

Workplace health and safety and COVID-19

Chamber of Commerce of Prince George

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Agenda

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- 2 Controlling the risk of COVID-19 exposure in the workplace
- 3 WorkSafeBC support and other resources
- 4 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 coughing, sneezing, sore throat, difficulty breathing, fever
- 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 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 flu-like 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 BC Support App and Self-Assessment Tool at <https://bc.thrive.health/>.
 - Call 811 for health advice.
- Consult with a health care provider before returning to work.

**Controlling the risk of COVID-19
exposure in the workplace**

Basic control measures

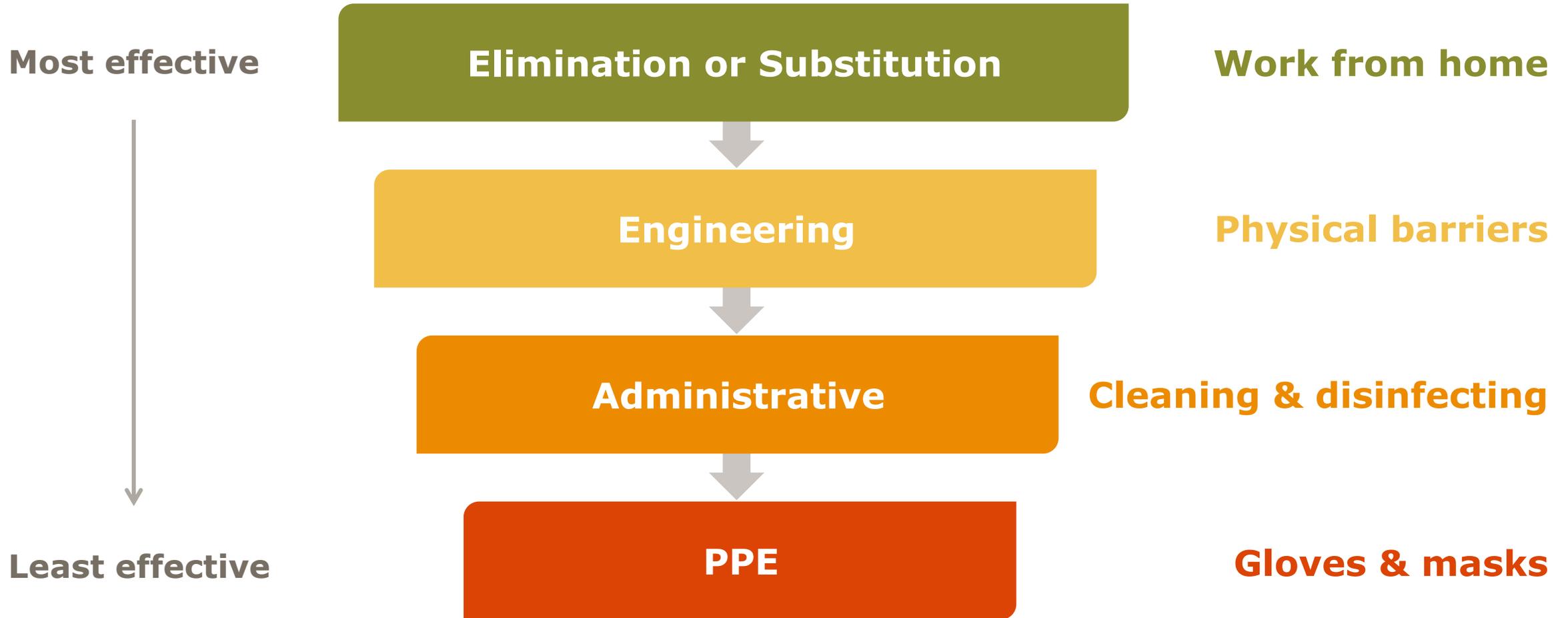
Follow the **orders, notices, and guidance** from the **provincial health officer** and the **BC Centre for Disease Control**.

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.

