

# Workplace health and safety and COVID-19 update

Electrical Contractors Association of BC

Chris Back Director, OHS Consultation & Education Services

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# Agenda

- 1 Understanding COVID-19
- 2 Developing your COVID-19 Safety Plan
- 3 Controlling the risk of COVID-19 exposure in the workplace
- 4 Industry information
- 5 Focus areas
- 6 WorkSafeBC support and other resources
- 7 Questions and answers

# **Understanding COVID-19**

# COVID-19 symptoms and transmission

**Coronaviruses** are a large family of viruses that can cause diseases ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases. **COVID-19** is the name of the disease caused by a newly identified coronavirus.

## Symptoms

- Include fever, chills, new or worsening cough, shortness of breath, new muscle aches or headaches, sore throat
- Can range from **mild to severe** and can appear up to **14 days after exposure**

## Transmission

The virus is transferred by **infected droplets** coming in contact with the **eye, nose, or mouth** through:

- Close contact with other people
- Touching contaminated surfaces or people

# COVID-19 transmission risk factors

**The following factors increase likelihood of transmission via person-to-person contact:**

- Challenges maintaining 2 metres (6 feet) of distance
- High frequency of unique persons at the workplace (e.g., customers or clients)
- Potential to work in enclosed areas
- Potential for sustained group interaction
- Probability of infected persons
- Inadequate self-isolation practices

**The following increases likelihood of transmission via surface contact:**

- Potential for regular contact with shared surfaces

# What to do if you, or your workers, experience COVID-19 symptoms

Anyone experiencing flu-like symptoms associated with COVID-19, should:

- Immediately inform their supervisor
- Physically distance from colleagues and leave the workplace
- Seek medical advice from a health care professional:
  - Call 911, if urgent
  - Use the COVID-19 Support App & Self-Assessment Tool — <https://bc.thrive.health/>
  - Call 811 for health advice
- Consult with a health care provider before returning to work

# What do employers need to do if workers report having COVID-19 symptoms?

- Send workers home to recover for the prescribed self-isolation period.
- Clean and disinfect their work station and/or the workspace and tools they were using as part of their job.
- Follow any directions from public health.

**Developing your COVID-19 Safety Plan  
to control the risk of exposure in the workplace**

# Requirements of the employer

Every employer is required to have a **COVID-19 Safety Plan** that assesses the risk of exposure at its workplace and identifies measures implemented to keep its workers safe.

- WorkSafeBC will not review or approve the plans of individual employers in advance, but will review them during our inspections of your workplace.
- We will ask employers about the steps they have taken to protect their workers and to see the plan if it has been developed.
- By order of the Provincial Health Officer, your plan must be posted at your worksite, and on our website if applicable.

# Orders, notices, and guidance

Follow the **orders, notices, and guidance** from the **provincial health officer** and the **BC Centre for Disease Control**.

## The basics

- Physical distancing (2 metres / 6 feet)
- Cleaning and disinfecting
- Personal hygiene:
  - Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue or use your elbow.
  - Wash your hands.
  - Avoid touching your face.
  - Do not share food, drinks, or items.



# COVID-19 Safety Plan steps

**Follow these steps to create your COVID-19 Safety Plan:**

1. Assess the risk at your workplace
2. Implement measures to reduce the risk
3. Develop policies to manage your workplace
4. Develop communication plans and training
5. Monitor your workplace and update your plans as needed
6. Assess and address risks from resuming operations



Source (image): The Canadian Press

# Step 1: Assess the risk at your workplace

- Assess the workplace to identify where risk of transmission is introduced.
- Consider questions like:
  - Where do people congregate?
  - What job tasks or processes require workers to come into close proximity with one another or members of the public?
  - What tools, machinery, and equipment do people come into contact with?
  - What surfaces are touched often?

