory droplets when people are close together, contaminated surfaces may also spread the virus. An emphasis on cleaning and disinfecting commonly touched surfaces with an approved disinfectant is an important infection control measure.

COVID-19 Cases in Your Workplace

It is possible that you will have someone in your workplace in the coming week/months who contracts COVID-19, an employee, a customer, a supplier. The resources Hamilton Public Health Services (HPHS) is providing will help guide you in responding to such a situation. But we are not expecting you to be a Public Health professional and be totally comfortable with what you must do. We strongly urge that you call or email Hamilton Public Health Services (HPHS) as soon and as often as necessary!

Most of the resources required to develop this Safety Plan can be found the [Ministry Website](#). Hamilton Public Health Services has created this additional resource, with sample answers for the six questions in the Provincial Safety Plan, to help with the development of your plan.

The six questions in the Safety Plan that correspond to our answers below include:

- How will you ensure all workers know how and are able to keep themselves safe from exposure to COVID-19?
- How will you screen for COVID-19?
- How will you control the risk of transmission in your workplace?
- What will you do if there is a potential case of, or suspected exposure to, COVID-19 at your workplace?
- How will you manage any new risks caused by changes to the way you operate your business?
- How will you make sure your plan is working?

This is question #1 in your safety plan

1. Factors to consider for ensuring employees know how and can keep safe from exposure:

Factors to consider for keeping employees and customers safe from exposure	Description
Screening – active screening is now mandatory for all workplaces	<p>Screen all individuals daily prior to entering workplace</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider using the Ministry online COVID-19 self-assessment tool OR • Consider using the Screening Tool for Workplaces Or • Create your own tool but it MUST contain all of the questions from the Screening Tool for Workplaces and must be kept updated by periodically checking this webpage.
Employee Education – training/re-training on procedures	<p>Education for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ COVID-19 symptoms ○ COVID-19 management ○ Public Health Practices/Hierarchy of Controls ○ Videos for hierarchy of controls, handwashing and wearing a face-covering, <p>Workplaces should post the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Face-covering requirements ○ Passive screening signs <p>Workplace could also consider posting information for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Hand-washing/hand-sanitizing ○ Respiratory etiquette ○ How to wear a face covering ○ Workplace hygiene ○ Workplace PPE requirements <p>Employees should be made aware of what to do if feeling unsafe at work and should be informed of support available to them:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ontario’s Health and Safety Contact Centre – 1-877-202-0008 ○ Public Health Number – Hamilton Public Health Services 905 974 9848
Workplace Policy Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop policies to support individuals needing to stay home when unwell or if they are required to self-isolate due to COVID infection or as a close contact.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post in a visible place (virtual and/or physical) and ensure employees are aware of policies and how to access them • Ensure information is available in languages spoken in workplace.
Know and follow your own sector-specific requirements, regulations and by-laws	Links to: Sector-Specific guidance Provincial Regulations- Reopening Ontario & O. Reg. 263/20: Rules for Areas in Stage 2 Face covering By-law Ontario Occupational Health and Safety Act Ontario Workplace Safety and Insurance Act
Provide employees with resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remind employees about available social and mental health support resources
Communicate clearly and often with employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate important safety measures, public health measures and workplace policies via emails, workplace social media, or announce at virtual team meetings or through intercom announcements. • Post your safety plan and other important documents in a common and visible area in your workplace.

This is question #2
in your Safety Plan

2. Screening for COVID-19

Screen all individuals (workers, volunteers, suppliers and contractors) daily prior to entering the workplace. Screening may be done in-person, online or verbally.

- Consider using the Ministry online [COVID-19 self-assessment tool](#)
OR
- Consider using the [Screening Tool for Workplaces](#)
Or
- Create your own tool/platform but it MUST contain all of the questions from the workplace screening tool and you must describe how you will ensure that it remains up-to-date. Should an update be posted, you will be able to find it on this [website](#) (under ‘Symptoms, Screening and Testing Resources’).

Workplaces must be able to demonstrate that they have implemented a screening system and that it is working as intended. While there is no specific guidance for maintaining screening records, an inspector will need to be able to determine compliance with the law. Workplaces can consider various ways of demonstrating that they are compliant with the screening requirements,

including by keeping a daily record of individuals who were screened (if you are keeping contact tracing records, this can be recorded on the same form).

In addition to active screening a [sign](#) should be posted at the entrance reminding ill employees, clients or customers not to enter the workplace if they have COVID-19 symptoms.

