



Canadian Union of Public Employees

Personal Protective Equipment and

How It Applies to COVID-19

March 2021 - Part II - Resource Materials

This is an **INTRODUCTORY** level presentation for the **BC Region**. It is general in nature and addresses core principles that apply across jurisdictions and provinces.

Tom McKenna, National Health and Safety Representative

The information is not legal advice. The materials only address Workers Compensation and Occupational Health and Safety. Nothing in this presentation supersedes the *Workers Compensation Act*, OHS Regulations, Guidelines and Policy. There may also be Collective Agreement rights and obligations. The current law and policy should be reviewed as they change frequently. Legislative, regulation and policy changes may occur.

cope-491*ct



Government of Canada. See Resources and Links of the Resources document.

Government of Canada / Gouvernement du Canada

Search Canada.ca

Canada.ca > Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) > COVID-19 health product industry > COVID-19 medical devices > COVID-19 personal protective equipment (PPE)

Personal protective equipment (COVID-19): Overview

Overview | [How to get authorization](#)

Personal protective equipment (PPE) are items worn to provide a barrier to help prevent potential exposure to infectious disease. These items include:

- gloves
- gowns
- surgical masks
 - surgical masks with visor attachment
- respirators
- face shields
- eye protection
 - goggles

Personal protective equipment sold for medical purposes are classified as medical devices in Canada. Under the *Medical Devices Regulations*, [medical masks](#), [N95 respirators](#), [medical gowns](#), [face shields](#) and medical goggles are Class I medical devices. [Medical gloves](#) are Class II medical devices.

Table of Contents.

- I. Overview of Presentation: Part I - The Power Point Presentation, Part II - The Resource Materials and Part III - The Summary.
- II. What is Personal Protective Equipment and Why is it Important?
- III. The *Workers Compensation Act* (“Act”), the OHS Regulations, Policy and Guidelines.
- IV. How Does Personal Protective Equipment Apply to COVID-19 Safety Plans (BC Region)?
- V. Common Problems that Arise.
- VI. Additional Resources and Links.

Table of Contents. Contd.

- ❑ **Important slides are indicated**



- ❑ **There are multiple system reviews occurring. Significant changes may occur in the next two years. Always refer to the online materials at WorkSafeBC.**
- ❑ **Adhere to the BC Provincial Health Officer's Orders.**

BRITISH COLUMBIA

Home > Public safety and emergency services > Emergency Preparedness, Response & Recovery > B.C.'s res

Province-wide restrictions

Province-wide restrictions

Provincial restrictions are in place to help stop the spread of COVID-19. Some restrictions are made by the Provincial Health Officer (PHO) under the Public Health Act and others are made under the Emergency Program Act (EPA). Most orders can be enforced by police and compliance and enforcement officials.

Last updated: **February 8, 2021**

On this page:

- [PHO order on gatherings and events](#)
- [PHO order on restaurants and bars](#)
- [EPA order on masks in public indoor settings](#)
- [Travel advisory](#)
- [Enforcement](#)

BRITISH COLUMBIA

Workplaces

Employers must review and redouble their efforts on their COVID-19 Safety Plan, remind employees to monitor themselves daily and to always stay home if they have symptoms.

Employers must make every effort to provide work from home options.

- Workplaces must ensure that all workers and customers maintain an appropriate physical distance and extra care should be taken in small office spaces, break rooms and kitchens
- [Review the WorkSafeBC COVID-19 Safety Plan documentation](#)

Daily health check

A daily health check should already be included in every business's existing COVID-19 Safety Plan.

- [Review WorkSafeBC information on daily health checks](#)

The 2003 SARS Commission by Justice Archie Campbell affirmed that the **Precautionary Principle** should be used to guide the development and implementation of hazard controls to keep workers and patients safe during future outbreaks of novel pathogens. **PPE does not eliminate the hazard.**



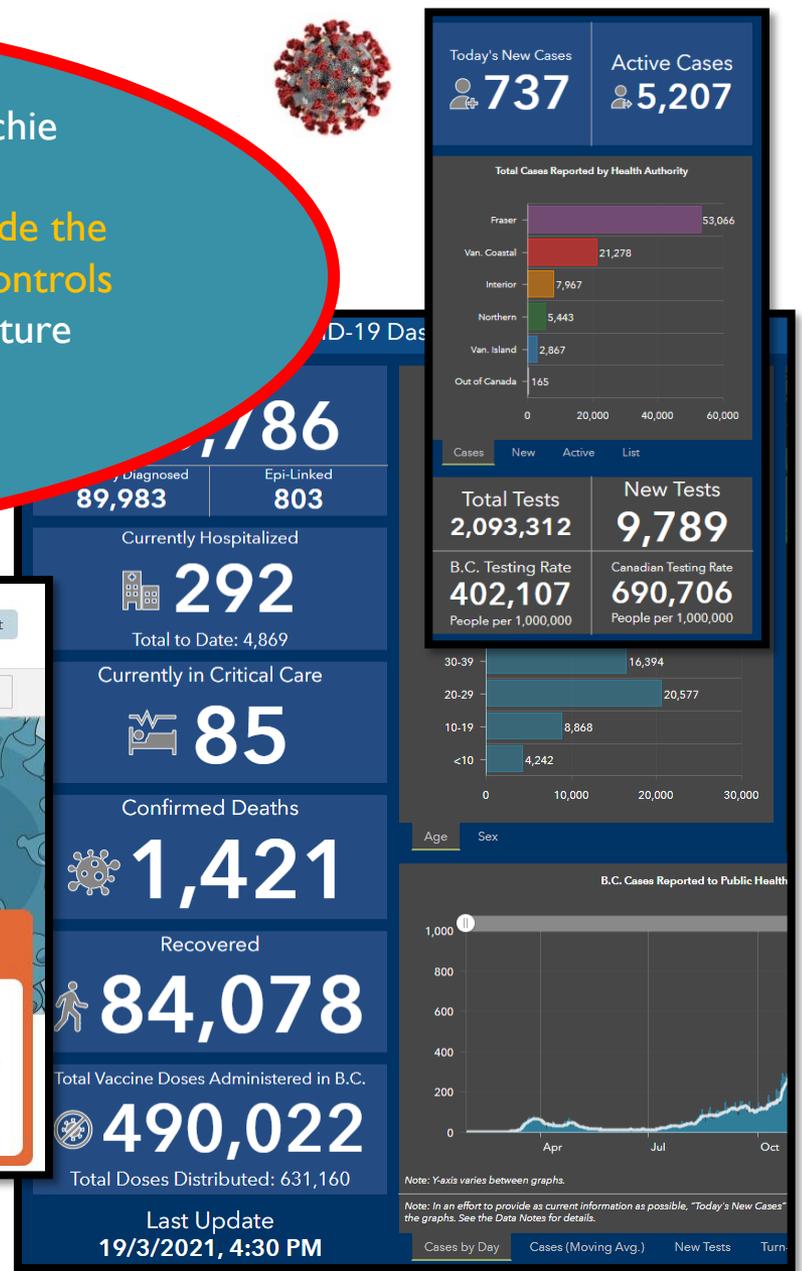
WORK SAFE BC Forms & Resources Law & Policy About Us Contact Us Log in / Create an account

Health & Safety Insurance Claims I Am a... Search worksafebc.com

COVID-19

How do I...

- Develop, review, and update my COVID-19 safety plan
- See my legal requirements for a COVID-19 safety plan
- Find COVID-19 health and safety resources
- Report a claim if I'm a worker
- Report a claim if I'm an employer
- Find public health orders and guidance

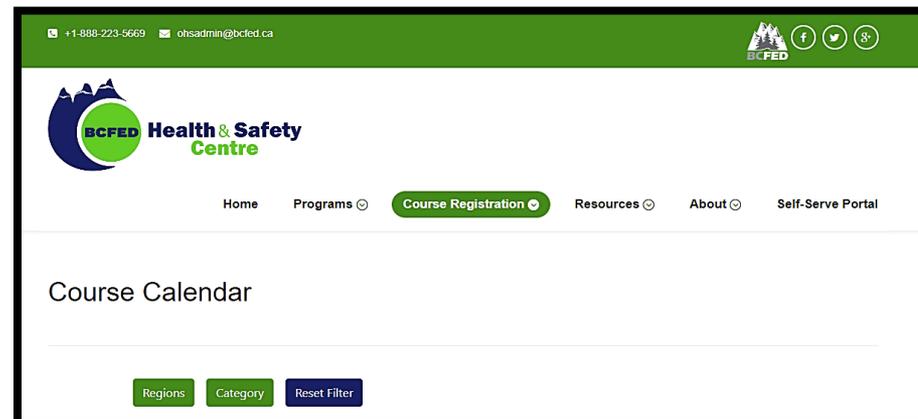


I. Overview of Presentation.

- This is an **INTRODUCTORY** level presentation for the **BC Region**. It is Toolbox Talk that focuses on safety topics such as workplace hazards, safe work practices, etc. Figures are interspersed to illustrate various resources.
- There are **three** documents: the **Resources** document (this document), the short **Power Point Presentation** and a two-page **Summary Sheet** of key points. These were distributed prior to the presentation and are on the CUPE BC OHS Committee website.
- **These three documents focus on core concepts and principles.** The Resources document contains more detailed information.
- **These three documents do not explain individual Personal Protective Equipment e.g. N95 respirators.**

I. Overview of Presentation. Contd.

- The Presentation portion by the facilitator will be one third of the webinar. Participants will have the remainder to ask questions, clarify how the materials can be used, etc.
- Information changes daily – Rely upon the most current information by the BC Provincial Health Officer, the BC CDC, the health authorities and WorkSafeBC.
- For full length WorkSafeBC accepted courses see:



Does Personal Protective Equipment relate to health and safety and COVID-19 and, if so, how? Answer: It cannot be applied in isolation as it is the lowest level of protection.

There is overlap between the **Precautionary Principle**, **Hazard and Risk Assessments**, the **Hierarchy of Controls** and **Personal Protective Equipment**.

What does the simplified macro level process look like ...
(see next slide)

Simplified process

Start here

Foundational Principles:
Precautionary Principle, Due Diligence, Hierarchy of Controls, the 4 Rights, etc.

Exposure Control Plan (ECP).
See 6.34 of the BC OHS Regulations. There are at least eight components.

The Joint Health and Safety Committee is part of every stage of the process.

Safety Plan (COVID-19).

Employer's Overall Health and Safety Program.



Government of Canada. See Resources and Links of the Resources document.

Government of Canada / Gouvernement du Canada Search Canada.ca

MENU

Canada.ca > Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) > COVID-19 health product industry > COVID-19 medical devices

COVID-19 personal protective equipment (PPE)

Information on personal protective equipment in relation to COVID-19

Most requested

- [COVID-19 for health professionals](#)
- [What's new - medical devices](#)
- [Reprocessing of single use respirators](#)
- [Non-medical masks and face coverings](#)
- [3D printing and other manufacturing of PPEs](#)

[About personal protective equipment](#)
Expedited access, authorization for sale, 3D printing and innovative manufacturing, who to contact

[Medical masks and respirators](#)
Expedited access, authorization for sale, addressing shortages, reprocessing N95 respirators

[Medical gowns](#)
Infection prevention, types, expedited access, authorization for sale, guidance for industry

[Medical gloves](#)
Infection prevention, types, expedited access, authorization for sale, guidance for industry

[Face shields](#)
About face shields, standards and requirements, regulatory authorization, feedback

[Authorized PPE products](#)
List of personal protective products authorized for sale

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II. What is Personal Protective Equipment and Why is it Important?

- Personal Protective Equipment is the lowest level of protection in the Hierarchy of Controls but is the most commonly sought-after protection by workers and employers.
- Many workers and employers do not know the role Personal Protective Equipment plays in slide 9. Do you know where this is located? Answer: See slide 36, BC OHS Regulation 6.34.
- The Precautionary Principle **MUST** be applied to Personal Protective Equipment as per the OHS Regulations and in the OHS Regulation Guidelines e.g. OHS Regulation 6.34.
- It is very important to remember the overlap between key principles as per slide 9.



