

## Conducting a hazard assessment and developing a safety plan

In order to limit exposure to COVID-19, employers must complete a hazard assessment and follow the hierarchy of controls to determine appropriate preventative measures for their specific:

- workplace setting
- workers
- contractors
- clients

This planning tool will guide you through six steps in the process of conducting a hazard assessment and developing an appropriate safety plan.

Personal information must not be included in a safety plan. Personal information is any recorded information that uniquely identifies a person, such as a person's name, age, sex, race, religion, sexual orientation, disability, blood type, criminal or employment history, financial information, education or health information.

### 1. Step one: Assess the hazards in your workplace

COVID-19 spreads in several ways. It can be transmitted from person-to-person via coughing and sneezing (droplet transmission). It can also be spread by touching contaminated surfaces and then touching your mouth, nose or eyes before washing or sanitizing your hands. While it is not yet known exactly how long COVID-19 lives on surfaces, preliminary evidence suggests it can live on objects and surfaces from a few hours to several days.

**Involve workers when assessing the workplace.** Identify areas where there may be potential risks of COVID-19 exposure either through close physical proximity or through contaminated surfaces.

#### Checklist

- We have involved frontline workers, supervisors, managers and occupational health committee (OHC) members or occupational health and safety representatives.
- We have done a walkthrough of the workplace to identify specific conditions or tasks that may increase the risk of worker exposure.
- 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 to members of the public. This can occur in your workplace, in worker vehicles or at other work locations.
- 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, faucets and light switches.

## **2. Step two: Implement protocols to reduce the hazards**

Implement protocols to minimize the risks of transmission. The following information may provide some guidance:

- Review the industry specific guidelines available in the [Re-open Saskatchewan Plan](#) to determine if any are relevant to your industry.
- If guidelines are available specific to your sector or industry, implement these where they are applicable to the hazards at your workplace. You may also need to implement additional control measures to address the hazards to your workers.
- Implement and follow public health orders, guidance and recommendations in the [Re-open Saskatchewan Plan](#).
- Follow the guidelines or protocols from your health and safety association or other professional industry associations. Limitations of the implemented infection control measures should be identified in the protocol.

### **Reduce the hazard of person-to-person transmission by implementing controls**

To reduce the risk of the virus spreading, implement protocols to protect against identified hazards. Whenever possible, use the protocols that offer the highest levels of protection. This may mean you need to incorporate controls from various levels to address all of the hazards in your workplace.

#### **First level of protection: Elimination**

Use policies and procedures to follow the public health orders. Limit the number of people in your workplace at any one time and ensure physical distancing wherever possible. Rearrange work spaces or reschedule work tasks to ensure that workers are two metres apart from one another and from customers.

## Checklist

- We have established and posted occupancy limits for our workplace, including break rooms, meeting rooms, washrooms, elevators, photocopy spaces, storage rooms, etc.
- We have considered work-from-home arrangements, virtual meetings, rescheduling tasks and limiting the number of customers or visitors in the workplace.
- We have implemented measures to keep workers at least two metres apart wherever possible.

## Second level of protection: Engineering controls

If you cannot maintain physical distancing, install barriers and partitions to separate people.

## Checklist

- We have installed barriers in situations where workers can't completely keep two metres distance from coworkers, customers or others.
- We have included barrier cleaning in our cleaning protocols.
- We have installed the barriers so that they do not introduce other hazards to the workers (for example, barriers installed inside a vehicle don't affect the safe operation of the vehicle).

## Third level of protection: Administrative controls

Establish rules and guidelines, such as posted occupancy for shared spaces, a designated delivery area and one-way doors or walkways, to keep people physically separated.

## Checklist

- We have identified rules and guidelines for how workers must conduct themselves.
- We have policies and procedures for handwashing.
- Our workplace has enough handwashing facilities/stations for all staff.
- We have reviewed the information and protocols for cleaning and disinfecting surfaces and shared spaces (washrooms, doorknobs, light switches, etc.).
- We have sufficient cleaning materials and staff have been trained to use them. The chemical product labels are visible on the cleaning solutions.
- We have removed unnecessary tools and equipment to simplify cleaning processes (coffee makers, shared utensils, etc.).

