

Infrastructure Health and Safety Association

Guidance on transportation services health and safety 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.

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](#).

Transportation best practices: The health and safety of workers is a top concern amid the global COVID-19 pandemic. During this time, all parties must place an increased focus on health and safety in order to keep transportation companies operating as an essential service to our country's economy and continuity of operations.

All measures taken to prevent the spread of COVID-19 should be done in compliance with requirements under the Occupational Health and Safety Act and associated regulations and public health directives issued by the Chief Medical Officer of Health.

In addition, below are a set of, resources, tips, and best practices to help employers prevent the spread of COVID-19 for transportation companies.

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.

For more information, visit: ihsa.ca/COVID-19

*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 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.

Protecting yourself and your co-workers: Coronaviruses (COVID-19) are spread through close contact, including at work. Here are some general helpful tips to help prevent the spread of germs:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Sneeze and cough into your sleeve.
- If you use a tissue, discard immediately and wash your hands afterward.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth.
- Avoid contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home if you are sick.
- Avoid high-touch areas, where possible, or ensure you clean your hands after.
- Wash your clothes as soon as you get home.
- If you are ill, notify your supervisor immediately, complete the self-assessment and follow the instructions you receive.

Physical distancing (two metres): As advised by the Chief Medical Officer, public health officials, and outlined throughout government communications, physical distancing is required to control the spread of COVID-19.

In order to ensure physical distancing while working, transportation service employers should consider:

- Staggering start/dispatch times for drivers
- Staggering breaks for facility/office employees
- Staggering lunches for facility/office employees
- Restricting the number of people at the terminal and where they are assigned to work
- Controlling location movement (by limiting the potential for workers to gather, including in the warehouse and during the loading and off-loading of trailers)
- Holding meetings in an outside or large space to enable physical distancing and only holding in-person meeting as a last resort of communication
- Limiting unnecessary contact between workers, and between workers and with outside service providers, and encourage physical distancing in all areas (for example, loading docks, in dispatch area, during road side inspections, etc.)

Reporting illness: The symptoms of COVID-19 are like many other illnesses, including the cold and flu. At this time, it is recommended that any worker who has any symptoms related to cold, flu, or COVID-19 should be sent home. In addition, employers should advise these workers to complete the online self-assessment or call either:

- Telehealth Ontario: 1-866-797-0000

- Their primary care provider (for example, family physician)

Getting information on infection prevention and control: Employers can contact local public health units for questions on workplace infection prevention and control related to COVID-19 infections.

Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development reporting requirements: Employers must report all known positive test results for COVID-19 to:

- The ministry (in writing) within four days
- The joint health and safety representative
- A trade union (if applicable)

Share information: It is important that all parties in a workplace communicate their roles and responsibilities. Employers will need to ensure health and safety policies are updated and posted for all employees to see. Using industry resources, including this one and those listed and linked below, will help to improve employee understanding.

Posting of policies: All employers need to post and communicate COVID-19 policies to all employees. These policies should cover how the company will address:

- The sanitization of tractors, trailers, offices, warehouse, and common facilities
- How employees report illnesses
- How to ensure physical distancing
- How work will be scheduled and vehicles will be dispatched to promote physical distancing

Track and monitor your workforce: Due to the time it takes for symptoms of COVID-19 to develop, it is important to track where employees have worked, and specifically, where drivers have delivered to or stopped at while on route during their work day. If an employee tests positive for COVID-19, the local public health unit will ask employers to provide information on where the employee worked as well as the contact information of any other employee who may have been exposed. Employers will track information and Public Health Units will respond.

Transportation specific health and safety best practices: Below are some specific work-related tips and recommendations to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the context of transportation related activities, including commercial vehicle operations. Remember to refer to and follow your company's standard operating procedures in addition to the support materials listed below.

General best practices

- Minimize the number of vehicles shared by employees where possible to limit the spread of the virus.
- Ensure drivers have access to appropriate disinfectants, hand sanitizer, personal protective equipment, and other materials needed to clean high-touch surfaces in their vehicles.
- Drivers must diligently self-monitor for symptoms. Anyone displaying symptoms should self-isolate and stay at home.
- Coronaviruses can be spread by touching an infected area, then touching the mouth, nose,

For more information, visit: ihsa.ca/COVID-19

or eyes. Effective hand washing is a key way to prevent the transmission of the virus.