II. What is Personal Protective Equipment and Why is it Important? Contd.

- To recap:
 - The use of Personal Protective Equipment should be based on the Precautionary Principle.
 - As per 6.33 and 6.34 of the OHS Regulations in BC:

The precautionary principle, as defined in section 6.33 of the *Regulation*, means adopting provisional precautions covering all routes of transmission, based on a higher level of protection when the identity, causation or routes of transmission of the biological agent designated as a hazardous substance have not been established.



II. What is Personal Protective Equipment and Why is it Important? Contd.

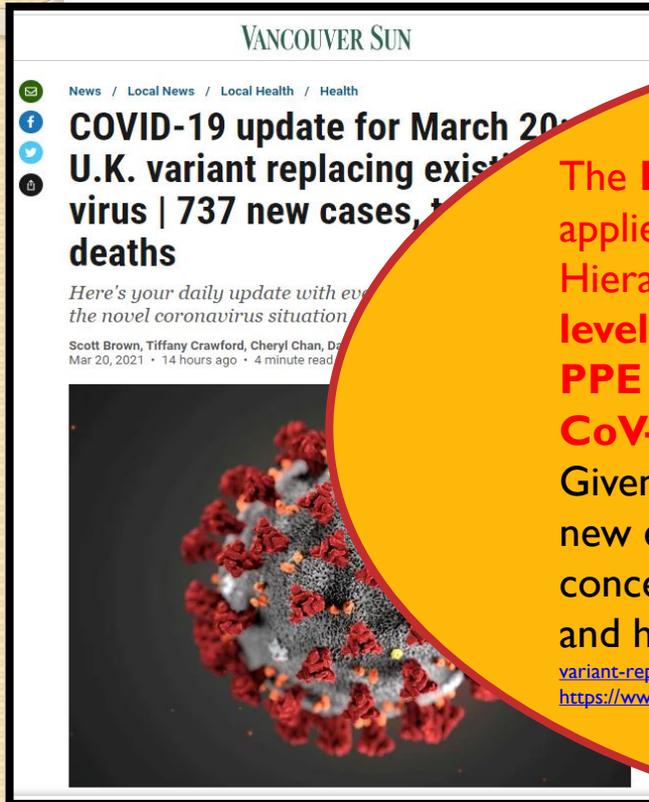
- The core wording of the Precautionary Principle is:
When an activity raises threats of harm to human health, the environment, etc., precautionary measures should be taken even if some cause-and-effect relationships are not fully established scientifically

And,

The highest level of safety control should be used until such time as there is definitive evidence that such a control is not required.



II. What is Personal Protective Equipment and Why is it Important? Contd.



The **Precautionary Principle** should always be applied to **Exposure Control Plans** (including the Hierarchy of Controls) because **PPE is the lowest level of protection in the Hierarchy of Controls. PPE does not eliminate the hazard of SARS-CoV-2 and COVID-19.**

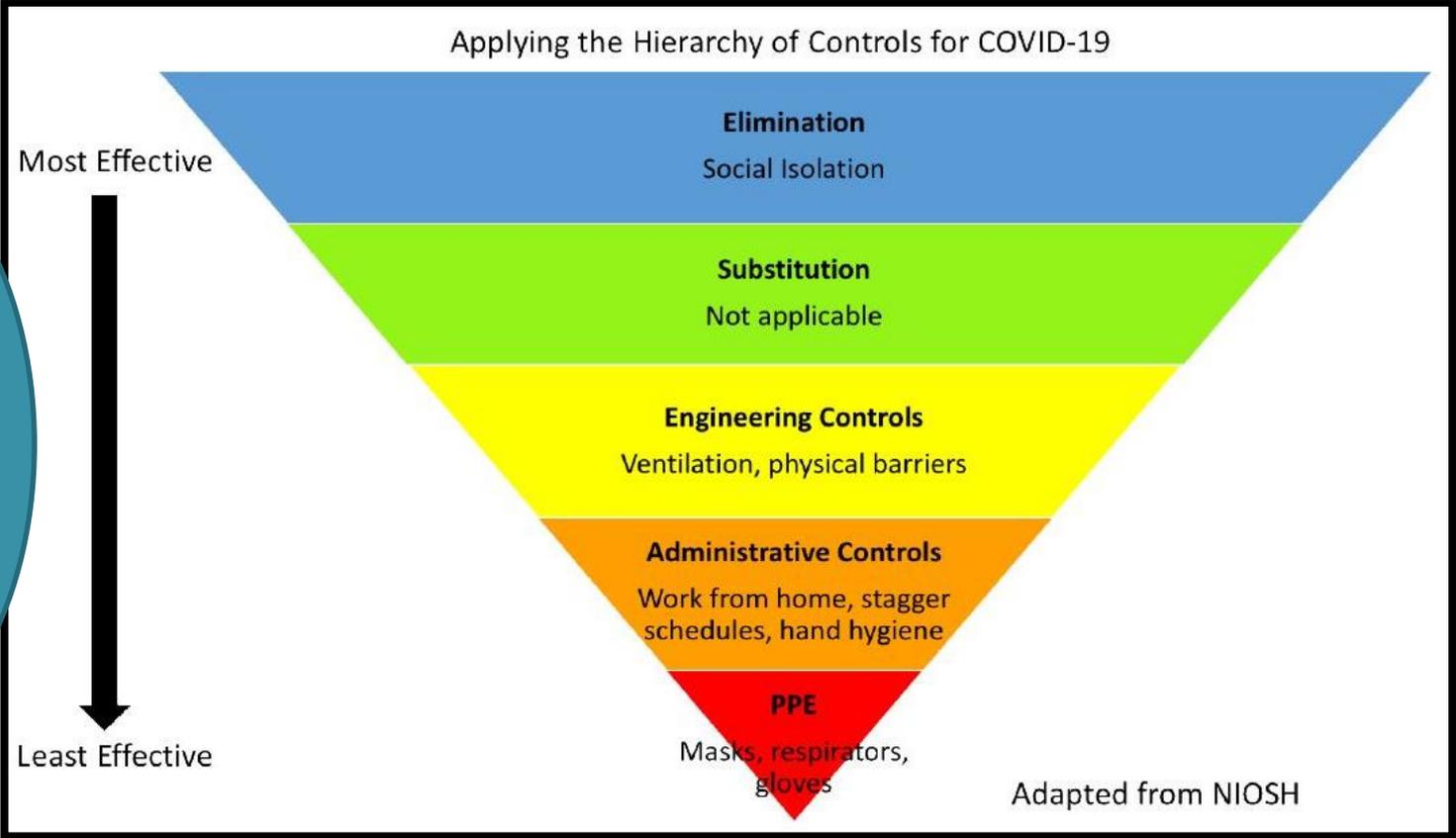
Given the evolving science regarding SARS-CoV-2 and new evidence that people may be reinfected, variants of concern may cause higher mortality rates (up to 72%) and higher infection rates (58%) <https://vancouversun.com/news/u-k-covid-19-variant-replacing-existing-virus-in-b-c-accounts-for-12-per-cent-of-new-cases> and <https://www.cnn.com/2021/03/20/health/variant-b-117-vaccines-work/index.html>

II. What is Personal Protective Equipment and Why is it Important? Contd.

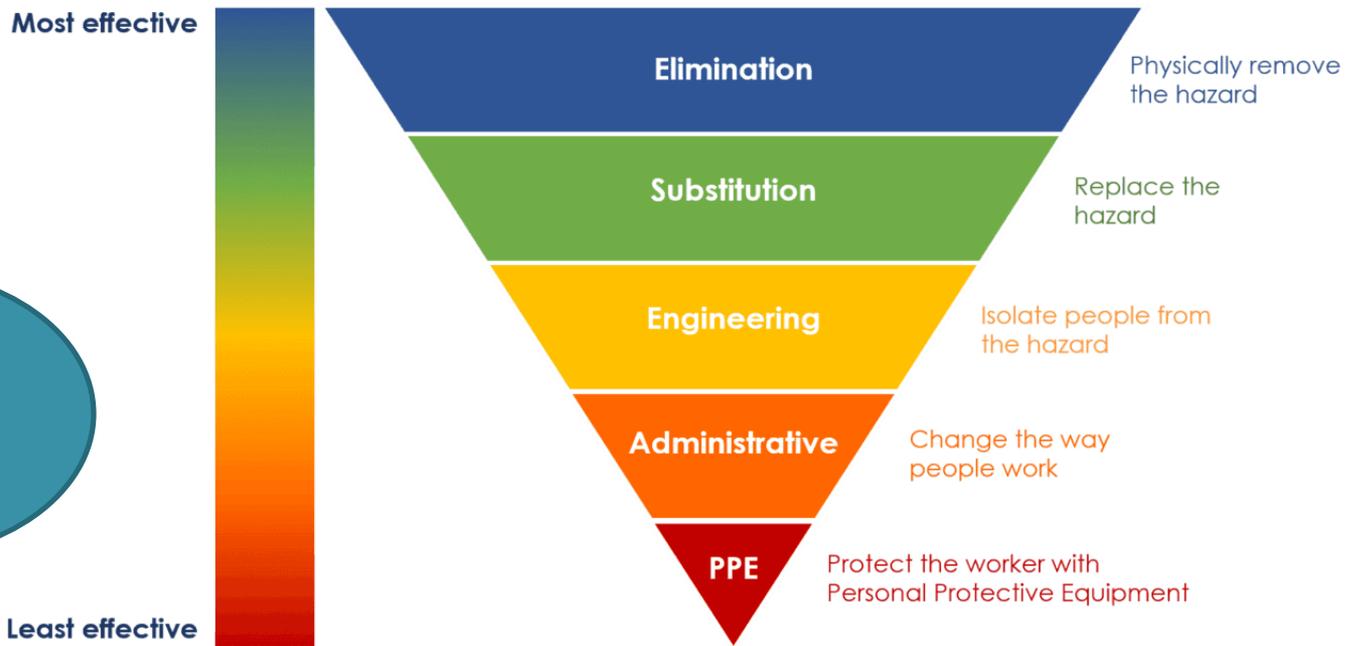
- The Hierarchy of Controls is “based on a higher level of protection”.
- Personal Protective Equipment would be the lowest level of protection.
- Every version of the Hierarchy of Controls has Personal Protective Equipment at the bottom of the hierarchy. See the next several slides for examples.



Johns Hopkins
Bloomberg
School of
Public Health.
See Resources
and Links of
the Resources
document.



II. What is Personal Protective Equipment and Why is it Important? Contd.

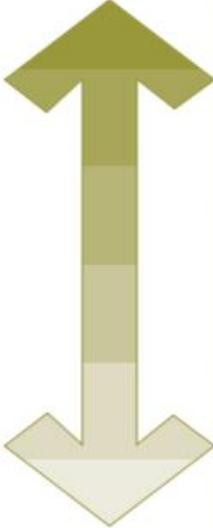


The standard version.

II. What is Personal Protective Equipment and Why is it Important? Contd.

WorkSafeBC.
See Resources
and Links.

Hierarchy of controls from most effective to least effective

 <p>Most effective</p> <p>Least effective</p>	1. Elimination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eliminate human interaction from the process Eliminate pinch points Automate material handling
	2. Substitution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Replace a hazardous product, process, or piece of equipment with one that is less hazardous
	3. Engineering controls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mechanical hard stops Guards Interlocked guards Presence-sensing devices Two-hand controls
	4. Awareness controls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Warning signs and labels Lights, beacons, and strobes Computer warnings "Restricted Space" painted on floor Beeper Horns and sirens
	5. Administrative controls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safe work procedures Equipment inspections Training Lockout
	6. Personal protective equipment (PPE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safety eyewear and face shields Hearing protection Gloves Respirators

 See the appendices for a sample committee recommendation.

II. What is Personal Protective Equipment and Why is it Important? Contd.

Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety.