Temperature checks are neither required nor recommended.

Your response to this question should contain the following information:

- Where and how is the screening tool accessed and completed?
- If online, where is it sent? Who verifies that it has been completed and that the employee is safe to enter the workplace?
- If it is a paper-based screen, where is it completed? who reviews it and authorizes entrance to the workplace? Where and how are these results stored?
- If verbal questions are asked re: symptoms and exposures where and who completes this? Where and how is the information stored?

e.g. #1: Sample response for Safety Plan: All individuals entering the workplace will be screened daily. The workplace will create an online template with the same questions from the Screening Tool for Workplaces. Our Human Resources department is responsible for checking on a weekly basis that the questions on our platform continue to match those from the Screening Tool for Workplaces. Employees will be required to complete daily screening before attending work. An email will automatically be sent to a supervisor with screening results (and if screening has not been completed) to determine work suitability. The supervisor is responsible for ensuring that no member of their team enters the workplace unscreened. Employees also sign an attestation form that they will complete daily self-screening and will follow the results of the screening tool as a condition of their continued employment at our company. Results are stored in a password protected database.

e.g. #2 Sample Response for Safety Plan: Our door is kept locked with a sign that informs employees and customers to text reception or use the buzzer on the left-hand side of the door when they arrive. Employees and customers will be screened verbally prior to entering the workplace by _____ (enter name of job title/individual responsible for screening) using the provincial list of COVID-19 symptoms. Our front door also displays a poster reminding individuals not feeling well not to enter. Results will be documented by the person screening on the same paper where contact tracing information is kept. This information will be stored securely for 30 days in a locked filing cabinet after which time it will be shredded. Individuals who fail the screening will not be allowed into the workplace.

3. Controlling the risk of transmission in your workplace

a. Physical Distancing and Barriers

All individuals should aim to have a space of 2 metres (6 feet) between themselves and others.

When it is not possible to ensure that workers are able physically distance from co-workers, customers, and others, consider [using barriers](#) to separate people.

Practices your workplace may already be doing or could consider to lower the risk of COVID-19 spread:

- Offer telecommuting or work from home options for employees.
- Develop options for clients to interact with employees in a non-crowded manner or use online platforms
- Restrict the number of individuals allowed into the workplace to allow for physical distancing and adequate flow of movement
- Reduce the number of individuals in elevators and stairwells at a given time
- Rearrange furniture to ensure that employees/staff are spaced apart
- Stagger start and end times and schedule different break times to reduce large numbers of people coming together at the same time.
- Promote contactless payment and delivery/pick-up options
- Develop policies that restrict the amount of time individuals can remain in a particular space (e.g. retail customers are asked to limit the amount of time that they browse to x minutes)

b. PPE & Source control masking

- Ensure clients, customers and visitors to your workplace are reminded of the [By-law](#) requirement to wear a face covering in enclosed public places
- [Post face-covering requirements](#) in a visible spot for others to see upon entering the establishment
- Follow the PPE requirements as per [sector-specific guidance](#) and [Regulations](#) for your establishment

c. [Hygiene practices in the workplace](#)

- Display posters promoting [hand-washing](#) and [respiratory etiquette](#) strategically in the workplace
- Where soap and water are not available, supply hand sanitizer and remind customers and staff to wash hands frequently
- Regularly [clean and disinfect](#) high-touch surfaces such as point of sale transaction equipment, elevator buttons, keyboards, mouse, phones, desks, computers, door knobs, light switches, seating areas, lunch tables, kitchens, and washrooms.
- Use cleaners and disinfectants that are effective against COVID-19. No brands are better as long as they are effective. These will have a Drug Identification Number (DIN) and be approved by Health Canada. A searchable list can be found [here](#).

d. Ventilation

- The risk of COVID-19 transmission is higher in more enclosed and crowded spaces. You should ensure that air-handling (HVAC) systems are maintained according to the manufacturer’s instructions and meet [industry guidelines and standards](#).
- If the weather permits and if it is safe to do so, open a window or a loading dock door to promote input of outdoor air.
- Where possible, turn off ceiling fans and adjust fans and portable air conditioners to direct airflow upwards, away from surfaces and occupants.
- Continue ventilation and air exchange after regular business hours (e.g. consider running HVAC before and after spaces are occupied, in accordance with manufacturing recommendations).
- Use available outdoor space whenever possible (for example, for meetings, breaks, client interactions such as curbside pick-up).