- We have clearly communicated the rules and guidelines to workers through a combination of training and signage.

#### **Fourth level of protection: Personal protective equipment**

If the first three levels of protection are not enough to control the hazard, consider the use of personal protective equipment (PPE). Ensure workers are using PPE appropriately.

[Non-medical masks or face coverings](#) are **not** PPE. If they are used in a workplace setting, be aware of their limitations. The provincial government has [guidelines on the use of non-medical masks or face coverings](#).

#### **Checklist**

- We have reviewed information on how to use the PPE provided.
- We understand the limitations that PPE has in providing protection and how they need to be used in combination with other control measures.
- We have trained employees on how to use PPE.

Employers must conduct a hazard assessment with their OHC or occupational health and safety representative to ensure that any control measures implemented are not introducing new hazards for the workers in a workplace setting.

### **3. Step three: Develop policies**

Develop the necessary policies to manage your workplace, including policies around who can be at the workplace, how to address illness that arises at the workplace and how to keep the workers safe in adjusted working conditions. Having a policy around what an investigation looks like when a worker tests positive for COVID-19 is also recommended.

#### **Checklist**

- Our workplace policies ensure that workers and others showing symptoms of COVID-19 are prohibited from entering the workplace.
- Our policies prohibit anyone who is required to self-isolate from entering the workplace.
- Our policies address visitors coming to the workplace.
- First aid attendants, if applicable, have been provided with the appropriate protocols for COVID-19.
- We have an investigation policy for work-related COVID-19 exposure incidents that protects the confidentiality of the exposed worker.

- We have a working alone policy (if needed).
- We have a work from home policy (if needed).
- We have strategies and training to address the risk of violence that may arise as individuals adapt to restrictions or modifications to the workplace.
- Our workplace has policies around what to do if workers believe that they have been exposed to COVID-19.

Our policy to address workers who start to feel ill at work includes:

- Directions for sick workers to report to first aid if applicable, even with mild symptoms.
- Directions for sick workers to wash or sanitize their hands, be provided with a mask and isolated. Direct the workers to go straight home and call the Saskatchewan HealthLine at 811 for further guidance. If the worker is severely ill, call 911.
- Clean and disinfect any surfaces that an ill worker has come into contact with.

#### **4. Step four: Develop communications plans and training**

You must ensure that everyone entering the workplace, including workers from other employers, knows how to keep themselves, and those around them, safe while at your workplace. This plan must be in writing and available to workers.

##### **Checklist**

- We have a training plan to ensure everyone is trained on our policies and procedures, including identifying limitations of infection control measures.
- All workers have received the policies for staying home when ill.
- We have posted signage at the workplace, including occupancy limits and effective hygiene practices.
- We have posted signage at the main entrance indicating who is restricted from entering the premises, including visitors and workers who have symptoms.
- Supervisors have been trained on monitoring workers and the workplace to ensure policies and procedures are being followed.

#### **5. Step five: Monitor your workplace and update plans as necessary**

As you continue to operate your business, things may change. You may identify new areas of concern or need to address a process that isn't working. Involve your employees and OHC or occupational health and safety representatives in reviewing and updating policies and processes.

## Checklist

- We have a plan in place to monitor hazards.
- We make changes to policies and procedures as necessary.
- Workers know who to go to with health and safety concerns.
- When resolving safety issues, we involve employees and OHCs or occupational health and safety representatives.
- Our policies include escalations to address individuals who may not be following procedures.

## 6. Step six: Assess and address hazards after resuming operation

If your business has not been operating during the COVID-19 pandemic, you may need to manage the hazards associated with resuming or reopening your business.

### Checklist

- We have a training plan for new staff.
- We have a training plan for staff taking on new responsibilities.
- We have a training plan around changes to our business and how we operate.
- We have reviewed the startup requirements for equipment, machinery and vehicles that have been out of use for any period of time.
- We have identified a safe process for cleaning systems and lines of production that have been out of use.