Controlling COVID-19 in the Workplace

Apply the Hierarchy of Controls

Focus on the most effective methods first and then move on to the next level of control. **In all cases practice physical distancing, hand hygiene, and respiratory etiquette.**



Elimination and Substitution

- Allow workers to work remotely where and if possible.
- Assess the need to report to the workplace in person on an individual or job role basis.
- People with immunocompromising health conditions (including chronic conditions such as diabetes, heart and lung issues, or cancer) or who live with immunocompromised individuals may need to continue to work remotely.
- Use technologies to facilitate working remotely, such as teleconferencing.

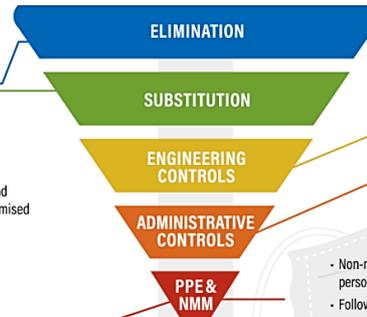


Personal Protective Equipment



Respirators Face Shields Gowns

Most effective



Least effective



Engineering Controls

- Physical barriers.
- Increased ventilation and high efficiency filters.
- Sensors or no- or low-touch controls for water taps, doors, and garbage lids.



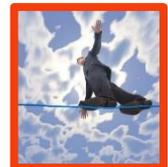
Administrative Controls

- Communicate risks and rules.
- Limit occupancy, stagger shifts/teams.
- Use electronic communications for sign-ins and administrative work.
- Screen workers and/or customers.
- Clean and sanitize frequently.
- Practice physical distancing, hand hygiene, and respiratory etiquette.
- Change work practices to encourage physical distancing.

Non-Medical MASKS

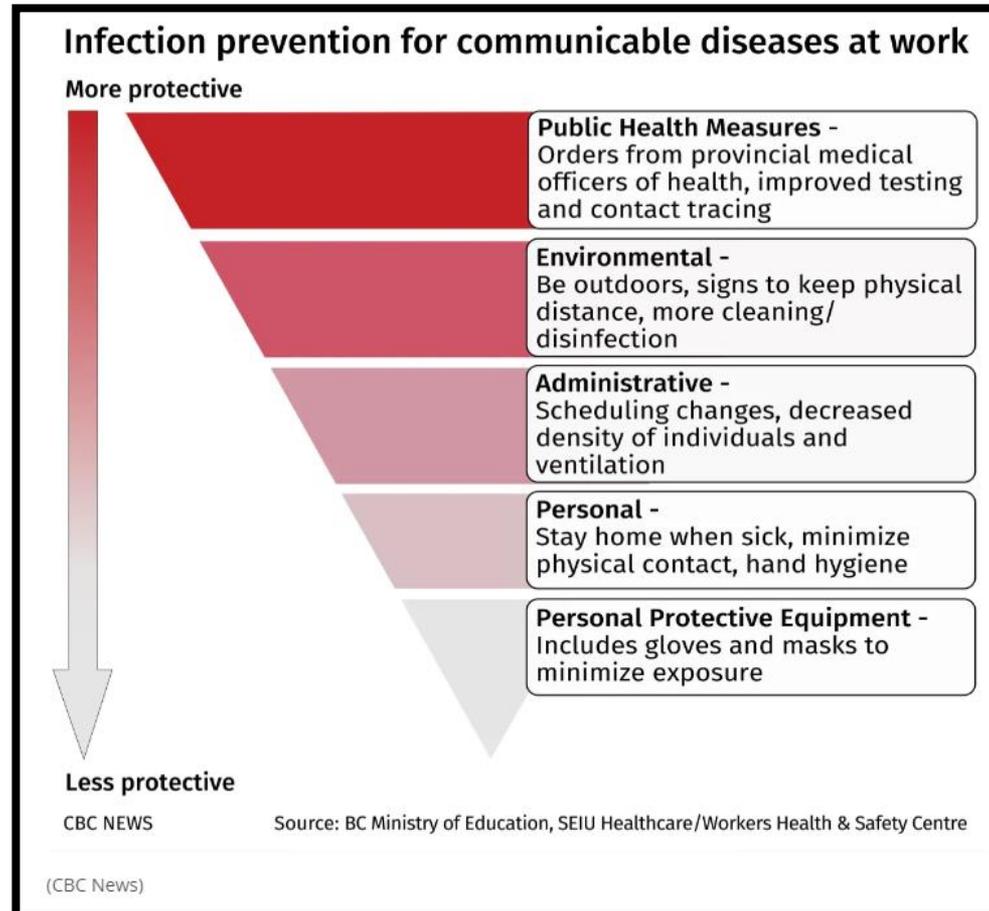
- Non-medical masks are NOT personal protective equipment.
- Follow advice from your public health agency about when to use a non-medical mask.
- If your mask becomes damaged, wet or dirty, replace it with a fresh one.
- Wearing a non-medical mask or face covering is recommended when you cannot consistently keep 2 metres away from others, especially in crowded settings.
- Wearing a mask alone will not prevent the spread of COVID-19, but it can help. Continue to practice physical distancing and good hygiene.

CCOHS.ca
Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety



II. What is Personal Protective Equipment and Why is it Important? Contd.

BC Ministry of
Education and
SIEU Healthcare
/ Workers Health
and Safety
Centre.
CBC News. July
24, 2020.



II. What is Personal Protective Equipment and Why is it Important? Contd.

- Each sector (and school district, employer, department and job) will have its own requirements for Personal Protective Equipment.
- Where do you find out which requirements apply to each sector in BC? See WorkSafeBC Industry-specific information in slide 22 at <https://www.worksafebc.com/en/covid-19/industry-specific-information>
- The Provincial Government COVID-19 Health & Safety Guidelines for K-12 Settings determines how Personal Protective Equipment is to be used in the K-12 sector are at slides 23 and 24. <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/safe-caring-orderly/k-12-covid-19-health-safety-guidelines.pdf>
- The next three slides show examples of the above (BC region).





Home > COVID-19 > Industry-specific information

COVID-19

Health and safety

Industry-specific information

Accommodation

Agriculture

Arts and culture

Child care and day camps

Community social services (non-residential)

Community social services (residential)

Construction

Education (K-12)

Education (post-secondary)

Faith-based organizations

Forestry

Industry-specific information

WorkSafeBC has developed protocols to address health and safety considerations in specific industries. Industry protocols are listed in the left-side of this page. The information and resources below are for all employers to assist them in ensuring the risk of exposure to the virus that causes COVID-19 is minimized at their workplace.

[COVID-19 safety plans](#)

[If you have a question or concern](#)

[Responsibilities](#)

[More information](#)

[Resolving concerns about unsafe work](#)

COVID-19 safety plans

Employers are required to develop a [COVID-19 Safety Plan](#) that outlines the policies, guidelines, and procedures they have put in place to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission. Employers must involve frontline workers, joint health and safety committees, and supervisors in identifying protocols for their workplace.

Employers are not required to submit plans to WorkSafeBC for approval, but in accordance with the [order of the provincial health officer](#), this plan must be posted at the worksite and posted to the website, if there is one. During a WorkSafeBC inspection, we will ask employers about the steps they have taken to protect their workers and to see their plan. To learn more, read [Inspections during the COVID-19 pandemic](#).

WorkSafeBC.
See Resources
and Links of the
Resources
document.

II. What is Personal Protective Equipment and Why is it Important? Contd.

BC Provincial Government. See Resources and Links of the Resources document.



Provincial COVID-19 Health & Safety Guidelines for K-12 Settings

Updated February 23, 2021



Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Although personal protective equipment (including masks) is the lowest level on the [hierarchy of Infection Prevention and Exposure Control Measures](#), it can provide an additional layer of protection when more effective measures are not feasible. Non-medical masks and face coverings (hereafter referred to collectively as “masks”) have a role to play in preventing the spread of COVID-19. They provide some protection to the wearer and to those around them.

Those wearing masks must still maintain physical distancing whenever possible. There must be no crowding or congregating of people, even if masks are worn.

Masks should not be used in place of the other safety measures detailed in this document. For example, masks are not a replacement for the need for physical distancing for in-class instruction delivered to students from more than one learning group (refer to the *Hierarchy for Infection Prevention and Exposure Control Measures for Communicable Disease* graphic on page 6).

II. What is Personal Protective Equipment and Why is it Important? Contd.

BC Provincial Government.
See Resources and Links of the Resources document.

K-12 STAFF:

All K-12 staff are required to wear a mask or a face shield (in which case a mask should be worn in addition to the face shield) in schools - both within and outside of their learning group, except when:

- sitting in (or standing at) their desk/workstation, or while maintaining physical distance (2M), in a classroom/learning environment;
- there is a barrier in place;
- eating and drinking; or
- outdoors;

All K-12 staff are required to wear a mask or a face shield (in which case a mask should be worn in addition to the face shield) on school buses.

In "staff only" spaces, staff are required to wear masks when indoors, unable to maintain physical distance (2M), and a barrier is not present. [WorkSafeBC guidance for offices](#) also lists measures that should be considered and implemented as applicable to the workplace for staff in office environments (both inside and outside of 'bricks and mortar' schools).

Exceptions will also be made for staff who cannot tolerate masks for health or behavioural reasons. Schools must not require a health-care provider note (i.e. a doctor's note) to confirm if staff cannot wear a mask.



COVID-19 health and safety: Selecting and using masks in non-health care settings



This information sheet outlines the limitations of masks as a protective measure, and describes how to select and use different types of masks including cloth masks, surgical masks, and disposable respirators.

Public health orders

On November 19, 2020, the provincial health officer (PHO) announced that the Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General would be issuing a public safety order under the *Emergency Program Act* around mandatory use of masks. On November 24, the Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General issued an order requiring all British Columbians, 12 years of age and older, to wear masks in many indoor settings. Refer to [mandatory masks](#) for more information.

Additional resources and information about COVID-19 are also available.

Download PDF

Also available in: Tiếng Việt, ਪੰਜਾਬੀ, 한국어, 中文 (繁體), 中文(简体), Español, Français

Publication Date: Jun 2020

File type: PDF (1 MB)

Asset type: Information Sheet

Share via Email (Anonymously)



Related Resources

- Help prevent the spread of COVID-19: How to use a mask
- COVID-19 health and safety: Selecting and using face shields in non-health care settings

WorkSafeBC.
See Resources
and Links.

WorkSafeBC.
See Resources
and Links.

COVID-19 health and safety

Selecting and using masks in non-health care settings

The most effective ways to prevent the spread of COVID-19 infection include having sick workers stay at home, physical distancing, handwashing, and cleaning and disinfecting work areas. Employers should only consider using masks as an additional control measure if physical distancing is not possible and workers are in close, prolonged contact with others.

This document provides guidance on using masks and single-use respirators in non-health care settings. For health care settings, refer to the [BC Centre for Disease Control](#).

How COVID-19 spreads

COVID-19 is an infectious disease that mainly spreads between humans through direct contact with an infected person or their respiratory droplets. Respiratory droplets are generated by breathing, speaking, coughing, and sneezing. Your exposure risk is greatest when you have prolonged close contact with an infected person.

The virus can also spread if you touch a contaminated surface and then touch your eyes, mouth, or nose. A surface can become contaminated if droplets land on it or if someone touches it with contaminated hands.

Should your workers use masks in the workplace?

Some regulated industries or industry associations may recommend or require the use of certified medical masks or single-use respirators to protect workers against chemical, physical, or biological hazards, including COVID-19.