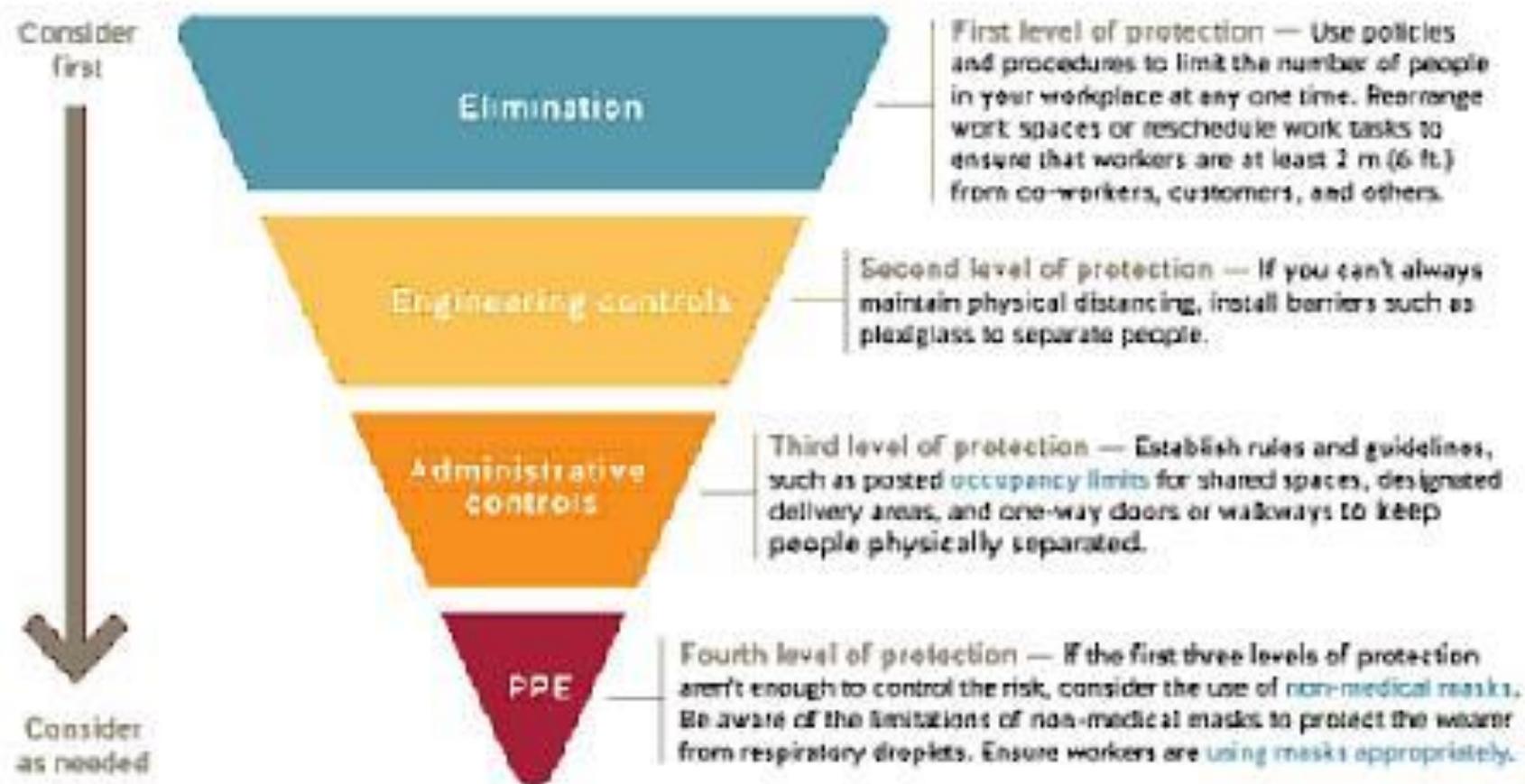


Reduce risk with the hierarchy of controls



Reduce the risk of person-to-person transmission

To reduce the risk of the virus spreading through droplets in the air, implement protocols to protect against your identified risks. Different protocols offer different levels of protection. Wherever possible, use the protocol that offers the highest level of protection. Consider controls from additional levels if the first level isn't practicable or does not completely control the risk. You might likely need to incorporate controls from various levels to address the risk at your workplace.



What employers should do

General guidance

- Determine who should be at the workplace:
 - Create policies that are in line with the recommendations and emergency measures laid out by the provincial health officer and the BC Centre for Disease Control.
- Consider engineering controls (e.g. plexiglass barriers).
- Implement physical distancing measures:
 - Reconfigure how the workplace is set up.
 - Stop in-person meetings and revise shift schedules.
 - Change work processes and practices.



Source (image): The Canadian Press

What employers should do

Workers in vehicles

- Limit essential work travel and ban non-essential travel.
 - For instances where work travel is required, consider practices to encourage physical distancing between workers.
 - Follow other preventative measures related to cleaning and hygiene.



What employers should do

Hygiene and training

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



What employers should do

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.



What workers should do

- Know when not to come to work.
- Follow preventative measures while at work:
 - Comply with the employer's instructions around minimizing exposure.
 - Practice 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.



Returning to safe operation

On May 6, 2020, the provincial government outlined its plan to restart B.C. safely. Employers preparing to resume operations must develop plans* to reopen safely, which includes assessing the risk of COVID-19 transmission in their workplace, and developing measures to reduce these risks.