- Practice good hygiene. Health Canada recommends following these basic hygiene practices:
 - Wash 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 cough into your elbow or sleeve.

Clean vehicle cab frequently: Cleaning methods should be employed with special attention to frequently touched areas including but not limited to door handles, grab handles, steering wheel, shift lever, touch screen, shift levers, radio and climate controls. Note: If using a shared vehicle, it is important to clean the cab before leaving the terminal.

- Many non-penetrable surfaces in the cab can be cleaned with detergent and water, or sanitizer wipes if detergent and water are not available.
- Dispose of any cleaning gloves and other soiled cleaning materials in a sturdy plastic bag as soon as possible. Tightly tie the bag and dispose of it immediately.
- Remove garbage from the cab regularly.
- Clean or replace cabin filter if necessary to ensure you are breathing clean air in the vehicle.
- Wash your hands once cleaning is complete.

On-route deliveries: When stopping at a delivery point, drivers should:

- Limit the amount of face-to-face contact during deliveries.
- Stay in the cab and wait for cargo to be loaded/unloaded, if possible.
- Use technology to communicate with shippers/receivers.
- Wait in a separate designated area if one is available to avoid close contact with others.
- Avoid the use of shared pens.
- Ensure that they wash their hands or use a hand sanitizer before returning to the vehicle once the delivery/ stop is complete.

Mental health awareness: Drivers normally work long hours and can be away from home for extended periods. With the additional pressure associated with being an essential service to our country's business continuity, there is the risk of additional stress and/or feelings of anxiety generated from long work hours in an isolated environment, uncertainty of changes with COVID-19, long periods of time away from family and friends, lack of physical exercise, feelings of disrespect from others, and changing road and weather conditions.

While working, the following controls can be used to support positive mental health:

- Know the facts and ensure that you are receiving up-to-date information from reliable sources (credible news outlets, company management, etc.) and avoid rumors and

gossip.

- Reach out to your network. Social distancing is imperative for reducing the spread of the virus, but can also cause feelings of isolation, depression, and loneliness. During rest stops or while waiting for shipments to be loaded or unloaded, use this opportunity to check in with family and friends.
- Eat healthy and avoid the temptation to have comfort foods/snacks.
- Practice self-care while on the road.
- During your rest breaks, try deep breathing exercises, relaxation techniques, or meditation in your cab.
- Use your break times to read or listen to something that has nothing to do with COVID-19.
- Try detoxing from the digital world while on break by avoiding social media.
- Remind yourself that you are making a difference and helping the economy and people by providing an essential service.
- Practice defensive driving techniques and ensure you properly plan your trip to avoid potential weather systems, construction zones, etc.
- Get sufficient rest.
- Take walks for fresh air while still practicing social distancing.
- Monitor your personal well-being. If you feel that you need help, remember that it is ok to ask for it.
- Check with your company supervisor, provincial programs, or your insurance provider to see what resources are available to you. Many companies have confidential, easy-to-access employee assistance programs

Fueling practices: When fueling a vehicle ensure that you use disinfectant wipes to clean the pump handle and payment keypad before beginning the fueling process. Caution should be taken when touching the service station door handles, pay machines, or handling any automotive products that may be required when performing vehicle maintenance such as topping up key washer fluids or motor oil.

Inspection procedures: Drivers may be required to stop at an inspection station or be subject to a roadside inspection.

- Stay in the vehicle at all times unless instructed by the inspector.
- Should you be instructed to exit the vehicle, maintain physical distancing at all times.
- Try to stay upwind/crosswind from the inspector when speaking with them.
- Ensure that you use disinfectant wipes with any areas of the vehicle you come into contact with (i.e. door handles).
- If you are required to sign the inspection paperwork, use your own pen.
- Ask if the inspector would like to visually review the documents through the window:
- Suggest that you can hold the documents up to the window for the inspector to review which will allow the inspector to get the information they need without physical contact.
- Suggest that they take photos if necessary.
- Wipe down any areas of concern with disinfectant wipes.