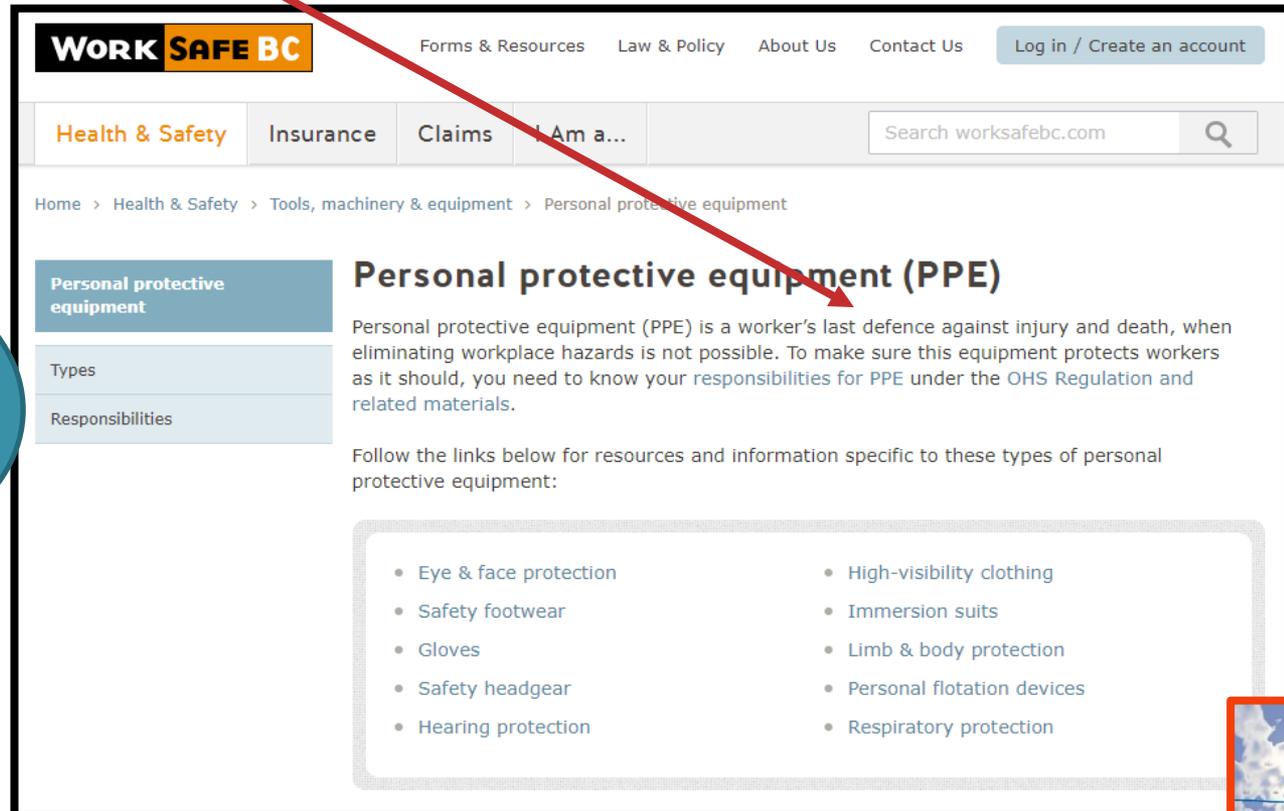
As an employer, you need to understand the limitations of masks as a protective measure. If masks are recommended, you must ensure

they are selected and used appropriately. If your workers are wearing masks, ensure they are aware of the following:

- Make sure you know how to wear your mask. Follow manufacturer or industry specifications and directions.
- Don't wear masks below the nose or chin. This can increase the risk of exposure.
- Keep your mask clean and dry. If it gets wet, it's less effective at preventing the spread of droplets.
- Change masks as necessary. You may need several masks available as they build up moisture during the day and become less effective. If your mask becomes wet, soiled, or damaged, replace it immediately.
- Make sure you know how to clean your mask. Wash cloth masks every day using the warmest water setting. Store in a clean, dry place to prevent contamination. Disposable masks cannot be laundered.
- Practise good hygiene even if you're wearing a mask. Don't remove your mask to cough or sneeze. After coughing or sneezing, wash your hands. Don't touch your eyes, nose, or mouth.

II. What is Personal Protective Equipment and Why is it Important? Contd.

- Personal Protective Equipment – Is “a worker’s last line of defence” as per WorkSafeBC:



WORK SAFE BC Forms & Resources Law & Policy About Us Contact Us Log in / Create an account

Health & Safety Insurance Claims I Am a... Search worksafebc.com

Home > Health & Safety > Tools, machinery & equipment > Personal protective equipment

Personal protective equipment (PPE)

Personal protective equipment (PPE) is a worker’s last defence against injury and death, when eliminating workplace hazards is not possible. To make sure this equipment protects workers as it should, you need to know your responsibilities for PPE under the OHS Regulation and related materials.

Follow the links below for resources and information specific to these types of personal protective equipment:

- Eye & face protection
- Safety footwear
- Gloves
- Safety headgear
- Hearing protection
- High-visibility clothing
- Immersion suits
- Limb & body protection
- Personal flotation devices
- Respiratory protection

WorkSafeBC.
See Resources
and Links of the
Resources
document.



II. What is Personal Protective Equipment and Why is it Important? Contd.

- Personal Protective Equipment includes protection for the face, eye, hand, respiratory protection, gowns, etc. (for SARS-COV-2).
- It may include personal masks.
- The requirements will vary by direction from the Provincial Health Officer, Ministry, by sector, by employer, by department, by job, etc.
- The hazard and risk assessment is the foundation for determining what Personal Protective Equipment is required and when.
- The hazard and risk assessment is part of the Exposure Control Plan.
- The Exposure Control Plan is part of the Safety Plan.
- The Safety Plan is part of the employer's overall health and safety program.



II. What is Personal Protective Equipment and Why is it Important? Contd.

- With some exceptions, **authorization by Health Canada is required before medical devices can be imported and sold in Canada.**
- There are different medical device authorizations depending on the role of the company (manufacturer, importer or distributor) and the class of medical device:
- A medical device licence authorizes a manufacturer to import or sell their Class II, III or IV medical devices.



The screenshot shows the Government of Canada website interface. At the top, there is a search bar with the text "Search Canada.ca" and a magnifying glass icon. Below the search bar, there is a "MENU" dropdown button. The breadcrumb trail reads: "Canada.ca > Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) > COVID-19 health product industry > COVID-19 medical devices > COVID-19 personal protective equipment (PPE)". The main heading is "Personal protective equipment (COVID-19): Overview". Below the heading, there are two buttons: "Overview" (highlighted in dark blue) and "How to get authorization" (in a light grey box).

III. The *Workers Compensation Act*, the OHS Regulations, Policy and Guidelines.

- General Health and Safety Information:
 - There are overlapping legislation, regulations, policies and guidelines that affect occupational health and safety.
 - The BC Provincial Health Orders, *Workers Compensation Act*, the OHS Regulations and the Prevention Policies are mandatory.
 - The BC Provincial Health Orders are the primary source of direction.
 - The OHS Regulation/legislation Guidelines only interpret the OHS Regulations.

III. The Workers Compensation Act, the OHS Regulations, Policy and Guidelines. Contd.

- Sample key sections of the revised **Act** related to Personal Protective Equipment (as it relates to COVID-19) include:
 - ... there are none that specifically address Personal Protective Equipment for COVID-19.
 - Workers and Joint Health and Safety Committees can rely on the general provisions that follow:

WorkSafeBC.
See Resources
and Links of the
Resources
document.

Division 4 — General Duties of Employers, Workers and Others

- 21 General duties of employers
- 22 General duties of workers
- 23 General duties of supervisors
- 24 Coordination at multiple-employer workplaces
- 25 General duties of owners
- 26 General duties of suppliers



III. The Workers Compensation Act, the OHS Regulations, Policy and Guidelines. Contd.

- Sample key sections of the **OHS Regulations** that relate to the Personal Protective Equipment:

- 6.33 Precautionary principle
- 6.34 Exposure control plan
- 8.1 to 8.18 Personal Protective Equipment
- 8.32 to 8.45 Personal Protective Equipment
- The OHS Regulation Guidelines

The screenshot displays the WORKSAFE BC website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the logo and links for 'Forms & Resources', 'Law & Policy', 'About Us', and 'Contact Us'. A search bar is located on the right. Below the navigation bar, the breadcrumb trail reads: 'Home > Law & Policy > Occupational Health & Safety > Searchable OHS Regulation & related materials > Occupational Health and Safety Regulation > OHS Regulation Part 8: Personal Protective Clothing and Equipment'. The main content area is titled 'OHS Regulation Part 8: Personal Protective Clothing and Equipment' and includes a 'My Handbook (0)' button. A 'Contents' section lists various sub-sections, including '8.1 Definitions', 'GENERAL REQUIREMENTS' (8.2-8.10), 'SAFETY HEADGEAR' (8.11-8.13), and 'EYE AND FACE PROTECTION' (8.14-8.17). A sidebar on the left provides a detailed table of contents for the entire OHS Regulation, with '8. Personal Protective Clothing and Equipment' highlighted. In the bottom right corner of the screenshot, there is a small image of a person working on a high-altitude structure, possibly a construction site, with a blue sky background.

WORK SAFE BC Forms & Resources Law & Policy About Us Contact Us [Log in / Create an account](#)

Health & Safety Insurance Claims I Am a...

Home > COVID-19 > Health and safety > COVID-19 FAQs

COVID-19

Health and safety

What employers should do

What workers should do

COVID-19 FAQs

Below are answers to frequently asked questions from British Columbian workers and employers focusing on how to maintain a healthy and safe workplace during the COVID-19 outbreak. Questions and answers are grouped under various topic headings.

The information on this page is based on current recommendations and may change. For the latest guidance, please see the following websites:

- [COVID-19 safety plans](#)
- [Employer obligations](#)
- [Joint health and safety committees and worker representatives](#)
- [Mental health](#)
- [Incident investigations](#)
- [Exposure control plans](#)
- [Illness in the workplace](#)
- [Workplace entry restrictions](#)
- [Health monitoring and temperature checks](#)
- [Workers moving between locations](#)
- [Personal protective equipment](#)
- [COVID-19 safety in vehicles](#)
- [Worker accommodation](#)
- [Resolving concerns about unsafe work](#)

WorkSafeBC.
See Resources
and Links.



WorkSafeBC.
See Resources
and Links.

COVID-19 safety plans

Employers are required to develop a [COVID-19 Safety Plan](#) that outlines the policies, guidelines, and procedures they have put in place to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission. Employers must involve frontline workers, joint health and safety committees, and supervisors in identifying protocols for their workplace. Refer to the [COVID-19 Safety Plan OHS Guideline](#) for information about developing a safety plan, including the level of detail required and using supporting documentation.

Below are answers to questions you may have about developing your plan.

Do I need to submit my COVID-19 safety plans to WorkSafeBC for approval?

Employers do not need to submit their COVID-19 safety plan to WorkSafeBC for approval, but in accordance with the order of the [Provincial Health Officer](#), this plan **must be posted** at the worksite and on your website, if you have one. During a WorkSafeBC inspection, we will ask employers about the steps they have taken to protect their workers and to see their plan.

How will businesses know how to develop this COVID-19 safety plan?

See our [Industry-specific information](#) page for general guidance on developing your plans. It lays out a six-step process that employers should follow to prepare to return to operation safely, in a manner that reduces the potential for COVID-19 transmission. See our [COVID-19 Safety Plan](#) template for more information.

WorkSafeBC also worked with industry stakeholders to prepare industry-specific protocols and resources during Phase 1 and Phases 2 and 3 of B.C.'s [Restart Plan](#), which employers can refer to for their plans.

As part of your planning process, you must involve workers as much as possible to ensure their concerns are heard and addressed. This includes frontline workers, supervisors, Joint Health and Safety Committees, and/or worker representatives.

What are the consequences of reopening without a COVID-19 safety plan in place?

WorkSafeBC will be engaging directly with employers and workers in returning industries through education, consultation and workplace inspections. Enforcement measures will be considered if employers are not taking measures to protect workers from COVID-19 exposure.

IV. How Does the Personal Protective Equipment Apply to COVID-19 Safety Plans?

- Personal Protective Equipment is part of the Safety Plan.
- A Safety Plan starts with the Exposure Control Plan.
- The Exposure Control Plan contains at least eight components as per slide 36 - One of these is the hazard and risk assessment.
- WorkSafeBC states under COVID-19 FAQs that:
“WorkSafeBC requires employers to **continually assess the risk of COVID-19 transmission at their workplaces and to apply controls to control that risk.** The process for assessing risk in the workplace and selecting appropriate controls is outlined in the COVID-19 Safety Plan.”