How WorkSafeBC is partnering in B.C.'s Restart Plan

- Engaging workers, employers, industry, and other stakeholders to help them understand the health and safety measures they need to have in place
- General guidance to employers on returning to safe operation now on [worksafebc.com](https://www.worksafebc.com)
- Specific resources to be developed for industries as they prepare to reopen

** WorkSafeBC will not review or approve the plans of individual employers, but during a WorkSafeBC inspection we will ask employers about the steps they have taken to protect their workers.*

Returning to safe operation

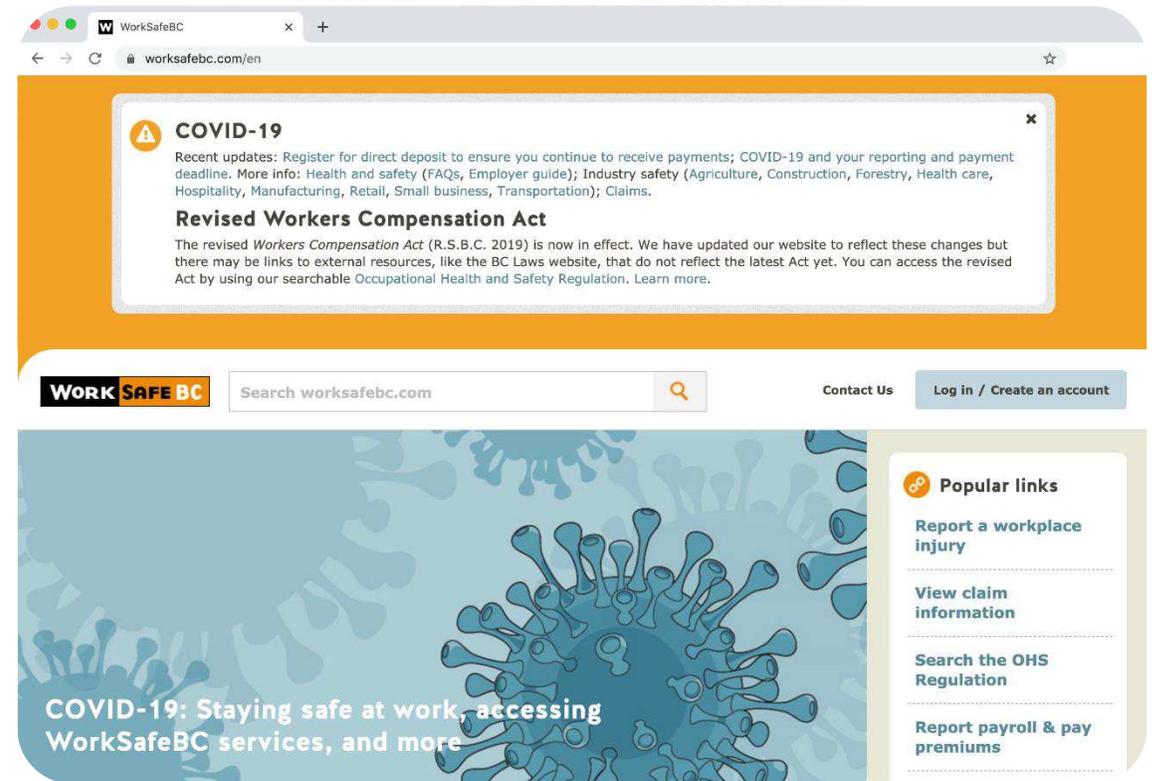
Guide to reducing the risk of COVID-19

- “COVID-19 and returning to safe operation” page on worksafebc.com provides a general guide to help employers develop a COVID-19 safety plan
- Employers’ plan to reduce the risk of exposure will address how:
 - Your workplace is organized and arranged
 - Some specific activities are carried out
 - You clean and sanitize
 - Changes and precautions will be communicated to everyone at the workplace

WorkSafeBC's support

Accessing WorkSafeBC services

- WorkSafeBC has been deemed an essential service.
- Check [worksafebc.com](https://www.worksafebc.com/en) 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.



<https://www.worksafebc.com/en>

WorkSafeBC's prevention efforts

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

Online resources:

- [General health and safety information for all workers and employers](#)
- [Preventing exposure to COVID-19 in the workplace: A guide for employers](#)
- [FAQs](#)
- [Industry information pages](#)
- [Announcements and updates](#)
- [E-newsletter](#) and social media

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.

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/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 FAQs](#) on worksafebc.com, call the **Claims Call Centre** at 1.888.967.5377, or use the [Email us](#) form on worksafebc.com.

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 \(BC Ministry of Health\)](#)

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

- **BC Centre for Disease Control:** COVID-19 information for employers and businesses
- **The Government of BC:** Business Continuity Planning Checklist
- **Small Business BC:** COVID-19 Support Service for BC Businesses
- **Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (CCOHS):** Online products and resources



BC Centre for Disease Control



Thank you!

Questions?

[insert email address]

**Psychological health and safety
during a pandemic**

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)

**Best practices for
the work at home office**

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, the above topics.

Working from home: resources

- Visit worksafebc.com for:
 - [Working from home: A guide to keeping your workers healthy and safe](#)
 - [Setting up, organizing, and working comfortably in your home workspace](#)

Ergonomics for the home office

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](#)

