

Infrastructure Health and Safety Association

Guidance on in-person classroom training 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

Training providers and participants may be at risk of getting COVID-19 in training sessions where equipment is shared or where training happens in smaller indoor spaces, especially spaces that do not allow for physical distancing.

This document was developed to help training providers understand the measures required for classroom training during COVID-19. Where possible, training should be delivered through remote (distance) or virtual training platforms.

Where remote or virtual training cannot be accommodated, the in-person classroom training provider should:

- Use a space that allows for physical distancing of at least 2 metres (6 feet)
- Have a plan in place for regular cleaning and sanitization
- Ensure personal hygiene can be maintained through access to running water and soap, or hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.

If these precautions cannot be met or adhered to during the entire training program, training should not occur at this time.

Training Provider Requirements:

Training should be conducted following the below protocols:

1. Class size and planning

- Class sizes must be limited to the maximum number of persons allowed to gather as stipulated by the province of Ontario. Building capacity must also be considered.
- If there is more than one training program being offered in the building on the same day, the following protocols should be observed:
 - Stagger of start and stop times so that participants in different programs are not arriving or leaving at the same time.
 - Stagger breaks and lunches for the different programs.
 - Have procedures in place to avoid crowding in washrooms.

2. Elevator use

- Limit the use of elevators where possible.
- Have procedures in place for regular cleaning of commonly-touched surfaces, such as elevator buttons.
- Provide instruction on cleaning procedures and capacity limits for elevators.

3. Screening

- Instructors and participants of the training program should be screened for COVID-19 symptoms and potential exposures ([as per Self-Assessment criteria](#)). Please refer to IHSA's [Guidance on COVID-19 Screening](#).
- No one suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19, or who has been in contact with someone with COVID-19 or who recently travelled outside of Canada, should instruct or attend training.

4. Personal hygiene and sanitization

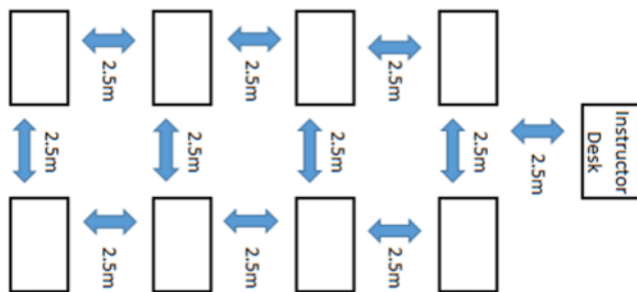
- Ensure access to soap and water, or hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Ensure access to appropriate cleaning products.
- Ensure instructors and participants are able to wash or sanitize their hands frequently, especially when they arrive, before and after touching commonly-touched surfaces, and before leaving.
- Verify with the facility that the training room has been cleaned and sanitized.
- Ensure all surfaces in the training room (tables, chairs, countertops, doorknobs, light switches etc.) are disinfected before and after the training using appropriate cleaning products.
- Ensure any training equipment, tools or props are cleaned and sanitized before and after use.

5. Physical distancing and PPE

- Ensure participants are positioned a minimum of 2 metres (6 feet) from one another and remain at a safe distance at all times. This may require organizations to change the layout of existing training rooms and/or reduce the number of participants per course. Below is a diagram of a suitable training room arrangement.

- Implement all measures to ensure physical distance and separation between people. If physical distance cannot be maintained, workers will need personal protective equipment (PPE) consisting of a surgical/procedure mask and eye protection (goggles or face shield).
 - Workers must be trained on the proper use, care and limitations of any required PPE.

Example of suitable training room arrangement
(Example shows 8 participants plus instructor)



6. Communication and signage

- Ensure policies and procedures related to COVID-19 are posted, available and communicated to all participants.
- Put up COVID-19 posters in the facility and classroom to communicate key messages such as physical distancing of 2 metres, hand hygiene, and how to screen for symptoms.
- Use signage and markings to direct foot traffic and encourage physical distancing.

7. Sharing equipment and materials

- For programs where participants must demonstrate skills or perform physical tasks and use supplied equipment, tools or props, individuals should be encouraged to:
 - first wash or sanitize hands prior to task
 - maintain physical distance during task, and
 - wash or sanitize hands when task is complete.
- The use of digital technology is strongly encouraged as an alternative to paper handouts in training.
- The sharing of pens and normal office supplies is strongly discouraged. Participants are encouraged to bring their own personal pens/pencils.

8. Participant Requirements:

- Participants are expected to be in good health and not showing any of the following respiratory, cold or flu-like symptoms including:
 - New onset or worsening of existing cough
 - Vomiting
 - Fever (> 38 degrees Celsius or >100.4 degrees Fahrenheit)
 - Severe fatigue
 - Shortness of breath or trouble breathing
 - Runny nose
 - Chest pain
 - Sore throat
- Participants who demonstrate any of these symptoms over the course of the program should be asked to leave and the course should be suspended immediately.
- Some people with COVID-19 do not show any symptoms, so everyone should practice physical distancing by maintaining a distance of at least 2 metres (6 feet) from others and during any interaction.
- Participants should be instructed on proper cough/sneeze etiquette, and to wash their hands frequently for at least 20 seconds, before and after eating and before touching their eyes, nose, or mouth.
- Participants should be instructed to sanitize hands and disinfect any equipment, tools or props being brought into the training facility and at regular intervals throughout the course.

Alternative evaluation methods

Due to the new COVID-19 protocols, training providers may need to adjust current evaluation methods or consider alternative evaluation methods. Training providers should consider the effects of COVID-19 safety measures on the accommodations needed.

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

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
- 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.