# Involve your workers

## Joint health and safety committees

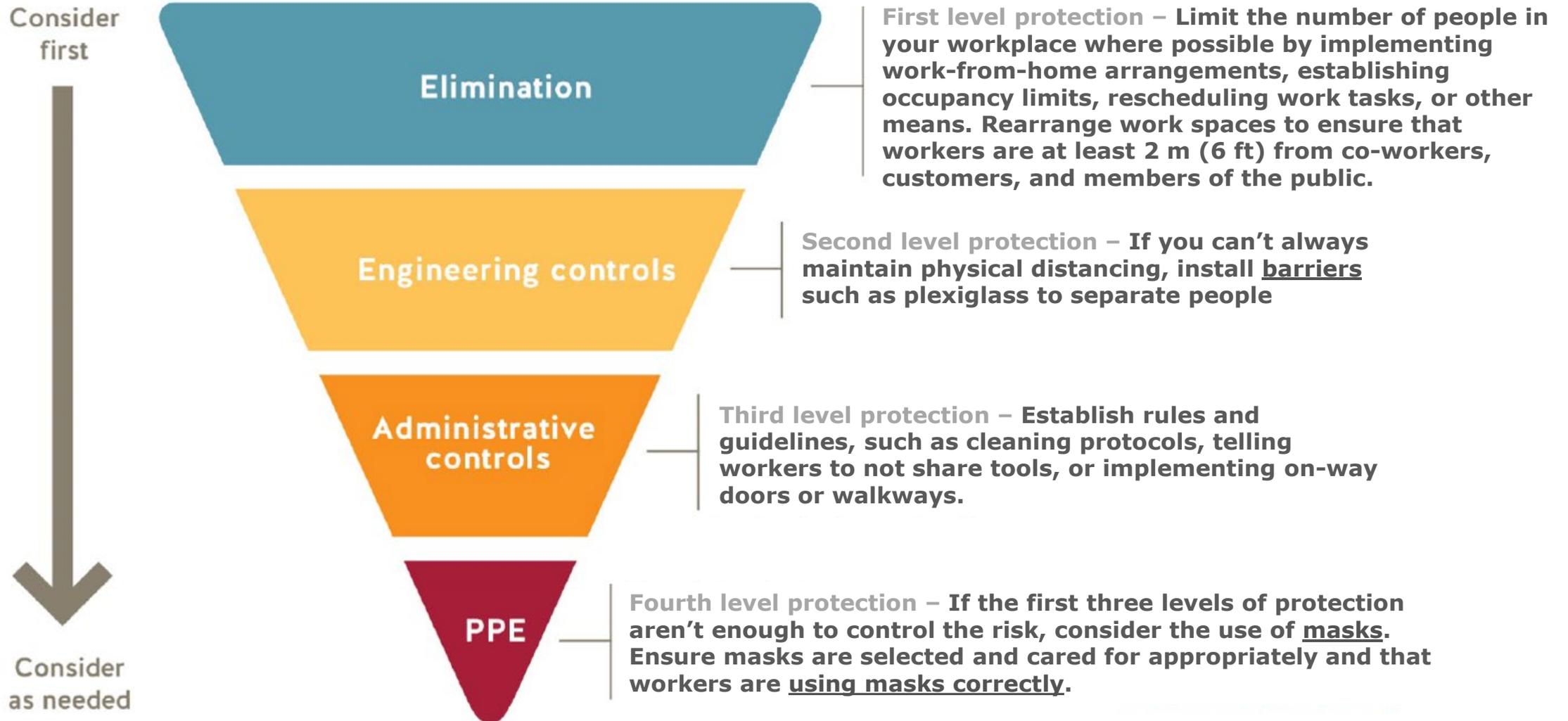
- Work with joint occupational health and safety committee (JOHSC) members or worker representatives to:
  - Identify and find solutions to workplace health and safety issues.
  - Includes concerns about exposure to COVID-19.
  - Joint committees must continue to meet regularly as required under the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation.



## **Step 2: Implement protocols to reduce the risk**

- You must select and put protocols in place to minimize the risk of transmission, with an emphasis on:
  - Maintaining physical distance
  - Other measures where physical distance cannot be maintained
  - Cleaning and hygiene

# Selecting protocols for your workplace



# Protocols for cleaning and hygiene

- Enhance cleaning and hygiene measures:
  - Provide adequate handwashing facilities.
  - Put up reminders for personal hygiene practices.
  - Provide cleaning supplies.
  - Disinfect high-contact areas and items.
  - Remove shared items.
- Train, supervise, and document.



# Looking ahead

- Keeping pace with changes in the workplace
- Ongoing risk assessment
- Consider where people congregate
  - Vehicles during cold weather
  - Indoor work spaces
  - Break rooms and washrooms
- Consider impacts of changing weather
  - Outdoor wash stations/hand hygiene



# COVID-19 Safety Plan templates and app

- You can build your plan based on our template by using one of the following tools:
  - [worksafebc.com/covid-19-resources](https://worksafebc.com/covid-19-resources) for a fillable PDF to download
  - [worksafebc.com/covid-19-app](https://worksafebc.com/covid-19-app) for iOS and Android mobile app
- We also have a guide for employers to **Review and Update COVID-19 Safety Plans**