<https://www.worksafebc.com/en/covid-19/health-and-safety>



WorkSafeBC.
See Resources
and Links of the
Resources
document.

6.34 Exposure control plan

- (1) If a worker has or may have occupational exposure, the employer must develop and implement an exposure control plan, based on the precautionary principle, that meets the requirements of section 5.54 and that includes the following:
 - (a) a risk assessment conducted by a qualified person to determine if there is a potential for occupational exposure by any route of transmission;
 - (b) a list of all work activities for which there is a potential for occupational exposure;
 - (c) engineering controls and administrative controls to eliminate or minimize the potential for occupational exposure;
 - (d) standard or routine infection control precautions and transmission-based precautions for all work activities that have been identified as having a potential for occupational exposure, including
 - (i) housekeeping practices designed to keep the workplace clean and free from spills, splashes or other accidental contamination,
 - (ii) work procedures to ensure that contaminated laundry is isolated, bagged and handled as little as possible, and
 - (iii) work procedures to ensure that laboratory or other samples containing a biological agent designated as a hazardous substance in section 5.1.1 are handled in accordance with the *Laboratory Biosafety Guidelines 3rd edition, 2004* , issued by the Public Health Agency of Canada;
 - (e) a description of personal protective equipment designed to eliminate or minimize occupational exposure;
 - (f) a program to inform workers about the contents of the exposure control plan and to provide them with adequate education, training and supervision to work safely with, and in proximity to, a biological agent designated as a hazardous substance in section 5.1.1;
 - (g) a record of all training and education provided to workers in the program described in paragraph (f);
 - (h) a record of all workers who have been exposed, while performing work activities, to a biological agent designated as a hazardous substance in section 5.1.1.

[Enacted by B.C. Reg. 319/2007, effective February 1, 2008.]

[Amended by B.C. Reg. 312/2010, effective February 1, 2011.]

COVID-19 Safety Plan



Employers are required to develop a COVID-19 Safety Plan that outlines the policies, guidelines, and procedures they have put in place to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission. This tool will guide you through a six-step process to help you create your plan. The tool is provided as a fillable PDF you can download and save with the details of the plan for your workplace.

The COVID-19 Safety Plan can also be completed on any mobile device using the [COVID-19 Safety Plan app](#).

Additional resources and information about COVID-19 are also available, including a [guide](#) to reviewing and updating your safety plan in response to changing conditions or Provincial Health Officer orders.

Download PDF

Also available in: Tiếng Việt, ਪੰਜਾਬੀ, 한국어, 中文 (繁體), 中文(简体), Español, Français

Publication Date: Jan 2021

File type: PDF (299 KB)

Asset type: Checklist

Form: 12E54

Share via Email (Anonymously)



WorkSafeBC.
See Resources
and Links of the
Resources
document.

IV. How Does the Personal Protective Equipment Apply to COVID-19 Safety Plans? Contd.

- The reference to Personal Protective Equipment in the Exposure Control Plan is at OHS Regulation 6.34(1)(e) of the OHS Regulations.
 - “(e) a description of personal protective equipment designed to eliminate or minimize occupational exposure;”
- Proper training must be provided as OHS Regulation 6.34(1)(f):
 - “a program to inform workers about the contents of the exposure control plan and to provide them with adequate education, training and supervision to work safely with, and in proximity to, a biological agent designated as a hazardous substance in section 5.1.1;”



IV. How Does the Personal Protective Equipment Apply to COVID-19 Safety Plans? Contd.

- Personal masks are not part of every Safety Plan.

WorkSafeBC.
See Resources
and Links of the
Resources
document.

Personal protective equipment

Do workers need to wear masks to protect themselves from the virus that causes COVID-19?

WorkSafeBC requires employers to continually assess the risk of COVID-19 transmission at their workplaces and to apply controls to control that risk. The process for assessing risk in the workplace and selecting appropriate controls is outlined in the [COVID-19 Safety Plan](#). Some COVID-19 Safety Plans may include the use of masks as part of a hierarchy of controls implemented at the workplace. For more information, see [Controlling exposure](#).

Do workers need to wear gloves to protect themselves from the virus that causes COVID-19?

Medical experts say that it's not necessary for workers in non-health care settings to wear gloves to prevent the spread of the virus. Other measures, such as physical distancing and good hygiene practices, are more effective in preventing the risk of transmission.

How should I respond if a worker wishes to wear optional personal protective equipment (PPE), like face masks, where there is no specific requirements for PPE?

The use of optional personal protective equipment (PPE) by workers is not addressed in the *Workers Compensation Act* or the Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Regulation. However, employers are required to maintain healthy and safe workplaces and to institute measures to ensure that safety concerns raised by workers are addressed. In this case, the use of optional PPE by a worker would likely suggest that the worker feels that the risk of COVID-19 exposure is not adequately controlled through other measures, such as physical distancing and hygiene measures. The employer should review the control measures in place to determine whether they are adequately controlling the risk of COVID-19 exposure and whether additional measures are warranted. As noted in the hierarchy of controls, PPE is the last form of protection and should only be considered after the other control measures.

IV. How Does the Personal Protective Equipment Apply to Safety Plans? Contd.

- The Exposure Control Plan largely determines what kind of Personal Protective Equipment workers may use.
- Exposure Control Plans should be continuously updated.
 - Section 6.34 of the OHS Regulations states, in part:
6.34 Exposure control plan
(1) If a worker has or may have occupational exposure, the employer must develop and implement an exposure control plan, based on the precautionary principle, that meets the requirements of section 5.54 and that includes the following ...
- Exposure Control Plans are based on the Precautionary Principle.



Health and Safety

Share this   

What to do if you have a health and safety problem



Refusing unsafe work: A step by step guide



Health and safety

Health and safety is an essential part of our union's work. CUPE members face a wide range of hazards. We provide tools, resources and training to help members stay healthy and safe and to encourage activism. We also conduct research on current and emerging health and safety hazards.



COVID-19 Health and Safety Practices



Health and Safety Committee Resource Kit



Health and Safety Fact Sheets



Violence Prevention Kit



Employer Response for Workers in the case of workplace exposure or transmission

COVID-19: Aerosolization Risk Assessment

[View all](#)

CUPE National Health and Safety Branch. See Resources and Links.

The next three (of four) slides navigate within the CUPE National Health and Safety Resource Kit document to the specific page and section regarding the Precautionary Principle.



CUPE National
Health and Safety
Branch.
See Resources
and Links.

Though this guide and accompanying kit focus on health and safety committees, much of the information provided will be applicable to smaller workplaces that have health and safety representatives.

- [Download the Guide for Health and Safety for Committee Members and Representatives](#)
- [Download the Incident and Occupational Disease Investigations Guide](#)
- [Order copies of the Health and Safety Committee Resource Kit \(Maximum 16 per order\)](#)

The Health and Safety Committee Resource Kit provides additional information and materials you can refer to.

ATTACHMENTS

-  [Four steps to resolving a Health and Safety problem](#)
-  [Four myths about workers' compensation](#)
-  [Health and Safety Fact Sheet: Refusing Unsafe Work](#)
-  [Hazard Prevention Program](#)
-  [Hazard vs Risk](#)
-  [Sample Incident Investigation Checklist](#)
-  [Sample Safety Inspection Checklists](#)
-  [Health and Safety Learning Series Pamphlet](#)
-  [Health and Safety Committee Recommendations](#)
-  [Legislation Applying to Health and Safety Committees in Canada by Jurisdiction](#)
-  [Conducting Surveys for Investigations](#)
-  [Terms of Reference for \(Joint\) Health and Safety Committees](#)
-  [Workplace Inspection Guide](#)
-  [Four myths about workers' compensation](#)
-  [Four Steps to Resolving a Health and Safety Problem](#)
-  [Legislative Inspection requirements fact sheet](#)
-  [Violent Incident Report form](#)
-  [Incident Reporting form](#)

CUPE National
Health and Safety
Branch.
See Resources
and Links.



Health and Safety Guidelines

Incident and Occupational Disease Investigations Guide

CUPE | Canadian Union
of Public Employees
Health and Safety Branch

CUPE National
Health and Safety
Branch.
See Resources
and Links.

people with symptoms, especially later in the workday. Another is that cleaning products are a common cause of skin problems for custodial staff.

For example, if you have 1 person in an office of 50 that has a headache, it's difficult to pinpoint what the problem could be. But if in that same office, you have 20 people having a headache late in the day, or if that 1 person always complains of headaches after using the photocopier, then you have more information to consider which can help you figure out what might be going on, what the pattern could be about.

Diagrams of work areas or risk maps may help to demonstrate patterns. The diagrams can have symbols or other marks to represent the location of hazards, types of symptoms, number of people affected, movement of workers and materials, location of air ducts, aisles and stairways. Have a key that explains the symbols used in the diagrams.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This part of the investigation should pay special attention to presenting links between the health problem and the workplace. Focus on trying to show:

- workers are suffering from symptoms of disease or illness;
- there is a cause and effect relationship between the hazard and workers' symptoms;
- workers were exposed to the hazard(s) on the job; and
- exposure at work was enough to cause disease or illness.

Remember that definitive proof is not always needed to draw conclusions and make recommendations. You can make assumptions based on the evidence, just as incident investigators do. After all, investigations are supposed to prevent further problems, not lead to ignoring problems for lack of "absolute proof". Remember that the precautionary principle is that in the absence of scientific certainty of safety, you should exercise the highest level of precautions.

Recommendations should follow the hierarchy of controls by first focusing on preventative measures such as removing the source of the problems, then on controls to reduce the risk of exposure. The recommendations should cover short and long-term measures.

Quite often the simplest (and the quickest) way to learn if working conditions are causing health problems is to make a change in the conditions. For example, if workers using cleaning agents have complaints of headaches and dizziness, it may be simpler to try safer substitutes or to implement ventilation controls than to do an intensive investigation.

Additional information on application of the precautionary and the hierarchy of controls can be found in CUPE's Health and Safety Committee Resource Kit.

Be wary of recommending more studies. Further studies for "truth" and "proof" only allow unhealthy or unsafe exposure to continue and delay preventive measures. Also, be careful. An indoor air quality study of the workplace may not detect a localized emission that may be causing a really bad reaction to workers who are inhaling it.



V. Common Problems that Arise.

- WorkSafeBC states:

“Assessing risk and applying appropriate controls

Recognizing workplaces are constantly changing,

WorkSafeBC requires employers to **continually assess the risk of COVID-19 transmission** at their workplaces and to **apply controls to control that risk.** The process for assessing risk in the workplace and selecting appropriate controls is outlined in the COVID-19 Safety Plan.

Employers need to stay vigilant and ensure their COVID-19 Safety Plans are understood and being followed through effective training and supervision.”

- Outdated Exposure Control Plans and the Safety Plans.



V. Common Problems that Arise. Contd.

- Common issues and problems include:
 - Outdated Exposure Control Plans e.g. there are new hazards.
 - Changing hazards and risks. See slides 36 and 48.
 - Changing Provincial Health Officer Orders.
 - Changing medical and scientific evidence on exposure e.g. variants of concern, efficacy of personal masks, exposure duration times, etc.
 - Lack of orientation and training for workers on the use and care of Personal Protective Equipment e.g. N95 respirators.
 - Improperly fitting Personal Protective Equipment e.g. personal masks.



V. Common Problems that Arise. Contd.

- Unclear Safety Plans that do not address where Personal Protective Equipment should be worn, why, when, etc.
- Who performed the hazard and risk assessment? Was it done by both the employer and the Joint Health and Safety Committee worker representative?
- Has the employer conducted the required orientation and training of new and existing workers (generally, not just for Personal Protective Equipment)?
- Who performed the hazard and risk assessment? Was it done by both the employer and the Joint Health and Safety Committee worker representative?



