

COVID-19 NOVEL CORONAVIRUS

Workplace guidance for business owners

Information has been developed to support businesses permitted to operate as per Manitoba's Pandemic and Economic Roadmap for Recovery, while reducing the risk of transmission of COVID-19 among employees, volunteers and patrons.

NOTE: This document does not contain sector-specific guidance but rather, provides overarching advice applicable to all businesses. This guidance document does not include recommendations for health care facilities and employees; separate resources are available at: <https://sharedhealthmb.ca/covid19/providers/>.

As the COVID-19 outbreak continues to evolve, this information is subject to change and is not intended to exempt employers from existing workplace health and safety requirements. Under the Workplace Safety and Health Act, employees have the right to refuse work that they reasonably believe is a danger to their safety and health, or that of another person.

General Guidance

Where feasible and practical, businesses are encouraged to:

- Maintain teleworking arrangements (teleconferencing and video conferencing), and allow employees to work from home or work flexible hours and/or stagger start times to avoid peak public transportation times or crowding in the workplace.
- Provide goods by delivery or pick-up that have been ordered online, by telephone or other remote means.
- Assign employees who are at increased risk of serious illness from COVID-19 (such as people with a weakened immune system, living with a chronic disease or aged 60 years or older) to job tasks that lowers their risk of exposure.
- Review sick-leave policies and requirements for medical (sick) notes to encourage employees to stay home when ill.
- Ensure emergency contact information is current for all employees.

- Encourage employees who are required to report for work in-person to take public transit during non-peak times as much as possible. Alternatively, support employees as much as possible to use a personal vehicle to get to work.
- Identify an area that an employee can self-isolate in and develop a plan, if they become ill while at work.
- Review job-specific training requirements, particularly in situations where employees are completing unfamiliar job tasks.
- Consider keeping regular work groups together to minimize the number of workplace contacts.
- Encourage employees to take measures to support their mental health and well-being, by providing employees with information about supports available to them at: <https://www.gov.mb.ca/covid19/bewell/index.html>.

Communicating with Employees, Volunteers and Patrons

- Encourage employees and volunteers to use screening information in the provincial [self-screening tool](#) before leaving their home to attend work.
- Post guidance on entrance requirements including screening information, to your facility for all employees, volunteers and patrons.
 - Do not allow patrons who are exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 to enter the premises.
 - Employees, volunteers or patrons identified as symptomatic should be instructed to call Health Links - Info Santé (204-788-8200 or 1-888-315-9257).
 - In situations where appointments are required, patrons should also be screened by telephone before an appointment is booked, and again upon arrival.
- Emphasize that employees must stay home if they are experiencing [symptoms of COVID-19](#) (such as cough, fever, runny nose, sore throat, breathing difficulties). Information about what employers can do to help employees who are experiencing symptoms can be found at: https://www.gov.mb.ca/asset_library/en/coronavirus/workplace_responsibilities.pdf.
- Encourage employees and volunteers to remain current with information related to COVID-19 by regularly accessing manitoba.ca/COVID19.
- Reassure employees and volunteers that public health officials will conduct a public health investigation in the event an employee or volunteer is confirmed to have COVID-19 while at work during the time they were infectious. If any additional measures need to be taken at the workplace, public health officials will notify the workplace directly and provide advice.

- Do not make determinations of risk for COVID-19 based on race or country of origin and be sure to maintain confidentiality if an employee is confirmed to have COVID-19.
- Notify employees and volunteers of the steps being taken to prevent the risk of transmission of infection, the importance of their roles in these measures, and post this information in areas where employees and volunteers can refer to them.

Physical (Social) Distancing

- Provide employees and volunteers with information about physical (social) distancing.
- Post external signs indicating COVID-19 physical distancing protocols, along with floor markings, where service is provided or lines form.
- Maintain a single point of entry and ensure entry into the facility or place of business, including lines, are regulated to prevent congestion.
- Implement waiting room management strategies, including waiting in a car (where applicable), to ensure people maintain a two metre distance.
- Actively discourage the congregation of people and limit the areas where people gather or frequent. In situations where people congregate, ensure no more than 10 people gather in a common area, and that they maintain a two metre distance.
- Monitor occupancy levels to allow employees, volunteers and patrons to maintain a physical distance of at least two metres, except for brief exchanges. All non-essential businesses are required to limit occupancy to 50 per cent of normal business levels or one person per 10 square metres, whichever is lower.
 - Restaurants are required to limit occupancy on patios to 50 per cent of normal business levels and customers must maintain a distance of at least two metres from each other. This includes common areas and spacing between tables.
- Increase spatial separation and distance between workstations and shared spaces.
- Encourage cashless or no-contact payment to the greatest extent possible.
- Close public-use items, such as water fountains, onsite snack bars, coffee bars and other confectionery style counters.
- Where feasible and practical, consider using outdoor spaces. When indoors, ensure ventilation systems are working properly, and open windows as weather permits.
- Install plexiglas or other form of physical enclosures or barriers to separate employees and patrons, particularly in instances where a two metre distance cannot be consistently maintained.