The screenshot displays the 'COVID-19 Safety Plan' app interface. At the top, it features the 'WORK SAFE BC' logo and the title 'COVID-19 Safety Plan'. Below this, there is introductory text explaining that employers must develop a COVID-19 Safety Plan and that the app will guide them through the process. A 'RESET' button is visible in the top right corner. The main content area is titled 'Reviewing and updating COVID-19 safety plans: A guide for employers'. It includes a section for 'Step 1: Assess the risks at your workplace' with a checklist of questions. The checklist items include: 'We have involved frontline workers, supervisors, and safety representative, if applicable?', 'We have identified areas where people gather', 'We have identified job tasks and processes that can occur in your workplace, in work part of their jobs.', 'We have identified the tools, machinery, and equipment that workers use', 'We have identified surfaces that people touch often, such as light switches, doorknobs, steering wheels, cash registers, phones, photocopiers, and washroom facilities.', 'We have identified the places where workers are close to customers or other members of the public? Consider entrances and exits, shop floors, aisles, service counters, and registers.', 'We have considered vehicle transportation? Do workers travel together or with members of the public? Do workers use vehicles that others may have driven?', 'We have identified the tools, machines, and equipment that workers share?', and 'We have considered surfaces that people touch often, such as light switches, doorknobs, steering wheels, cash registers, phones, photocopiers, and washroom facilities?'. Below this is 'Step 2: Implement protocols to reduce the risks' with a checklist of questions: 'Did you review the industry-specific protocols on worksafebc.com that apply to your industry? Did you also review and consider other protocol pages that may contain useful information? For example, many workplaces may benefit from office protocols, even if the workplace is not in an office building.', 'Did you review materials provided by your health and safety association, or other professional or industry associations?', and 'Have you been complying with all the orders, guidance, and notices issued by the provincial health officer that are relevant to your industry?'. At the bottom of the page, there is a footer with 'Page 1 of 4', 'Reviewing and updating COVID-19 safety plans: A guide for employers', 'November 10, 2020', and the 'WORK SAFE BC' logo.

# What workers should do

- Know when to not come to work.
- Follow preventative measures while at work:
  - Comply with the employer's instructions around minimizing exposure.
  - Practise physical distancing, cleaning and disinfecting, and personal hygiene.
- Report hazards and refuse unsafe work.
- Take steps to minimize exposure to COVID-19 while away from work.



**Industry-specific protocols**

# Industry-specific protocols – worksafebc.com

**COVID-19** ×

**Returning to safe operation (B.C.'s Restart Plan):** Controlling exposure (**new**), **Protocols for Phase 2 and 3** industries, **Protocols for Phase 1** industries, General health and safety, Claims, Premiums waived for Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy, and Deferral of Q1 and Q2 payments ends October 20

**Resources:** COVID-19 Safety Plan template, OHS guideline G3.3 (COVID-19 Safety Plan), and more resources

**WORK SAFE BC** Search worksafebc.com 🔍 [Contact Us](#) [Log in / Create an account](#)

**COVID-19: Staying safe at work, resuming your operations, accessing our services, and more**

**Popular links**

- [Report a workplace injury](#)
- [View claim information](#)
- [Search the OHS Regulation](#)
- [Report payroll & pay premiums](#)
- [Get a clearance letter](#)

# Construction

- Visit [www.worksafebc.com/en/about-us/covid-19-updates/covid-19-industry-information/construction](https://www.worksafebc.com/en/about-us/covid-19-updates/covid-19-industry-information/construction) for guidance and resources on subjects including :
  - The role of prime contractors, employers, and sub-contractors
  - Controlling the risk of COVID-19 exposure
  - Worker transportation
  - Work camps

# Small business

- Visit [www.worksafebc.com/en/about-us/covid-19-updates/covid-19-industry-information/small-business](https://www.worksafebc.com/en/about-us/covid-19-updates/covid-19-industry-information/small-business) for guidance and resources on subjects including:
  - Understanding COVID-19
  - Who should come into the workplace
  - Physical distancing
  - Cleaning and hygiene
  - Documentation and training
  - Employment status, work sharing and temporary work
  - Mental health

# Transportation

- Visit [www.worksafebc.com/en/about-us/covid-19-updates/covid-19-industry-information/transportation](https://www.worksafebc.com/en/about-us/covid-19-updates/covid-19-industry-information/transportation) for guidance and resources for the entire transportation industry, with specific protocols for:
  - General trucking
  - Courier and delivery services
  - Passenger transit
  - General waste and recycling
  - Auto towing and auto service and repair
  - Warehousing
  - Taxi, limo, chauffeur and ride hailing
  - Moving and storage

# Offices

- Visit [www.worksafebc.com/en/about-us/covid-19-updates/covid-19-returning-safe-operation/offices](https://www.worksafebc.com/en/about-us/covid-19-updates/covid-19-returning-safe-operation/offices) for guidance on subjects including:
  - Building access
  - Workplace operations
  - Workstations
  - Communal spaces
  - Outside visitors
  - Deliveries
  - Transportation
  - Elevator use

**Focus areas**

# Schedule 1 Changes – COVID-19 Presumption

## Under the Amended Schedule 1, Work Causation is Presumed Where:

- A worker has an infection that is caused by a communicable viral pathogen that is the subject of a BC-specific emergency declaration or notice, and
- the worker's work involved a risk of exposure to a source(s) of infection significantly greater than the public at large, which was during the time period and within the area of the emergency declaration or notice.

