

MAY 5, 2020

## COVID-19: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A SAFE RETURN TO WORK

Returning to a routine is at the top of everyone's mind currently, getting back to the daily grind. However, when thinking about returning to your "old normal" remember that precautions will still need to be taken. We recommend the following precautions be adhered to when returning to work during phase one operations within the Province:

*Part 1: Returning Staff to Work*

*Part 2: Protecting Staff at Work*

*Part 3: Accommodating Staff with Specific Needs*

*Part 4: Travel*

*Part 5: Helpful Information + Relevant Links*

### **Part 1: Returning Staff to Work**

Employers are responsible for protecting the health and safety of employees at work. They are required to implement preventative measures to ensure employees are not exposed to conditions that could be harmful to their health or safety while working. Establish policies to reduce the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace and make sure these are communicated and understood by employees.

- Review your operations to determine essential staff consider operating at a staggered start for employees, or a continuation of the work from home protocols where possible.
- Review your office setup and the proximity of personnel to ensure physical distancing can be maintained.
- Based on steps 2 and 3, develop a phased or alternating schedule to bring back essential staff first.
- If employees are required to be in the office, think about reducing the daily hours needed to be within the office to maintain a safer environment.
- If physical distancing cannot be maintained, use an alternating schedule to have staff take turns working from home.



## Part 2: Protecting Staff at Work

- Ensure that a strict practice of physical distancing is maintained when in the workplace and reduce opportunities for any crowding.
- Keep a distance of 2 metres between you, your coworkers, and customers.
- If employees have any symptoms of an illness, they are recommended to stay home and NOT come into work.
- If a staff member is experiencing an illness, consider utilizing the COVID-19 self-assessment tool and/or accessing a Provincial testing site. Any staff that have a symptom of any type of sickness are advised to self-isolate for 14 days, and not return to the workplace until cleared by their healthcare provider, and all symptoms have disappeared.
- Employers should provide tissues and no-touch disposal receptacles for use by employees.
- Instruct employees to clean their hands often and when regular handwashing with soap and water (for at least 20 seconds) is not available, then with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 70% alcohol concentration.
- Provide soap and water and alcohol-based hand sanitizer in the workplace. Ensure adequate supplies are maintained.
- Emphasize the importance of respiratory etiquette and hand hygiene to all employees, consider the placement of posters that encourage staying home when sick, cough and sneeze etiquette, hand washing and hand sanitizing at the entrance or well-travelled areas within your workplace.
- Ensure that there are enhanced cleaning protocols in place concerning routine cleaning and disinfection tasks. Highly used areas such as doorknobs, elevator buttons, light switches, toilet handles, counters, handrails, touch screen surfaces and keypads should be sanitized regularly.

## Part 3: Accommodating Staff with Specific Needs

- Individuals with specific health risks or those living with at-risk individuals may need special consideration.
- Staff who do not have access to childcare may require special consideration
- Employers should continue to maintain flexible policies that will allow employees to stay home to care for a sick family member. During this time, employers should be aware that more employees may need to stay at home to care for sick children or other sick family members; and/or may have child care issues that will continue to require them to be on a work from home basis.
- When working from home, access to technology to complete daily tasks is essential and will be needed to be provided for these staff members.
- Employers may also need to provide Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) that may include respiratory protection keeping in mind that respirator fit testing may be required, disposable gloves, or disposable face mask and/or face shield.



## Part 4: Travel

If your employees are required to travel within their job tasks, keep in mind that special considerations for self-isolation may need to continue to be maintained. Consider the risks and benefits related to any upcoming essential travel and evaluate other options such as participating virtually.

- Inter-Provincial Travels should not be permitted unless utterly necessary.
- Travel outside of Canada should not be permitted.
- Travel within the Province of Manitoba could be permitted with all sanitization protocols being followed, and the follow up prior to a site visit that the site has protocols in place. A mandatory 14-day self-isolation protocol may be required upon return.
- Always remember to check the travel advisories on the Government of Canada website and follow all recommended guidelines.

## Part 5: Helpful Information

Remember, it is important to ensure that you continue to monitor the Public Health Authority guidelines.

- The Province of Manitoba recommendation document for the safe restoration of services can also be seen here [https://manitoba.ca/asset\\_library/en/proactive/2020\\_2021/restoring-safe-services.pdf](https://manitoba.ca/asset_library/en/proactive/2020_2021/restoring-safe-services.pdf)
- Government of Canada's travel advisories for the latest guidance and recommendations. <https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/health-safety/travel-health-notice/221>
- Covid-19 self-assessment tool <https://sharedhealthmb.ca/covid19/screening-tool/>
- Provincial testing sites <https://www.gov.mb.ca/covid19/locations.html>.
- CCOHS pandemic resources: <https://www.ccohs.ca/outbreaks/>
- Symptoms poster: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/COVID19-symptoms.pdf>
- Prevent the Spread Poster: [https://www.ccohs.ca/images/products/infographics/download/Prevent\\_Spread.jpg](https://www.ccohs.ca/images/products/infographics/download/Prevent_Spread.jpg)
- CCOHS FREE E-course for Pandemic Planning [https://www.ccohs.ca/products/courses/pandemic\\_plan/](https://www.ccohs.ca/products/courses/pandemic_plan/)
- Government of Canada Website Coronavirus: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/prevention-risks.html>
- Approved hard surface and disinfectants: <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/disinfectants/covid-19/list.html>
- Assistance to help establish Workplace Safety Policies: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/guidance-documents/risk-informed-decision-making-workplaces-businesses-covid-19-pandemic.html>