This is question #4 in your Safety Plan

4. Management of a potential case or exposure in the workplace

Management of a potential case or exposure of COVID-19 in the workplace
Direct individual feeling unwell to stay home (if at home) or to go home (if at work), self-isolate and book testing
If your workplace has a designated isolation area, ask the individual to wait there if necessary, e.g. if the person needs to wait to be picked up. Ideally the isolation area should have a door and provide a safe space for someone to wait without exposing others.
Clean and disinfect areas where the unwell individual was located and any surfaces they may have contacted as soon as possible. Follow public health advice for enhanced cleaning and disinfection measures to reduce the risk of spread in the setting.
Call Hamilton Public Health Services 905 974 9848 option 4 for further guidance/advice as required
IF CONFIRMED COVID-19 positive case
Call Hamilton Public Health at the number above for direction and support. Public Health will help determine if your employee was careful and consistent in using a mask while at work, during breaks and meals, and if they were able to practice physical distancing and hand hygiene regularly. Employees in close contact (less than 2 metres away and without a medically-certified mask - especially for a prolonged period of time, e.g. 15 minutes or more) with the case, have had potential exposure and will need to self-isolate.
Keep a list with names and contact information for each person in your workplace who had or may have had contact with the unwell individual. This list should be ready and made available if requested by Public Health. This information must be kept for at least 30 days and must be stored privately and securely (e.g. in a locked cabinet or password protected database) before being destroyed in a safe manner, e.g. shredding.

Communicate clearly and often with your other employees while keeping the personal health information of the employee with COVID-19 confidential. In a small workplace, others may know who this employee is, however as an employer you must do everything you can to safeguard the personal health information of your employees. A sample communication can be found on our [website](#) (under “Common questions about COVID-19 exposure and outbreaks”).

Report to the [Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development](#) within 4 calendar days and [Workplace Safety and Insurance Board](#) (WSIB) within 3 calendar days if you were advised that one of your employees has tested positive due to an exposure at the workplace.

- For more information please contact the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development: Employment Standards Information Centre: Toll-free: 1-800-531-5551
- For more information please contact the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board Telephone: 416-344-1000 or Toll-free: 1-800-387-0750

Allow your employee to return to work after 10 days since the start of their symptoms or, if they didn’t have symptoms, since the date of their test, as long as they no longer have fever and symptoms are improving or resolved. Other workers who were close contacts (regardless if they test COVID-positive or COVID-negative) may only return to work after the 14 day [self-isolation](#) period. **Do not require a repeat test or physician note as a condition of return.**

5. Managing new business risks that may arise from COVID-19

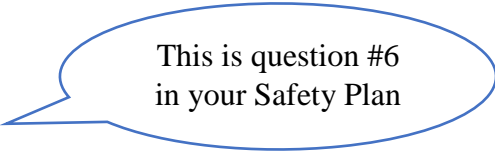
This is question #5
in your Safety Plan

Each workplace will need to determine their unique risks and challenges that may arise as a result of your planning for COVID-19 or from the infection itself. Below is an example of some common risks:

Examples of common risks	Examples of risk mitigation strategies
Increased employee absences as a result of infection, the need to self-isolate or to care for others in their family who have COVID-19 infection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of flexible workplace policies to support employee absences. • Cross-training of staff in other departments based on a predicted absentee rate. • Reduce the burden of requiring sick notes as these are difficult for employees to get and create added stress. • Ability for staff to transition to remote work if needed.
Employee stress and job transitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental well-being resources emailed frequently and easily accessible from company website. • Job transitions supported by management, skill-training program, and weekly check-in meetings

Financial strain due to the impacts of the pandemic on your business as well as your ability to supply necessary PPE and personnel needed for increased safety requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aware of available financial support for businesses • Aware of how to source PPE for businesses
Remote work – ergonomics and internet connectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workplace has allowed individuals to borrow personal chairs and computer monitors from offices • IT department has ensured secure internet access for employees working remotely

6. Ensuring your plan is working



This is question #6
in your Safety Plan

Factors you could consider to ensure that your business can remain both safe and open include:

Review of	Frequency of Review	By Whom
Safety Plan		
Operations (day-to-day management of establishment) -staff meeting -survey feedback etc.		
Communications – employee & patron/staff		
Contact Tracing Process/ recording the names of each patron -process of safely storing information -process for safely destroying information		