[Link on WorkSafeBC.com](#)

# Worker abuse due to COVID-19 policies

Restaurants, hotels, retail establishments, and other businesses have reported that some customers have been verbally abusing staff when asked to follow COVID-19 protocols.

Employer responsibilities include:

- Ensuring workers have the training and strategies to address the risk of violence that may arise as customers and members of the public adapt to restrictions or modifications to the workplace
- Ensuring that an appropriate violence prevention program is in place

For more information see *Take Care: How to Develop and Implement a Workplace Violence Prevention Program*, available on [worksafebc.com](https://worksafebc.com)

# Mental Health: Helping your workers cope

Psychological health is of equal importance to physical health.

## Here's how you can help:

- Support the mental well-being of workers by helping them manage stress, anxiety and uncertainty created by the COVID-19 outbreak.
- Leverage existing resources
  - [Managing COVID-19 Stress, Anxiety and Depression](#) (Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions)
  - [Mental Health and Psychosocial Considerations During COVID-19 Outbreak](#) (World Health Organization)
  - [Coronavirus: Managing Stress and Anxiety](#) (Canadian Mental Health Association)
  - [Mental Health and COVID-19](#) (Conference Board of Canada)
  - [Taking Care of Your Mental Health \(COVID-19\)](#) (Public Health Agency of Canada)

# Working from home: responsibilities & policy

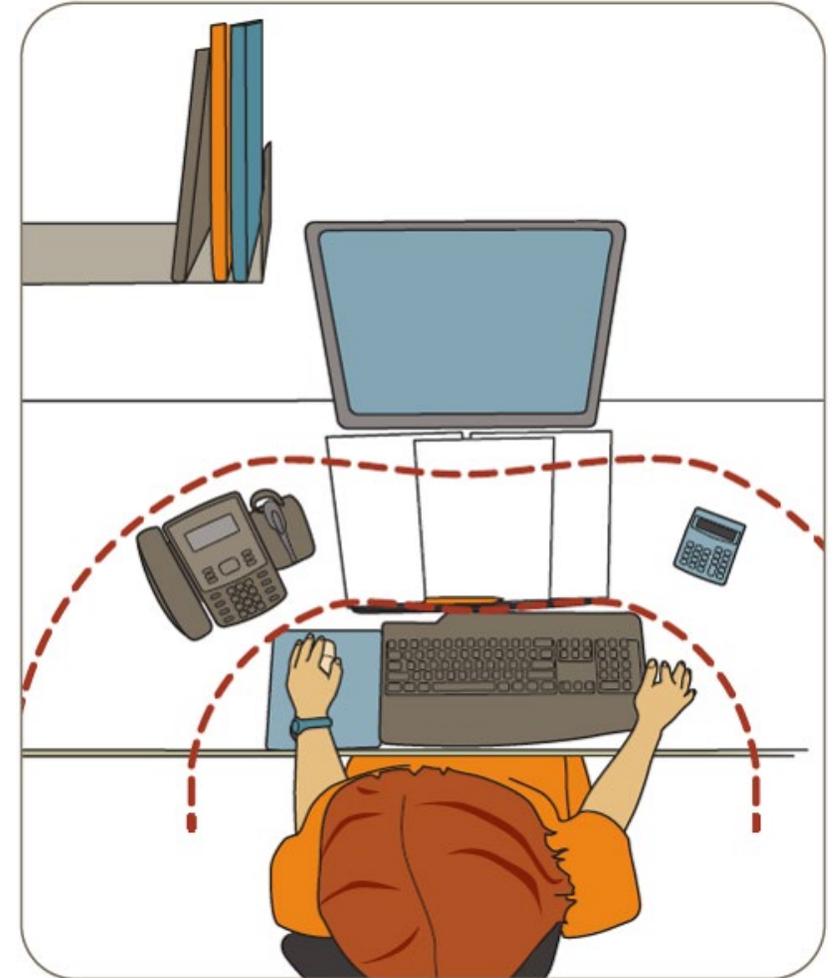
Many health and safety **roles, rights, and responsibilities** of employers and workers are just as applicable for **working at home** as they are for more traditional workplaces, including but not limited to:

- Hazard and risk assessment of the at-home workplace
- Procedures for working safely at home, including ergonomics
- Evacuation from the home in an emergency and emergency contacts
- Education and training
- Worker's duty to follow safe work procedures
- Reporting workplace injuries
- Check-in procedures

Develop a health and safety **working at home policy** which includes, at minimum, all of these topics.

