

# Infrastructure Health and Safety Association Guidance on handling and receiving packages (all persons at work or at home) during COVID-19

## Overview

During the COVID-19 (coronavirus) outbreak, we all need to do our part to keep workers, customers and the public safe and healthy so we can stop the spread and prepare to reopen the province, when we are ready.

Below is a set of resources, tips and best practices to help employers and employees prevent the spread of COVID-19 and work together to reopen the province.

Employers and workers in Ontario have certain duties and rights under the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA) and its regulations. Employers should also review and follow any applicable directives and guidance coming from the Chief Medical Officer of Health and Ministry of Health.

Learn more about:

- [workers' rights](#)
- [employers' responsibilities](#)

## Best practices

**Recognize hazards and assess risks:** The first step to controlling risks in a workplace is to identify the risks. This applies to all workplace hazards, not just COVID-19. Identifying and controlling workplace hazards is required of all employers in Ontario under the [Occupational Health and Safety Act](#) and its regulations.

Some important COVID-19 risk information includes how it is spread and what can increase the risk of a worker becoming infected. COVID-19 can be spread at the workplace in two main ways:

1. person to person – by people who are in close contact
2. by surfaces or objects – when people touch their face with contaminated hands

The level of risk in an activity will be related to the number of opportunities for transmission of the virus. This includes how close people come to each other, how many different interactions there are between people, how often people touch surfaces or objects and how long people stay in a space.

For more information, visit: [ihsa.ca/COVID-19](https://ihsa.ca/COVID-19)

It is possible for COVID-19 to be spread by people who do not have any symptoms. This makes effective control measures very important. We must act as if everyone is infected when setting up controls.

The risk of severe health outcomes is not the same for all workers. The risk increases with age and is higher for people with [certain medical conditions](#).

**Potential exposures to coronavirus while handling and receiving packages from couriers include:**

- Receiving and handling a delivered physical package and being in close contact with the delivery person.
- Exchanging paperwork during delivery, as well as clipboards and pens.
- Sharing the scanning equipment keypad and stylus pen.

**Controls:**

Infection prevention and control measures prevent the spread of the virus by breaking the chain of transmission. For example, [public health guidance](#) includes staying at least 2 metres away from others which avoids close contact; washing hands removes the virus and prevents people from touching their faces with contaminated hands.

For COVID-19 in the workplace, it is recommended that employers and business owners conduct a risk assessment to determine the most appropriate controls and actions for a particular workplace/situation. Reference the [IHSA's guide](#) on the risk assessment process to help facilitate this and review [Sample 1](#), [Sample 2](#) for examples.

Always start by considering the most effective controls first. It is best to begin by trying to eliminate the hazard – to remove it from the workplace altogether. Where that is not possible, use multiple engineering and administrative controls first to prevent the spread. Protective equipment (including personal protective equipment (PPE) and community protective equipment) should be relied on only where engineering and administrative controls do not sufficiently reduce the risk to workers.

In addition to the above recommendations, employers should determine whether personal protective equipment (PPE)\* needs to be part of their hazard control plan. The need for PPE should be based on a risk assessment taking into account environmental conditions and also take into consideration input from the local public health unit. Although proper use of PPE can help prevent some exposures, it should not take the place of other control measures.

- Workers must use personal protective equipment as required by their employer.
- Workers should be trained on the proper use, care and limitations of any required PPE.

\*NOTE: Please be reminded that most face coverings (non-medical masks) have not been tested to a known standard and do not constitute PPE. In some circumstances, face coverings  
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may be used as an effective means of source control, but should not be viewed as an appropriate substitute for physical distancing in the workplace.