Hygiene for Employees, Volunteers and Patrons

Good hygiene will provide significant protection from COVID-19. Businesses should ensure alcohol-based hand sanitizer is available at entrances and exits for employee, volunteer and patron use. Information should be posted in multiple locations, reminding employees, volunteers and patrons to:

- Wash their hands often with soap and warm water for at least 15 seconds, or use an alcohol-based hand cleanser. People should clean their hands when they enter and exit the building, before and after they eat, and after using the washroom. Employees and volunteers should be encouraged to take frequent breaks to clean their hands.
- Cover their mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing, or cough or sneeze into their sleeve. Ensure boxes of tissues and plastic-lined garbage bins are available for use by employees, volunteers and patrons, and include signage instructing people to clean their hands.
- Avoid touching their eyes, nose or mouth.
- Avoid sharing personal items (such as cups/dishes/cutlery and cigarettes), office equipment or supplies, including electronic devices (such as phones, tablets and laptops).

Cleaning Guidance

- Ensure there is a routine regime in place for overall sanitation of the workplace, including frequently cleaning and sanitizing washrooms.
- Discard equipment, instruments and/or materials that cannot be disinfected between patrons and sanitize shared surfaces, tools and equipment before/after use as well as in between users.
- Remove any unnecessary high-touch surfaces or items (magazines, newspapers, toys) that cannot be easily cleaned from common areas (such as break rooms and waiting areas)
- Regularly clean workstations and objects with disinfectants that are touched frequently, such as doorknobs, handles, elevator buttons and railings. This includes regularly disinfecting electronic devices (such as phones, tablets, laptops and payment devices) with an alcohol (70 per cent) wipe. Businesses are encouraged to increase the frequency of cleaning workstations and worksites to at least two times per day.
 - Provide cleaning supplies for employees to clean and disinfect their workspaces.
- Limit the number of incoming deliveries to those that are deemed essential. Consider leaving deliveries (packages, boxes and envelopes) unopened for a

few days, and be sure to remind employees and volunteers not to touch their face and to clean their hands after handling and/or unwrapping deliveries.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- Personal protective equipment (PPE) should be used on the advice of an organization's occupational health and safety officer/designate and is based on a risk assessment that considers both the risk associated with a specific task/activity as well as the characteristics of the source of the infection (e.g. a sick person or a contaminated environment). Most businesses will not require PPE.
- PPE must be used in combination with physical distancing, hand hygiene and other control measures.
- If PPE is required, employees and volunteers will be supplied the PPE as well as given the occupational health and safety guidelines for its use.
 - PPE must be maintained and in good condition at all times to perform the functions it was designed for.
 - Employees and volunteers must be properly trained in putting it on, taking it off, care, disposal and storage, as well as cleaning of PPE.
 - Employees should be aware that risk may increase if not using consistent and appropriate techniques.
- PPE guidance for the health sector is available at: <https://sharedhealthmb.ca/covid19/providers/ppe-resources/>, and may provide further guidance for applicable workplace settings.
- **IMPORTANT NOTE:** medical masks (procedural/surgical masks and N-95 respirators) are urgently required for health care settings. The use of respirators (e.g., N-95 respirators) are not recommended, except in healthcare settings when particular high risk procedures are being performed or, in other industries when respirators are routinely used. Use in other settings should be minimized.
- Wearing a non-medical mask has not been proven to protect the person wearing it. However, the use of a non-medical mask can reduce the chance that others are coming into contact with respiratory droplets by **covering your mouth and nose to prevent respiratory droplets from spreading to others or landing on surfaces.**
- Gloves are not routinely recommended. They are required when employees and volunteers will be in direct contact with an ill person, or a contaminated object or environment. When gloves are used, they must be properly disposed of following their use, and the wearer should immediately wash their hands after removing them.
 - Some service providers may choose to wear protective gloves when providing service, particularly when close touch or contact is involved.

- Eye protection/face shields are to be used when required for the work.

If a two-metre distance cannot be reliably maintained between individuals in the workplace:

- Minimize these interactions to be as brief as possible.
- Use barriers, where possible.
- Increase ventilation, where possible.
- Increase environmental cleaning and hand hygiene.
- Consider cohorting workers into smaller work groups.
- Consider using medical or non-medical masks (e.g., homemade cloth masks) during those interactions, depending on the setting.
 - Workers with direct public access can use medical masks if available. If medical masks are not available, non-medical masks can be used.
 - Where there is no direct public access, the above measures should be utilized to reduce risk and the number of workers they are exposed to. Non-medical masks can be used by the worker.

Enforcement

- Public health and state of emergency orders for businesses are enforced by public health inspectors, occupational health and safety officers and by-law officers. Police, as well as provincial and First Nations peace officers, will enforce orders related to public gatherings.
- Penalties for violations for individuals or corporations under the legislation range from fines of up to \$50,000 or \$500,000 and/or six months or up to a year imprisonment. Tickets can also be issued for violations under any of the orders in the amount of \$486 for individuals and \$2,542 for corporations.
- Officials will continue with the system of escalating enforcement, including education, warnings and tickets.

Resources

- Signs should be posted in multiple locations, providing employees, volunteers and patrons with information on proper hand hygiene, cough etiquette, screening and social distancing.

Several printable resources including posters and factsheets, are available online at: manitoba.ca/covid19/resources/index.html and <https://sharedhealthmb.ca/covid19/providers/posters/>.