# Working from home: resources

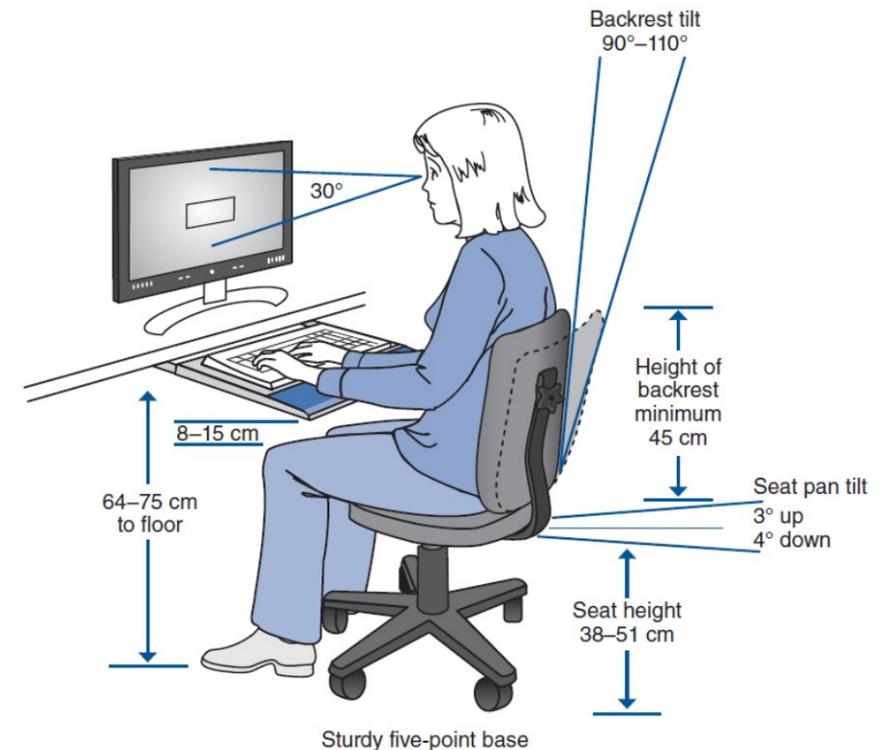
- Visit [worksafebc.com](https://www.worksafebc.com) or the WorkSafeBC virtual booth for the following resources:
  - [Working from home: A guide to keeping your workers healthy and safe](#)
  - [Setting up, organizing, and working comfortably in your home](#)



# Computer workstation: preventing injury

Prevent **musculoskeletal injuries (MSIs)** such as sprains and strains by assessing the home workstation, identifying risks, and making appropriate adjustments.

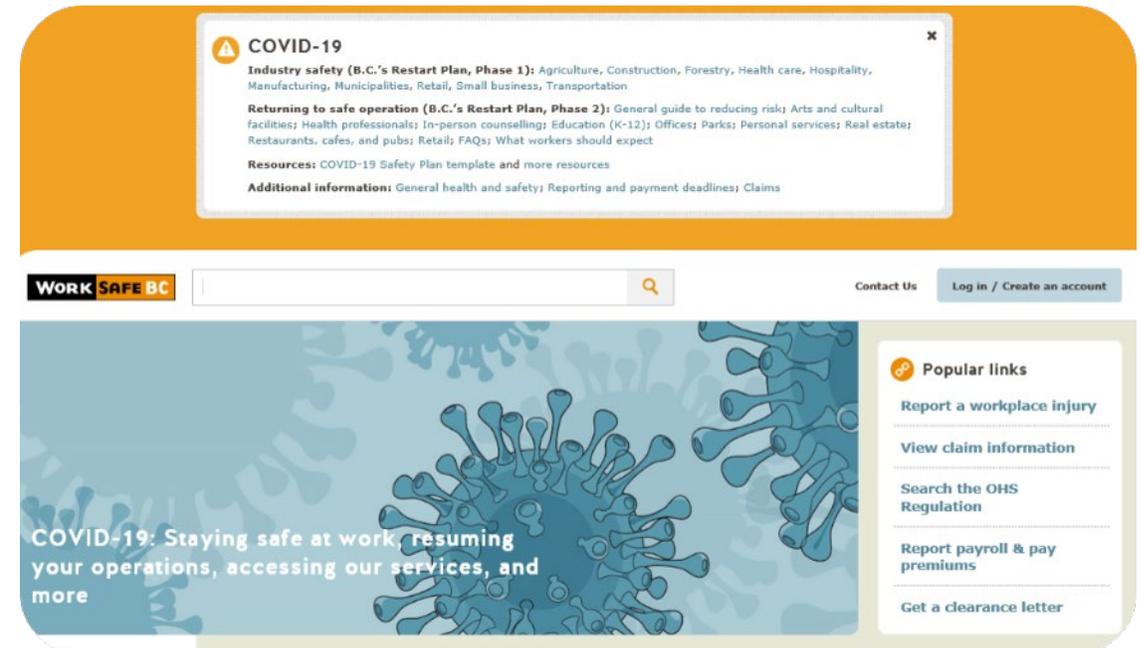
- Workstation layout for neutral posture
  - Chair
  - Backrest and footrest
  - Monitor/Laptop
  - Keyboard
  - Mouse
  - Documents
  - Lighting
- Organization of workday and activities
  - Breaks and micro-pauses
  - Exercises
- WorkSafeBC resource:
  - [How to make your computer workstation fit you](#)