V. Common Problems that Arise. Contd.

- Have the Exposure Control Plan and the Safety Plan been updated?
- The Joint Health and Safety Committee is the starting point for addressing concerns related to Personal Protective Equipment e.g. requests for new risk assessments, etc.
- Remember the hazard and risk assessment process on the next slide. The CUPE National Health and Safety Branch has detailed information on how to conduct hazard and risk assessments.
See
https://www.cupe.bc.ca/occupational_health_and_safety_committee



CUPE National
Health and Safety
Branch.
See Resources
and Links.

Figure 1: Hazard Assessment Process

Note:

Risk is the combination of:

1. The likelihood that a worker will be exposed to a hazard that couldn't be removed, plus
2. The severity of harm if they are exposed to the hazard that couldn't be removed



VI. Resources and Links.

This is a partial list only.
New / updated resources are created weekly.

BC Provincial Health Officer:

- Province-wide restrictions

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/covid-19/info/restrictions>

BC CDC:

- COVID-19

<http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19>



Government of
BC.
See Resources
and Links.



Province-wide restrictions



Provincial restrictions are in place to help stop the spread of COVID-19. Some restrictions are made by the Provincial Health Officer (PHO) under the Public Health Act and others are made under the Emergency Program Act (EPA). Most orders can be enforced by police and compliance and enforcement officials.

Last updated: **February 8, 2021**

On this page:

- [PHO order on gatherings and events](#)
- [PHO order on restaurants and bars](#)
- [EPA order on masks in public indoor settings](#)
- [Travel advisory](#)
- [Enforcement](#)

PHO order on gatherings and events

This content is a summary of the [PHO order – Gatherings and Events \(PDF\)](#) document. It is not legal advice and does not provide an interpretation of the law. In the event of any conflict or difference between this webpage and the order, the order is correct and legal and must be followed.

By order of the PHO, all gatherings and events are suspended to significantly reduce COVID-19 transmission related to social interactions. The order came into effect November 19, 2020 at midnight and will be kept in place until further notice based on direction from the PHO.

Gatherings at residences or vacation accommodations

No social gatherings of **any size** at your residence with anyone other than your household or, if you live alone, your core bubble. For example:

- Do not invite friends or extended family into your residence or vacation accommodation
- Do not gather in your backyard, patio, driveway or anywhere else on your property
- Do not host playdates for children

VI. Resources and Links. Contd.

CUPE Materials BC Region – General Health and Safety:

- CUPE National has a website with many materials:

<https://cupe.ca/health-and-safety>

- Health and Safety Committee Resource Kit:

<https://cupe.ca/health-and-safety-committee-resource-kit>

- CUPE BC OHS Committee materials:

https://www.cupe.bc.ca/occupational_health_and_safety_committee

- CUPE BC OHS Committee:

https://www.cupe.bc.ca/occupational_health_and_safety_committee

VI. Resources and Links. Contd.

CUPE Materials BC Region – COVID-19 Health and Safety:

- CUPE BC OHS Committee – CUPE BC Region COVID-19 Resources

https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/cupebcvotes2014/pages/1551/attachments/original/1603126940/resources_list_COVID-19_2020_09_30.pdf?1603126940

7 pages

CUPE BC REGION COVID-19 RESOURCES

This is a list of resources for SARS-CoV-2 and COVID-19 (the pandemic) from the CUPE BC Region, CUPE National Health and Safety Branch and CUPE Ontario. The CUPE Health and Safety Representatives from across Canada regularly coordinate and jointly work on pandemic-related resources. This document also contains information for filing a WorkSafeBC claim for SARS-CoV-2 and COVID-19 (BC).

Pandemic-related resources are constantly changing and being updated as per the CUPE National Health and Safety Branch website. CUPE creates four pandemic-related resources per month, on average. Most of these are located on the CUPE National Health and Safety Branch website. These are in addition to resources from the CUPE sector specific social media pages and websites, BC Centre for Disease Control, the Office of the Provincial Health Officer (BC), WorkSafeBC, CSA Group, various health authorities, the Federal Government, OHCOW, and other resources.

The resources from the Office of the Provincial Health Officer (BC), BC Centre for Disease Control, health authorities and WorkSafeBC are usually directory, while CUPE resources are for guidance purposes. WorkSafeBC also has documents, forms and other materials for use.

For labour relations, Collective Agreement, human rights, and other health and safety matters please contact the CUPE National Representative.

The science and medical literature regarding the pandemic change, income protection and other resources for workers. Ensure the most current information and resources are being used (and for the correct jurisdiction).

Where links have changed or are broken, please refer to the CUPE National Health and Safety website.

Tom McKenna, CUPE National Health and Safety Representative
October 2020

34 pages

CUPE BC REGION

I. COVID-19 RESOURCES FOR CUPE NATIONAL REPRESENTATIVES

This is a list of resources for SARS-CoV-2 and COVID-19 for CUPE National Representatives in the BC Region. This document also contains information for filing a WorkSafeBC claim for SARS-CoV-2 and COVID-19 (BC). **This document is an internal document and not meant for distribution with the exception of Section II** (which is on the CUPE BC OHS Committee website).

Screenshots of various resources are included to show the appearance of websites.

Pandemic related resources are constantly changing and being updated as per the CUPE National Health and Safety Branch website. These are in addition to resources from the CUPE sector specific social media pages and websites, BC Centre for Disease Control, the Office of the Provincial Health Officer (BC), WorkSafeBC, CSA Group, various health authorities, the Federal Government, OHCOW, and other resources. Ensure the most current information and resources are being used (and for the correct jurisdiction).

The resources from the Office of the Provincial Health Officer (BC), BC Centre for Disease Control, health authorities and WorkSafeBC are usually directory, while CUPE resources are for guidance purposes. WorkSafeBC also has documents, forms and other materials for use. **The Office of the Provincial Health Officer and the relevant health authorities should always be the primary source.**

Please search for the document link using the title.

For other CUPE National Health and Safety Representative information, please refer to the document, and, in particular, I would like to thank Paul Sylvestre.

Tom McKenna, CUPE National Health and Safety Representative
November 2020

7 pages

SARS-CoV-2 / COVID-19 Mental Health Resources and Links for CUPE Members - BC Region

January 2021

Tom McKenna, CUPE National Health and Safety Representative BC Region

The pandemic has caused a significant increase in mental health issues across Canada and for Indigenous persons, the LGBTQ2+ community, persons with disabilities, women, younger people, the unemployed, and persons with pre-existing mental health issues in particular. As per News 1130:¹

"While 40 per cent of the 3,027 Canadian adults surveyed said their mental health has declined since March, 21 per cent of Canadians said they are hopeful.

However, the survey was executed in September, before major spikes in daily case counts, increased restrictions, and the recent spate of record-setting deaths in B.C.

Increased feelings of despair and hopelessness were more pronounced in people who identified as Indigenous (54 per cent), LGBTQ2+ (54 per cent), disability (50 per cent) or women (45 per cent).

Those who are unemployed (61 per cent), have a pre-existing mental health issue (61 per cent), and younger people aged 18-24 (60 per cent), also experienced heightened anxiety and stress above the national average."

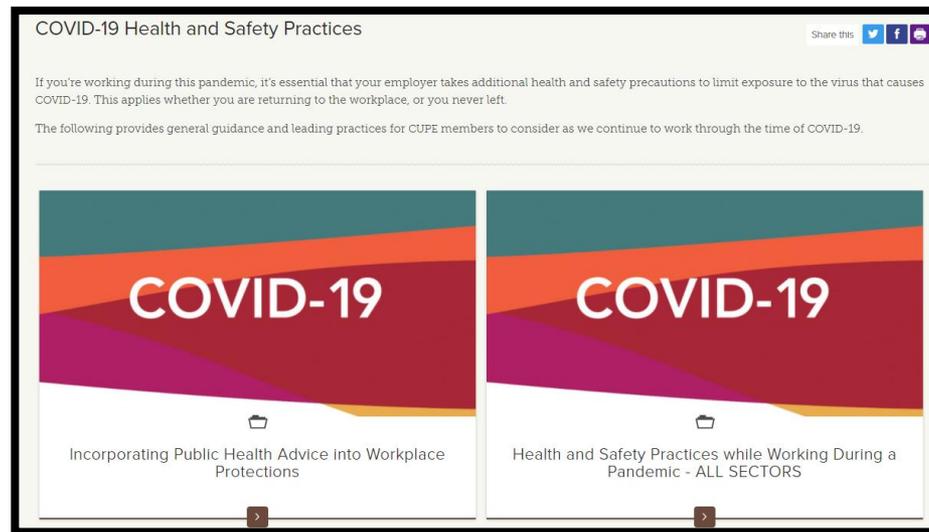
(Emphasis added)

¹ Kelly, A. December 03, 2020. "Such despair they can't see past it": Pandemic-driven mental health crisis on the rise in Canada." City News. News 1130. Retrieved January 26, 2021 from <https://www.citynews1130.com/2020/12/03/covid-19-pandemic-mental-health-crisis-canada/>

VI. Resources and Links. Contd.

CUPE Materials CUPE National Health and Safety – COVID-19 Health and Safety (Note: The following illustrations are multiple pages):

- CUPE National – COVID-19 Health and Safety Practices
<https://cupe.ca/covid-19-health-and-safety-practices-0>



2 pages

	COVID-19 Contact Tracing by Public Health Units Mar 8, 2021 COVID-19, Health and Safety
	Employer Response for Workers in the case of workplace exposure or transmission Mar 8, 2021 COVID-19, Health and Safety
	COVID-19: Prevention through Ventilation Feb 22, 2021 COVID-19, Health and Safety
	COVID-19: Aerosolization Risk Assessment Feb 22, 2021 COVID-19, Health and Safety
	Safety concerns for the spraying of chemicals to disinfect for COVID-19 Nov 27, 2020 COVID-19, Health and Safety
	Self-isolation and quarantine: why it's important Aug 6, 2020 COVID-19, Health and Safety
	General Health and Safety System Checklist for COVID-19 Jul 10, 2020 COVID-19, Health and Safety
	Preventing exposure to COVID-19 - Sector-specific resources Jun 18, 2020 COVID-19, Health and Safety
	Good Hygiene Practices and the Respiratory (Cough) Etiquette May 28, 2020 COVID-19, Health and Safety
	Masks and Facial Coverings Jun 1, 2020 COVID-19, Health and Safety

Preventing exposure to COVID-19 - Sector-specific resources

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Jun 18, 2020

RELATED CONTENT

[COVID-19 Contact Tracing by Public Health Units](#)

[Employer Response for Workers in the case of workplace exposure or transmission](#)

[Employment Insurance and federal recovery benefits: Q&A](#)

[View all](#)

As the global pandemic of COVID-19 persists, CUPE wants to ensure that employers and members continue to implement leading practices to prevent workplace exposure to the virus which causes COVID-19.

The guidance in these documents is specific to the hazard related to COVID-19. It is intended to assist CUPE health and safety activists in their efforts to ensure that adequate protections are in place for members. In the case of those workplace that have suspended operations, the guidance is intended to assist in implementing effective controls prior to the resumption of normal operations.

It remains vital that employers continue to work with their (joint) health and safety committee about the best way to control sector-specific hazards during this pandemic.

ATTACHMENTS

-  [ALL SECTORS](#)
-  [Airlines](#)
-  [Aquatic facilities](#)
-  [Child Care](#)
-  [Community and Social Services](#)
-  [Education sector](#)
-  [Emergency Medical Services sector](#)
-  [Energy sector](#)
-  [Food Management and Services](#)
-  [Health Care and Long-Term Care](#)
-  [Library sector](#)
-  [Municipal sector](#)
-  [Post-Secondary Education sector](#)
-  [School Buses \("Vehicles"\)](#)

5 pages



General Health and Safety System Checklist for COVID-19

July 10, 2020

The best way to address health and safety concerns is to put the COVID-19 response plan in place before workers are re-introduced into the workplace. Where work has never stopped, existing hazard (or risk) assessments should be reviewed in light of COVID-19. This must be done with a (Joint) Health and Safety Committee or the Health and Safety Representative (HSC/HSR) consultation, as appropriate.