1. **Maintain physical distancing.** Physical distancing means maintaining a distance of at least 2 metres (6 feet) or more between persons. By practicing physical distancing, you are less likely to be exposed to a respiratory virus.
2. **Request a contactless delivery.** Contactless deliveries involve the delivery driver leaving the package on your doorstep.
  - When placing the delivery, select the contactless delivery option (if available) or include the request in the notes section of your order. This will indicate/request that no signing or proof of receipt is required.
  - Request the driver place the package down rather than handing the item directly to you to maintain physical distancing.
3. **Avoid the use of shared materials.** Canada Post and many other delivery services have implemented policies where they no longer request signatures. However, there may be instances where proof of receipt (signature) is still needed. In these cases:
  - Use your own pen when signing for the delivery and avoid the use of shared pens.
  - If you are required to use a stylus or your finger to sign for receipt of the delivery, wipe down the keypad before use.
  - Wash your hands immediately after receipt of the package.
4. **Open the package outside.** Studies have shown that the COVID-19 virus can live on cardboard, however, it does disintegrate quickly. To limit any potential contamination from the package:
  - Open the package outside of the delivery location.
  - Upon opening the delivery immediately dispose of the packaging.
  - Wash your hands immediately after cleaning and sanitizing the potentially exposed areas.
5. **Clean and sanitize exposed areas.** If the package was brought into your home or place of employment:
  - Clean and sanitize any areas the package came into contact with such as table tops, counters, or floor area (where it was placed), etc.
  - Wash your hands immediately after cleaning and sanitizing the potentially exposed areas.
6. **Practice good hygiene.** Health Canada recommends following basic hygiene practices:
  - Wash your hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
  - If using hand sanitizers, they must be alcohol based (with greater than 60% alcohol) to be effective.
  - Sneeze or cough into a tissue and discard it or into your elbow or sleeve.

### **Evaluate:**

Changes to work procedures or practices related to COVID-19 may affect the way you have routinely managed other risks in the workplace. Thus, it is recommended that you consider the various preventative measures on an ongoing basis, and review and adjust accordingly if they are not working as intended or have created new risks or challenges.

### **Determine the following:**

- Has the hazard been eliminated or the risk minimized appropriately?
- Is there a better way to control the risk?
- Is the control being used consistently and as planned (monitor behavior and practices)?
- Can improvements be made to your control procedures and changes implemented as required?

Continuously engage your workers, communicate recommendations and adjustments with supervisors.

Also, continuously monitor the necessary tools, supplies, and equipment needed to meet your control measures, ensure sufficient supplies are readily available, adequate and accessible.

**Stay home if you are feeling ill.** If you detect symptoms, you should immediately distance yourself from others and go home. If possible, avoid using public transit. Ensure you notify your supervisor so that they are aware of the situation and can also notify others who may have been exposed.

## Resources

Stay updated with daily government updates:

- [Government of Ontario](#)
- [Government of Canada](#)
- [Public Health Ontario](#)

### **Ontario government and agency-issued resources about COVID-19**

Develop your COVID-19 workplace safety plan: Learn how you can create a plan to help protect your workers and others from novel coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19).

#### [Workplace Safety Plan](#)

The [Ontario Ministry of Health](#) is providing consistent updates on the provincial government's response to the outbreak, including:

- status of cases in Ontario
- current affected areas
- symptoms and treatments

For more information, visit: [ihsa.ca/COVID-19](https://ihsa.ca/COVID-19)

- how to protect yourself and self-isolate
- updated Ontario news on the virus

[Public Health Ontario](#) is providing up-to-date resources on COVID-19, including:

- links to evolving public health guidelines, position statements and situational updates
- synopsis of key articles updating on the latest findings related to the virus
- recommendations for use of personal protective equipment
- information on infection prevention and control
- testing information
- other public resources

### **Other COVID-19 resources**

[Health Canada](#) outlines the actions being taken by the Government of Canada to limit spread of the virus, as well as what is happening in provinces and communities across the country. It also maintains a live update of the number of cases by province.

The [World Health Organization](#) is updating the latest guidance and information related to the global outbreak and spread beyond Canadian borders.

It also provides the most up-to-date information on:

- current research and development around the virus
- a COVID-19 situation “dashboard”
- emergency preparedness measures
- live media updates on the spread of the virus

This resource does not replace the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* (OHSA) and its regulations, and should not be used as or considered legal advice. Health and safety inspectors apply the law based on the facts in the workplace.