**WorkSafeBC support**

# Accessing WorkSafeBC services

- WorkSafeBC has been deemed an essential service.
- Check [worksafebc.com](https://worksafebc.com) for regular updates and announcements.
- We are committed to continuing to provide core services for workers and employers around the province, which includes helping employers prevent workplace injury, illness, and disease.



# WorkSafeBC's prevention efforts

Prevention field officers and occupational health and safety consultants are still performing **inspections, education, and consultations.**

## Online resources:

- [Inspections during the COVID-19 pandemic: Frequently asked questions for employers](#)
- [Prevention Services data for COVID-19](#)

## Prevention Information Line:

- Workers and employers can speak to a prevention officer to get answers to questions.
- If required, a prevention officer will be assigned to assess the health and safety risk at your workplace.
- Call **604.276.3100** in the Lower Mainland or **1.888.621.SAFE** toll-free within B.C.

# What to expect during an inspection

You should be prepared to answer the following during a call or in-person inspection:

- How have you assessed the risk at your workplace?
- How have you reduced the risk?
- What policies have you developed to address illness in the workplace?
- How are you communicating with your staff?
- What are you doing to monitor and update your health and safety plans?

**Inspections during the COVID-19 pandemic**  
Frequently asked questions for employers

WorkSafeBC inspections are an important part of ensuring health and safety in B.C. workplaces. During Phase 2 of B.C.'s Restart Plan, officers may call or visit unannounced to evaluate how you're protecting your workers from the virus that causes COVID-19 in your workplace. These frequently asked questions (FAQs) outline what to expect from a WorkSafeBC inspection during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**What can I expect during an inspection?**  
The officer will ask you about the process you used to develop your plan and will work with you to assess how effectively the plan controls COVID-19 risk. The officer will want to speak to your joint health and safety committee member or worker representative. You should be able to answer the following questions:

- How have you assessed the risk at your workplace?
- How have you implemented protocols to reduce the risk?
- What policies have you developed to address illness in the workplace?
- How are you communicating with and training your staff?
- What are you doing to monitor and update your health and safety plans?

**What documents will I need to show the officer?**  
Currently, inspections are focused on the COVID-19 Safety Plan all employers are required to develop. You should be prepared to show in your safety plan how you're addressing the risks of COVID-19. You are not required to use our COVID-19 Safety Plan, but if you use another document, officers will be reviewing it to ensure that it covers the same content as the template. You may also be asked to show other documents relating to managing workplace safety (e.g., training and orientation records).

**If I get a phone call from WorkSafeBC, does it mean that my business is being inspected?**  
Not necessarily. WorkSafeBC will be reaching out to employers for various reasons to support them throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. You may be contacted by WorkSafeBC regarding your insurance premiums or claims. An occupational health and safety consultant may also contact you to offer support, guidance, and resources in the development of your COVID-19 Safety Plan. If a prevention officer is conducting a health and safety inspection, they will inform you of this when they contact you.

**What happens after the inspection?**  
The officer will send you an inspection report with details about the inspection as well as additional information and resources that may be of value to the workplace. The officer will issue orders if they identify health and safety violations that require correction, as well as the steps you must take to correct them. The officer will follow up with you as needed to ensure the necessary steps are taken to correct the issue. Orders are meant to be instructive and corrective in nature, and being issued an order will not impact your insurance premiums.