Below is a sample checklist to evaluate the current health and safety system in your workplace as it related to COVID-19. For more information on specific health and safety practices for COVID-19, HSC/HSR resources, and how a hazard/risk assessment can be performed, please visit the CUPE National Health and Safety Section of the website (see links below).

Worker Participation	Yes	No
Are the worker representatives on the HSC selected by the trade union?		
Has the HSC/HSR been consulted about the reopening of the workplace or how COVID-19 may potentially affect workers' health and safety?		
Do(es) the HSC/HSR have a copy of the employer's risk assessment?		
Does the COVID-19 plan include floor plans/layout/tables indicating the locations of COVID-19 control measures in the workplace*?		
Are there clear lines of communication between the CUPE Local Executive and the HSC/HSR?		
Are HSC/HSR members receiving occupational illness notices and information related to COVID-19 exposures?		
Are HSC meetings being held often enough to be useful and relevant to the changing circumstances?		
Are HSC meetings being held in a manner suitable for COVID-19? (For example, are they being held in-person or through an online platform?)		
Was an inspection with worker representative(s) for re-opening performed before workers re-entered a space that was vacated?		
Will the committee or representative be performing increased inspections to ensure COVID-19 precautions are in place?		
Has a workplace COVID-19 policy and plan to implement the policy been prepared with the full participation of the joint health and safety committee (JHSC) or worker health and safety representative?		
Has the employer posted the full workplace COVID-19 policy and plan in the workplace and communicated both to all workers, supervisors, vendors, contractors and clients/customers as appropriate, in writing and/or electronic format?		

*Note – when these are included, it provides specificity to any reader about what will be happening where. Floor plans provide an opportunity to evaluate the space under consideration.

Additional notes or comments or follow-up

VI. Resources and Links. Contd.

Government of Canada:

- COVID-19 personal protective equipment

<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/covid19-industry/medical-devices/personal-protective-equipment.html>

Government of Canada / Gouvernement du Canada

Search Canada.ca

MENU

Canada.ca > Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) > COVID-19 health product industry > COVID-19 medical devices

COVID-19 personal protective equipment (PPE)

Information on personal protective equipment in relation to COVID-19

Most requested

- [COVID-19 for health professionals](#)
- [What's new - medical devices](#)
- [Reprocessing of single use respirators](#)
- [Non-medical masks and face coverings](#)
- [3D printing and other manufacturing of PPEs](#)

About personal protective equipment
Expedited access, authorization for sale, 3D printing and innovative manufacturing, who to contact

Medical masks and respirators
Expedited access, authorization for sale, addressing shortages, reprocessing N95 respirators

Medical gowns
Infection prevention, types, expedited access, authorization for sale, guidance for industry

Medical gloves
Infection prevention, types, expedited access, authorization for sale, guidance for industry

Face shields
About face shields, standards and requirements, regulatory authorization, feedback

Authorized PPE products
List of personal protective products authorized for sale

Report a problem or mistake on this page | Share this page

VI. Resources and Links. Contd.

Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health:

- Johns Hopkins Education and Research Center for Occupational Safety and Health
<https://www.jhsph.edu/research/centers-and-institutes/johns-hopkins-education-and-research-center-for-occupational-safety-and-health/can-a-mask-protect-me-putting-homemade-masks-in-the-hierarchy-of-controls>

Occupational Health Clinics for Ontario Workers (OHCOW):

- COVID-19 Resources
<https://www.ohcow.on.ca/covid-19.html>
- COVID-related Webinars
<https://www.ohcow.on.ca/covid-19.html>

FACIAL BARRIERS, SURGICAL MASKS, RESPIRATORS ARE DIFFERENT



Barrier Face Covering

- No good seal to the face
- Any kind of filtration material may be used
- No performance requirements (some are under development)

Typical relevant capabilities

Filtration/4 ★

Fit/4 ★

Function/3 ★★?

Splash Protection/3 ★

Source Control/3 ★★

Surgical Mask

- No good seal to the face
- Filtration is material fluid and biological agent resistant
- Specifications exist but not all types meet them

Typical relevant capabilities

Filtration/4 ★★

Fit/4 ★

Function/3 ★★

Splash Protection/3 ★★+

Source Control/3 ★★

Approved Respirator

- Good seal to the face
- Filtration material required to be highly capable
- Governed by regulations and performance standards

For filtering facepiece:

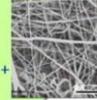
Filtration/4 ★★★★★

Fit/4 ★★★★★

Function/3 ★★+

Splash Protection/3 ★★+

Source Control/3 ★★



OHCOW.
See Resources
and Links.

EXAMPLES OF RESPIRATORY PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

Respirator:
A component of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), designed to protect the wearer's respiratory tract against inhalation of hazardous atmospheres

Selection includes balancing desired protection with other factors



Equipment	SCBA	PAPR (T)	FF-APR	PAPR (L)	HF-APR	FFP
Protection Hierarchy Level	5	4	3	2	1	1
Assigned Protection Factor	10,000	1,000	100	25/1,000	10	10
Comfort/Physiological Burden	*	***	**	****	**	**
Ease of Logistics and simplicity of training/ Maintenance	*	**	***	**	***	****
Non-Stop Usage in typical environment	30 min (air supply limited)	~8 hours (battery limited)	>8 hours (filter limited)	~8 hours (battery limited)	>8 hours (filter limited)	~2-4 hours (filter limited)
Initial Cost Range	>\$2,000	\$1,000-1,500	\$50-100	\$1,000-1,500	\$30-\$50	\$2-3

PRODUCT CLASSIFICATIONS

Respirators

- Respirators for workplace use in Canada must meet an approved performance level – the US National Institute for Occupational Health and Safety (NIOSH) is generally the accepted body
- NIOSH sets performance standards for all types of respirator – for particulate ones it established criteria with testing at the most penetrating particle size

Surgical Masks

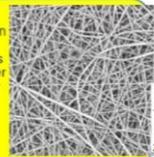
- Surgical mask "clearance" standard by the US FDA covering
 - Fluid resistance – three levels
 - Flammability
 - Biological filtration
- Filtration requirements are much lower than NIOSH

NIOSH Classifications

Efficiency	Negative Pressure		Type
	Non-Oil	Oil 1-sh	
95	N95	R95	
99	N99	R99	
100	N100	R100	
	Powered Air	100N	HE 100P

Why N, R and P?

- Polymer filter media are often treated to create dispersed electrostatic charge on fibres to improve removal of smaller particles while offering lower airflow resistance
- Oil can interfere with such treatments by coating the fibres, so either:
 - Both inorganic salt and oil-based aerosols are also used for approvals testing (e.g EN 149 FFP2)
 - There is distinction of classes for non-oil and oil-based aerosols (NIOSH N, R & P classes)



VI. Resources and Links. Contd.

WorkSafeBC – COVID-19 Health and Safety:

- WorkSafeBC COVID-19 webpage
<https://www.worksafebc.com/en/covid-19>
- COVID-19 Information for Workers
<https://www.worksafebc.com/en/covid-19/covid-19-information-for-workers>
- COVID-19 FAQs
<https://www.worksafebc.com/en/covid-19/health-and-safety/covid-19-faqs>
- Exposure Control Plans, Risk Assessments, Precautionary Principle
<https://www.worksafebc.com/en/law-policy/occupational-health-safety/searchable-ohs-regulation/ohs-guidelines/guidelines-part-06>

WorkSafeBC.
See Resources
and Links.

The screenshot shows the WorkSafeBC website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the WorkSafeBC logo and links for Forms & Resources, Law & Policy, About Us, Contact Us, and a Log in / Create an account button. Below this is a secondary navigation bar with categories like Health & Safety, Insurance, Claims, and I Am a..., along with a search bar for worksafebc.com.

The main content area features a large blue banner with a virus illustration and the text "COVID-19". Below the banner is a prominent orange box titled "How do I...". This box contains six links arranged in two rows:

- Develop, review, and update my COVID-19 safety plan
- Report a claim if I'm a worker
- See my legal requirements for a COVID-19 safety plan
- Report a claim if I'm an employer
- Find COVID-19 health and safety resources
- Find public health orders and guidance

Below the orange box are two main content sections:

- Keeping workplaces safe:** A list of links including Controlling exposure, PHO order: Worker health checks, COVID-19 inspections, Prevention Services data, Mandatory masks in public places, COVID-19 vaccinations, and COVID-19 FAQs. A "More" link is at the bottom right.
- Industry-specific information:** A list of links for Construction, Hospitality, Gyms and fitness centres, Personal services, Health care, Small business, Offices, and Restaurants, cafés, pubs, and nightclubs. A "More" link is at the bottom right.

To the right of these sections is a "News" section with three articles:

- Continued support for employers receiving CEWS:** Published on: March 01, 2021.
- WorkSafeBC engaging with industry to remind employers and workers to prioritize COVID-19 health and safety ahead of long weekend:** Published on: February 12, 2021.
- WorkSafeBC expects bars, pubs, and restaurants to revisit COVID-19 safety plans ahead of Super Bowl:** Published on: February 05, 2021.

At the bottom of the main content area are two smaller boxes:

- Claims:** Information for workers, Information for employers, Claims data.
- Other:** Insurance, WorkSafeBC's COVID-19 Safety Plans.



Reviewing and updating your COVID-19 safety plan: A guide for employers

Download PDF

Also available in: Tiếng Việt, ਪੰਜਾਬੀ, 한국어, 中文 (繁體), 中文(简体), Español, Français

Publication Date: Nov 2020

File type: PDF (230 KB)

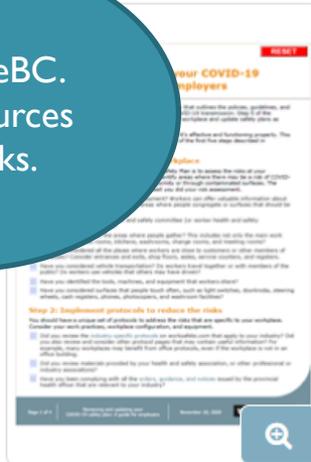
Asset type: Guide

Share via Email (Anonymously)



This guide will help employers review their COVID-19 Safety Plan to ensure it continues to be effective and functioning properly. As an employer, you're required to have a safety plan that outlines the policies, guidelines, and procedures you've put in place to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission. You must also review and update your plans if conditions change or in response to Provincial Health Officer orders.

Additional resources and information about COVID-19 are also available.



WorkSafeBC.
See Resources
and Links.

**COVID-19**

Health and safety ▶

Industry-specific information ▶

Claims ▶

Insurance

COVID-19 information for workers

COVID-19 information for employers

Information in other languages

WorkSafeBC's COVID-19 Safety Plans

COVID-19 information for workers

We're committed to continuing to provide you with access to WorkSafeBC services. Please see below for information on how we're supporting you during the pandemic.

What workers can do to stay safe at work

We're here to help

Claims

What workers can do to stay safe at work

First, make sure you know and understand the workplace health and safety responsibilities for workers and others in the workplace.

Then, visit these pages to learn what you can do to help prevent the workplace transmission of COVID-19.

- What workers should do to prevent the spread of COVID-19
- What workers should expect when returning to the workplace
- Controlling exposure
- Mandatory masks in public places
- PHO order: Worker health checks
- COVID-19 vaccinations
- COVID-19 FAQs

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[I Am a...](#)

Q

[Home](#) > [COVID-19](#) > [Health and safety](#) > [COVID-19 FAQs](#)

COVID-19

[Health and safety](#)

[What employers should do](#)

[What workers should do](#)

[Controlling exposure](#)

[Mandatory masks in public places](#)

[PHO order: Worker health checks](#)

[COVID-19 vaccinations](#)

[COVID-19 inspections](#)

COVID-19 FAQs

[Prevention Services data](#)

[Links to public health orders and guidance](#)

[Industry-specific information](#)

[Claims](#)

[Insurance](#)

[COVID-19 information for workers](#)

[COVID-19 information for employers](#)

[Information in other languages](#)

[WorkSafeBC's COVID-19 Safety Plans](#)

COVID-19 FAQs

Below are answers to frequently asked questions from British Columbian workers and employers focusing on how to maintain a healthy and safe workplace during the COVID-19 outbreak. Questions and answers are grouped under various topic headings.