Handling and receiving packages: If you are required to handle any packages, always ensure that you are maintaining physical distancing from others. As part of the handling of these packages avoid the use of shared materials with others (i.e. pens, clipboards, etc.) and clean your vehicle in any areas that may have been exposed by others loading and unloading packages. If possible, use technology (i.e. scanning devices) for confirmation of delivery.

- Preference would be for contactless delivery. For example: the delivery driver leaving the package on the doorstep (no signature required).
- Request the driver place the package down rather than handing the item directly to you to maintain physical distancing.
- 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.
- Open the package outside. To limit any potential contamination from the package:
- Upon opening the delivery immediately dispose of the packaging material
- Wash your hands immediately after cleaning and sanitizing the potentially exposed areas.
- Clean and sanitize exposed areas. If the package was brought into your home or place of employment 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.

Handling documentation, reports, and paperwork: Transport companies and drivers should:

- Use technology for communication as much as possible (e.g., text messaging and mobile phones) rather than having in-person conversations.
- Where possible, use technology to send and receive paperwork (e.g., scanning equipment and electronic proof of delivery).
- Not share pens, and request that others use their own pen or stylus when signing. If required to share, use disinfectant wipes to clean pens and styluses.
- Regularly disinfect any areas that you are frequently in contact with or are used by other people (e.g., tables, desks, tablets, pens, door handles).
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Once any cleaning is complete ensure you sanitize and wash your hands.

Rest stops and breaks: Transport drivers will need to stop at rest stops to refuel, for meal breaks, washroom facilities, and off-duty time.

- **Check with dispatch:** While most rest stops are remaining open during the pandemic, they may only have limited services available. Sit down service is now closed but drive-through service is available at most and many have made accommodations for truck drivers. Before stopping for an extended period of time, check with dispatch and see if they can confirm what is available at upcoming rest stops.
- **Pack some snacks:** With the rules changing rapidly you may encounter some rest stops that have closed. Pack some healthy snacks just in case you need to travel further to find a place to eat.

- **Refillable mugs:** Most rest stops (and coffee shops) are no longer allowing reusable mugs to be used. Leave the mug in the cab and purchase your beverage in an over the counter cup.
- **Bring a hygiene bag with you:** Always have a hygiene bag on hand so that you are using your own products at rest stops. Bags can include soap, shampoo, electric razor, toothbrush, toothpaste, small hand towels, deodorant, moisturizer, and any other hygiene or grooming products you may require.
- **Carry hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes with you:** When entering a rest stop ensure that you have disinfectant wipes to use on door handles, faucets, or stalls. Rest stops with showers have longer than normal wait times due to increased proper cleaning of the facilities however, you should still practice safe measures and wipe down any door handles or faucets with disinfectant wipes prior to using.
- **Wipe down high-touch areas:** Wipe down the pump handle, keypad, or anything else you may come into contact with using disinfectant wipes.
- **Visually look over the cab when leaving the rest stop:** Visually scan your vehicle every time you leave a rest stop to determine if any cleaning is required. Wipe down any areas of concern with disinfectant wipes.

Personal Hygiene – decontamination: Drivers should follow a standard procedure for their own personal decontamination daily.

- Change clothes before entering your personal vehicle or going home: Where possible it is best practice to change your work clothes before going home.
- Clean clothes should be kept in a separate plastic bag and, if possible, stored in your personal vehicle or locker while you are working
- Bag all dirty clothes and place in a plastic bag before going home
- Leave clothes in plastic bag until they are laundered
- Launder clothes as soon as possible
- If changing at home try to change in the same pre-identified area of your home (i.e. garage, laundry room etc.) to reduce risk of exposing dirty clothing to other areas of the house
- Remove your boots or work shoes outside or in the garage in the same spot daily
- Shower as soon as you return home

Decontaminate (clean) any equipment you have used throughout the day: During the course of the day you may have come into contact with a variety of equipment that requires cleaning (i.e. flashlight, tools, etc.). Ensure you:

- Clean all equipment with detergent and water followed by disinfectant wipes and then dry with a towel.
- Place towels in a plastic bag one cleaning is complete.
- Remove cleaning gloves and wash hands once all decontamination (cleaning) of equipment is complete.

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.

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
- 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.

For more information, visit: ihsa.ca/COVID-19

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.