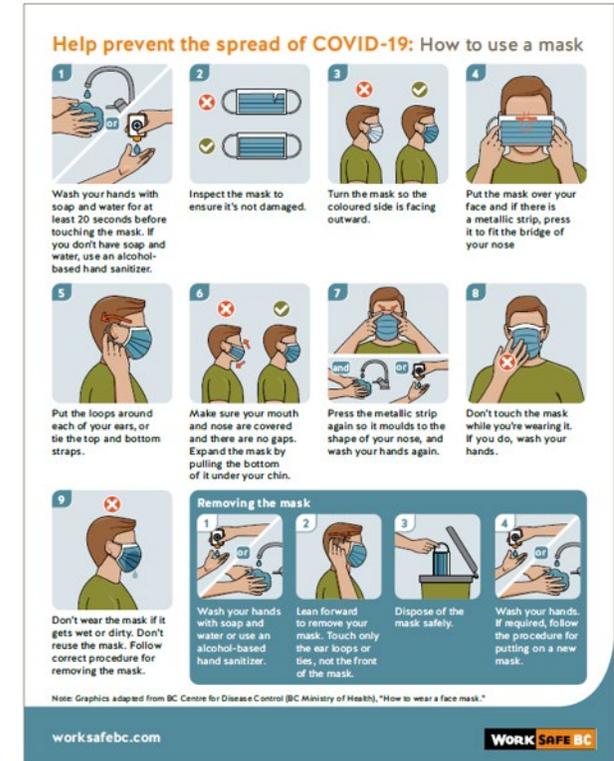
**How will the officer maintain safety during the visit?**  
Officers will follow specific protocols to protect you, your workers, and themselves. These include maintaining physical distance, frequent handwashing, minimizing touching of high-contact surfaces, and staying home when unwell.

**Where can I learn more?**  
Visit [worksafebc.com](https://www.worksafebc.com) to find details about COVID-19 and returning to safe operation. If you need additional health and safety information, contact our Prevention Information Line at 1.888.621.SAFE (1.888.621.7233).

Page 1 of 1 | Inspections during the COVID-19 pandemic  
Frequently asked questions for employers | **WORK SAFE BC**

# Key WorkSafeBC health & safety resources

- [COVID-19 Safety Plan template: fillable PDF and app](#)
- [Reviewing and Updating COVID-19 Safety Plans](#)
- [Selecting and using masks info sheet](#)
- [How to use a mask poster](#)
- [Designing effective barriers resource](#)
- [Cleaning and disinfecting information sheet](#)
- [Handwashing poster](#)
- [Occupancy limit poster](#)
- [Entry check for visitors poster](#)
- [Entry check for workers poster](#)



Find these and other COVID-19 resources at [worksafebc.com/covid-19-resources](https://worksafebc.com/covid-19-resources). Translated versions of resources are also available in Chinese (simplified and traditional), French, Punjabi, Spanish, and Vietnamese.

# Claims: Info for workers and employers

WorkSafeBC continues to support injured and ill workers and their employers during the pandemic.

## Existing claims

- Payments continue .
- Submit expenses and manage claims through the [Online Services Portal](#).
- Service continues, including updates, treatment plans, and return-to-work procedures.

## New claims

- Tell your employer, seek first aid and/or medical attention, and report to WorkSafeBC. This **includes work-related illness cases of COVID-19**.
- Continue to report using phone, online, fax, or mail.
- Services to register, adjudicate, and make payments will continue.
- If you disagree with a decision, you can request a review from the **Review Division**.

For more info, see the [COVID-19 Claims information](#) on worksafebc.com, call the **Claims Call Centre** at 1.888.967.5377, or use the [Email us](#) form on worksafebc.com.

# WorkSafeBC numbers - general

## WorkSafeBC Enquiries

COVID-related enquiries	
Questions	21,319
Reports of potential violations	5,499
Reports of workplace incidents	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>26,821</b>

## WorkSafeBC Social Media Enquiries

COVID-related social media enquiries	
Twitter	336
Facebook	306
Instagram	70
<b>Total</b>	<b>712</b>

## WorkSafeBC Website Activity

COVID-related website activity	
Web content	Page views
COVID-19 health and safety web pages	2,843,597
COVID-19 resources	1,198,224
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,041,821</b>

Source: <https://www.worksafebc.com/en/about-us/covid-19-updates/health-and-safety/prevention-data-for-covid-19> as of January 8, 2021