The information on this page is based on current recommendations and may change. For the latest guidance, please see the following websites:

- [British Columbia Centre for Disease Control](#) for health information
- [Government of British Columbia](#) for the latest news
- [Office of the Provincial Health Officer](#) for the latest orders

COVID-19 safety plans

Every employer is required to have a COVID-19 safety plan that assesses the risk of exposure at their workplace and implements measures to keep their workers safe.

To help you develop your plan, this page provides information and resources on keeping workers safe in industries that have been providing essential services since the start of the COVID-19 outbreak. For additional information, also see:

- Industry-specific information for details on developing a safety plan, including a [template for a COVID-19 Safety Plan](#)
- Our [COVID-19 Safety Plan OHS Guideline](#), which includes information on the level of detail required and using supporting documentation
- Reviewing and updating your COVID-19 safety plan: [A guide for employers](#), which will help you ensure your plan continues to be effective and functioning properly

WorkSafeBC will be reviewing plans of individual employers during their inspections of your workplace. Please be reminded that in accordance with the order of the provincial health officer, this plan **must be posted** at the worksite and posted to the website, if there is one. During a WorkSafeBC inspection, we will ask employers about the steps they have taken to protect their workers and to see their plan. To learn more, read [Inspections during the COVID-19 pandemic](#).

COVID-19 safety plans	+
Employer obligations	+
Joint health and safety committees and worker representatives	+
Mental health	+
Incident investigations	+

WorkSafeBC.
See Resources
and Links.

Industry-specific information ▶	<p>detail required and using supporting documentation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reviewing and updating your COVID-19 safety plan: A guide for employers, which will help you ensure your plan continues to be effective and functioning properly
Claims ▶	
Insurance	
COVID-19 information for workers	WorkSafeBC will be reviewing plans of individual employers during their inspections of your workplace. Please be reminded that in accordance with the order of the provincial health officer W , this plan must be posted at the worksite and posted to the website, if there is one. During a WorkSafeBC inspection, we will ask employers about the steps they have taken to protect their workers and to see their plan. To learn more, read Inspections during the COVID-19 pandemic .
COVID-19 information for employers	
Information in other languages	
WorkSafeBC's COVID-19 Safety Plans	

COVID-19 safety plans	+
Employer obligations	+
Joint health and safety committees and worker representatives	+
Mental health	+
Incident investigations	+
Exposure control plans	+
Illness in the workplace	+
Workplace entry restrictions	+
Health monitoring and temperature checks	+
Workers moving between locations	+
Personal protective equipment	+
COVID-19 safety in vehicles	+
Worker accommodation	+
Resolving concerns about unsafe work	+
Getting help	+

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See Resources
and Links.

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Health & Safety Insurance Claims I Am a... Search worksafebc.com

Home > Health & Safety > Tools, machinery & equipment > Personal protective equipment > Types > Respiratory protection

Personal protective equipment

Types

Responsibilities

Respiratory protection

Employers are required to provide workers with appropriate respirators wherever workers are exposed to hazardous substances in the air. This includes gases and vapours, dusts, fibres, mists, fumes, and bioaerosols. Different hazards require different types of respirators, so it is important to choose the right respirator for the breathing hazards in your workplace. Some respirators must also be fitted with the correct filter or cartridge in order to be effective.

For information on choosing and safely using respiratory protection, see the following resources.

Resources

Breathe Safer: How to Use Respirators Safely and Start a Respirator Program
This manual, developed for employers, supervisors, and workers, describes different types of breathing hazards and respirators. It also explains how to choose, fit, and care for a respirator. In addition,...

Publication Date: Apr 2014 | PDF | Book | Download | Preview

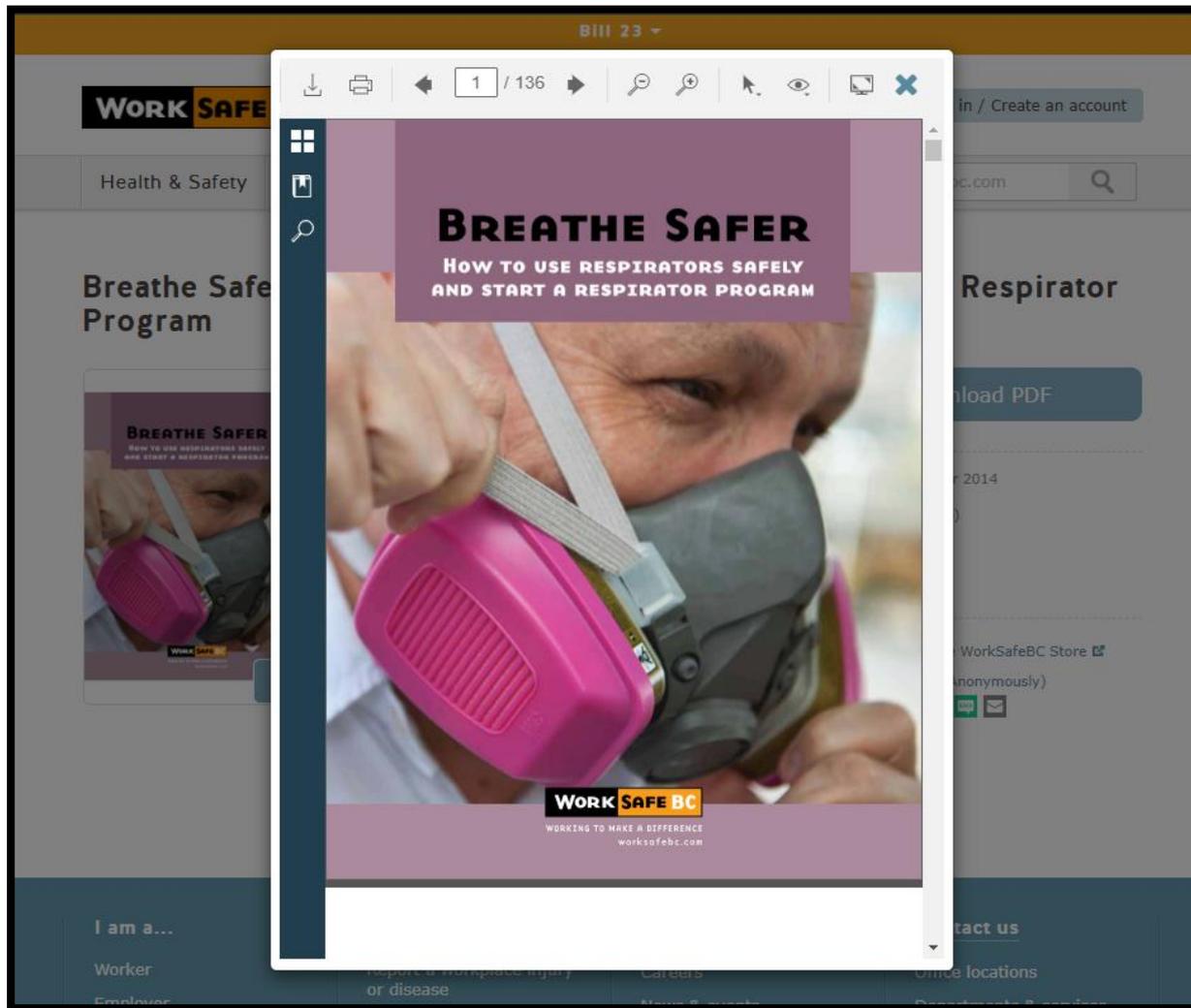
Fit testing your respirator
Describes when and how to do a fit test.

Publication Date: Sep 2009 | PDF | Information Sheet | Download | Preview

Putting on Your Respirator
Describes how to fit a respirator to your face.

Publication Date: 2007 | PDF | Toolbox Meeting Guide | Download | Preview

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COVID-19 health and safety
Selecting and using masks in non-health care settings

The most effective ways to prevent the spread of COVID-19 infection include having sick workers stay at home, physical distancing, handwashing, and cleaning and disinfecting work areas. Employers should only consider using masks as an additional control measure if physical distancing is not possible and workers are in close, prolonged contact with others.

This document provides guidance on using masks and single-use respirators in non-health care settings. For health care settings, refer to the [BC Centre for Disease Control](#).

How COVID-19 spreads

COVID-19 is an infectious disease that mainly spreads between humans through direct contact with an infected person or their respiratory droplets. Respiratory droplets are generated by breathing, speaking, coughing, and sneezing. Your exposure risk is greatest when you have prolonged close contact with an infected person.

The virus can also spread if you touch a contaminated surface and then touch your eyes, mouth, or nose. A surface can become contaminated if droplets land on it or if someone touches it with contaminated hands.

Should your workers use masks in the workplace?

Some regulated industries or industry associations may recommend or require the use of certified medical masks or single-use respirators to protect workers against chemical, physical, or biological hazards, including COVID-19.

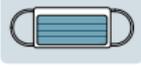
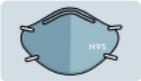
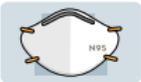
As an employer, you need to understand the limitations of masks as a protective measure. If masks are recommended, you must ensure they are selected and used appropriately. If your workers are wearing masks, ensure they are aware of the following:

- Make sure you know how to wear your mask. Follow manufacturer or industry specifications and directions.
- Don't wear masks below the nose or chin. This can increase the risk of exposure.
- Keep your mask clean and dry. If it gets wet, it's less effective at preventing the spread of droplets.
- Change masks as necessary. You may need several masks available as they build up moisture during the day and become less effective. If your mask becomes wet, soiled, or damaged, replace it immediately.
- Make sure you know how to clean your mask. Wash cloth masks every day using the warmest water setting. Store in a clean, dry place to prevent contamination. Disposable masks cannot be laundered.
- Practise good hygiene even if you're wearing a mask. Don't remove your mask to cough or sneeze. After coughing or sneezing, wash your hands. Don't touch your eyes, nose, or mouth.

Page 1 of 2 | COVID-19 health and safety: Selecting and using masks in non-health care settings | WORKSAFE BC

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Types of masks and their use in non-health care settings

Type	Use
Cloth or non-medical masks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May offer some level of protection by preventing the spread of droplets from the wearer to others around them. • Not a proven method of protection for the wearer because they may not prevent the inhalation of droplets. • May be considered by employers for use by workers or customers as a protective measure when physical distancing is not practical or feasible. • Should never be relied upon as a sole protective measure.
Medical masks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical masks (also known as procedure or surgical masks) are used by health care workers for direct patient care where physical distancing can't be maintained. • May be used in other jobs where there's a risk of exposure to blood or bodily fluids. • When worn properly, can protect the wearer and others around them against droplets. • Are single-use items that are not designed to be cleaned and reused. • There is a variety of certified medical mask types, some of which may be difficult to source because of supply limitations.
Medical N95 respirators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Used primarily by health care workers where there is significant risk of exposure to very small airborne particles and aerosols. • Offer protection from droplets and splashes. • Most often used during and after aerosol-generating procedures performed on patients infected with COVID-19 or other infectious agents. • Fit closely over the nose and mouth to form a tight seal. Must be fit-tested and worn properly. Subject to the fit-testing requirements of the Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Regulation. • Should not be used by non-health care workers.
Industrial N95 respirators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Used primarily in non-medical settings to protect workers from inhaling dust, fumes, and other hazardous aerosols. • When worn properly, can protect the wearer against droplets. If the respirator has a valve, droplets could be spread through the valve, so may not protect others. • Fit closely over the nose and mouth to form a tight seal. Must be fit-tested and worn properly. Subject to the fit-testing requirements of the OHS Regulation.

Let's all do our part

When workplaces in British Columbia are healthy and safe, they contribute to a healthy and safe province. As COVID-19 restrictions are lifted and more

businesses resume operations, let's all do our part. For more information and resources on workplace health and safety, visit [worksafebc.com](https://www.worksafebc.com).

Revised June 2020

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COVID-19 health and safety:
Selecting and using masks in non-health care settings

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