# WorkSafeBC numbers - prevention

Industry	Inspections	Consultations	Orders
<b>Construction</b> (e.g. commercial and residential construction, roofing, and mechanical installation)	4,478	461	325
<b>Manufacturing</b> (e.g. meat processing, breweries, sawmills, and pharmaceuticals)	2,116	235	251
<b>Primary Resources</b> (e.g. forestry, oil and gas, fishing, and agriculture)	1,540	192	64
<b>Public Sector</b> (e.g. government and law enforcement)	254	92	6
<b>Service Sector</b> (e.g. hotels, restaurants, gyms, hospitals, schools, real estate, hair salons, performing arts, and motion picture)	7,940	2,316	434
<b>Trade</b> (e.g. retail and wholesale operations, supermarkets, and service stations)	4,488	524	300
<b>Transportation and warehousing</b> (e.g. taxis and ride hailing, movers, transit, ferries, recycling depots, and warehouses)	486	196	42
<b>Total</b>	<b>21,302</b>	<b>4,016</b>	<b>1,422</b>

Source: <https://www.worksafebc.com/en/about-us/covid-19-updates/health-and-safety/prevention-data-for-covid-19> as of January 8, 2021

# WorkSafeBC numbers – claims by industry

Industry	Allowed	Disallowed	No adjudication Required	Pending	Rejected	Suspended	Total
<b>Service</b> – Health Care and Social Services	1,150	397	23	312	1	71	<b>1,954</b>
<b>Service</b> – Education	65	55	3	32	1	3	<b>159</b>
<b>Trade</b> – Retail and Wholesale	27	45	6	43	1	22	<b>144</b>
<b>Agriculture</b>	76	17		31		2	<b>126</b>
<b>Self Insured Employers</b>	43	36	4	14	1	28	<b>126</b>
<b>Service</b> – Other subsectors (including business, professional, and other services)	49	38	3	19	1	9	<b>119</b>
<b>Service</b> – Accommodation, Food, and Leisure	39	24	1	18		12	<b>94</b>
<b>Public Administration</b>	31	36	4	9	1	4	<b>85</b>
<b>Manufacturing</b>	34	15	6	8		7	<b>70</b>
<b>Construction</b>	23	19	3	10	1	7	<b>63</b>
<b>Transportation and Related Services</b>	16	22	2	9		5	<b>54</b>
<b>Oil &amp; Gas or Mineral Resources</b>	3	1					<b>4</b>
<b>Unknown Employer or Sector</b>	2	218	9	25		20	<b>274</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,558</b>	<b>923</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>531</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>190</b>	<b>3,272</b>

Source: <https://www.worksafebc.com/en/about-us/covid-19-updates/claims/covid-19-claims-by-industry-sector> as of January 8, 2021

# WorkSafeBC numbers – claims by occupation

Occupation	Allowed	Disallowed
Nurse aides, orderlies, and patient service associates	493	89
Registered nurses and registered psychiatric nurses	242	131
Licensed practical nurses	185	26
Social and community service workers	69	30
Light duty cleaners	46	10
Nursery and greenhouse workers	42	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,558</b>	<b>923</b>

Claims are allowed when the evidence is sufficient to establish the worker has COVID-19 and the risk in the workplace was significantly higher than the ordinary exposure risk.

Claims are typically disallowed because the evidence is insufficient to establish that the worker has COVID-19 disease (based on tests or symptom cluster), and/or the worker went off work strictly as preventative measure.

In order to protect privacy, only occupations with both 5 or more allowed claims and 5 or more disallowed claims are listed.

Source: <https://www.worksafebc.com/en/about-us/covid-19-updates/claims/covid-19-claims-by-industry-sector> as of January 8, 2021

# WorkSafeBC numbers – right to refuse unsafe work

These are inquiries or reports that arise from either workers or employers which indicate a worker is either exercising their right to refuse unsafe work or contemplating exercising their right.

## COVID-related inquiries as of January 5, 2021

Potential Right to Refuse Action Requests	804
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## COVID-related inquiries as of January 5, 2021

Action Requests requiring officer determination	56
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**Additional resources**

# Public health agency websites

For more information, please see the COVID-19 pages on the following websites:

- [BC Centre for Disease Control](#)
- [Office of the provincial health officer](#)
- [HealthLinkBC](#)
- [COVID-19 Symptom Self-Assessment Tool \(BC Ministry of Health\)](#)



BC Centre for Disease Control



## Call

- **1.888.COVID19 (1.888.268.4319):** For non-medical information about COVID-19. Available 7:30 a.m.–8 p.m., 7 days a week.
- **811** (HealthLink BC): To talk to a nurse if you need advice about how you are feeling and what to do next.

# Resources for employers and businesses

- **Health & Safety Associations:** COVID-19 information and resources for industry-specific employers and workers
- **Industry and Employer Associations**
- **Labour Organizations**
- **Small Business BC:** COVID-19 Support Service for BC Businesses
- **Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (CCOHS):** Online products and resources



**Thank you!**

Questions?

[chris.back@worksafebc.com](mailto:chris.back@worksafebc.com)  
[consultationservices@worksafebc.com](mailto:consultationservices@worksafebc.com)