WORKPLACE SAFETY & PREVENTION SERVICES GUIDANCE ON HEALTH AND SAFETY FOR PERSONAL CARE SERVICES SETTINGS DURING COVID-19

OVERVIEW

During the COVID-19 (coronavirus) outbreak, we all need to do our part to keep workers, customers and the public safe and healthy so we can stop the spread and prepare to reopen the province, when we are ready.

Below is a set of resources, tips and best practices to help employers and employees prevent the spread of COVID-19 and work together to reopen the province.

Employers and workers in Ontario have certain duties and rights under the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA) and its regulations. Employers should also review and follow any applicable directives and guidance coming from the Chief Medical Officer of Health and Ministry of Health.

Employers must also comply with Orders under the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act that are applicable for their industry or business.

Learn more about:
- workers’ rights
- employers’ responsibilities

BEST PRACTICES

We know that every workplace is unique which makes it so important that every workplace assess functions carried out by their workforce to ensure they take action to protect against the hazards presented by exposure to COVID-19.

Practicing physical distancing (staying 2 metres away from others), minimizing contact with droplets of mucous or saliva, keeping hands, surfaces and objects clean, and preventing contact with potentially infected people are all critically important measures. Other information on how you can protect yourself is available on ontario.ca/coronavirus.

We have provided some recommendations below for your consideration. Please keep in mind that introducing any new protective measures should be done as part of a full review of other workplace hazards - not just COVID-19. Employers should consult with Joint Health and Safety Committees/Health and Safety Representatives on measures to protect workers in the workplace.

Some workplaces may already have some existing controls in place that may help reduce the risk of exposure to workers, so regular ‘check-ins’ on the effectiveness of controls is highly recommended.

RECOGNIZE HAZARDS AND ASSESS RISK

For stylists, barbers, estheticians, and other personal care services sector employees we recognize that the nature of the work you do requires close contact with co-workers and customers (i.e. within 2 metres). These interactions, as well as the need to touch work surfaces and equipment could increase the likelihood that you or your customers could come in contact with the virus.

Take a look at where you might minimize those risks within your workplace. People who are sick or have signs of illness (e.g. fever, coughing, runny nose, tiredness, shortness of breath) should self-isolate. Consult public health information to learn more about the symptoms of COVID-19 infection. Recognize and report these hazards and use appropriate controls. Ensure that you or your co-workers stay home if you or they have symptoms.

Take a look at the controls below to see how they may assist you.
All existing safety, sanitation, and infection control standards established by licensing agencies and public health authorities are still in effect and enforced. Already existing controls may help to reduce the risk of exposure for workers (e.g. following practices required by the Local/Provincial Health Unit).

To protect yourself from some of the risk of exposure to COVID-19, consider the following options:

**Keep Informed and Communicate**

- Screen customers and staff regularly for health issues. This may include reminders to customers on websites and via telephone messages. If anyone develops symptoms of COVID-19, implement procedures for reporting the illness and keeping the worker away from others. For further guidance on screening procedures, consult the Ministry of Health.
- Communicate that it is not permitted for anyone to enter the business if individuals have symptoms of COVID-19. For example, install clear signage throughout the workplace, including the front desk and entry.
- Ensure that illness reporting requirements are well communicated in the workplace through training and signage. People who are sick or have signs of illness (e.g. fever, coughing, runny nose, tiredness, shortness of breath) must self-isolate, notify their employer and call a doctor or healthcare provider.
- Follow all municipal and local public health warnings, directions and recommendations related to COVID-19. Consider regular times to check in with public health updates and retrain/revise practices as needed.
- Update the business’s voicemail, email, social media, website and other external communications, and create a visible sign for your door to inform customers of changes to the business operations.
- Employers need to train workers on possible COVID-19 transmission points in the workplace, what steps are being taken to protect them, and how they can protect themselves, including frequent hand washing especially before and after each client, sanitizing items and surfaces more frequently, following tool disinfection procedures, and not touching their face.
- Ensure that measures you decide on are well communicated.

**Eliminate or Minimize Exposure**

**Physical Distancing**

- Install physical distancing markers throughout the reception area and other areas depending on the size of the facility, including the entrance area outside the premises if appropriate, to ensure customers maintain a physical distance of 2 meters.
- Limit the number of workers working in one space so that they can distance themselves from each other by:
  - Staggering shifts and break times and scheduling more time for cleaning in between customers.
- Practicing physical distancing during breaks.
- Where possible, have their workstations or chairs positioned to maintain the physical distance.
- Consider installing transparent barriers where physical distancing is not an option (for example between chairs or workstations or at salon tables).

**Disinfection and Sanitizing**

- Encourage workers to maintain clean work stations, debit machines, cash registers, counters, and equipment. Provide hand sanitizer and sanitizing wipes for clients to use upon entry. Consider having them available near the entryway, waiting areas, at reception and other high-traffic areas.
- Provide a safe place for individuals to dispose of used sanitizing wipes and personal protective equipment. Empty and clean waste containers on a regular basis.
- Surfaces that come in contact with customers must be disinfected prior to and after each customer service performed.
- Pay particular attention to frequently touched surfaces and common areas, such as entrances, counters and washrooms.
- Clean and disinfect/sterilize instruments such as scissors, hair clippers, nail files, and other equipment between clients. Public Health Ontario offers more information on cleaning and disinfection protocols.
Hand Hygiene
- Ensure all hand-washing facilities are available and in good working order.
- Proper handwashing is key. Workers should be trained in the proper hand washing technique and avoid touching their face. Extra handwashing is a good idea for everyone – and when that’s not possible, a hand sanitizer with minimum alcohol content of 60% should be used frequently.
- Encourage workers and visitors to wash their hands before entering the workplace, after contact with others, or with surfaces others have touched. Be sure to include handwashing before breaks, at shift changes, after making or receiving deliveries etc. Be sure to keep an adequate supply of soap, paper towels, etc.

Customer
- Consider only taking customers by appointment and have customers book online and by phone only, restricting walk-ins.
- Consider limiting customer capacity if unable to maintain physical distancing.
- Eliminate restrictions and penalties on cancellations to encourage clients to reschedule if they are feeling unwell. Consider minimizing or eliminating exposures by having customers pre-pay by electronic options, if this isn’t possible clean and disinfect payment devices between customers.
- Waiting areas inside your business should be closed and not available to the public. Consider signage at the door to inform the public, and inform your customers of this online/during booking.
- Remove chairs from the waiting area to make sure people do not sit close together or wait in groups.
- Consider also informing customers to exit the business immediately after their visit, with no waiting in the business following service.
- Any waiting area for your customers should have books, service menus, pens and other frequently touched items removed. Reception desks should also have unnecessary items removed as well as pens, paper, etc.
- Do not distribute snacks and beverages to customers.
- Where possible, assign workers to ensure staff and customers are utilizing sanitizing materials, following physical distancing protocols and screening for customers presenting COVID-19 related symptoms.
- Consider using single use tools, supplies and liners (example powder vials and pedicure spa bowls) where possible.
- Customer should be given direction to refrain from contacting any surfaces un-necessarily during their treatment. For retail sale of products, consider eliminating the amount of touch points on similar products such as “testers”. Encourage clients to not touch items on shelves by having workers, if possible, monitor product sale areas and having signs to ask workers for assistance.

OTHER CONTROL MEASURES
- Limit the number of people sharing equipment or tools. If this has not been done before, assign each worker a unique set of tools for their use only.
- Services with an increased risk of contact with bodily fluids must be avoided until there is further direction from Public Health Ontario (For example: massage, shaving, beard trimming etc.).
- Protective coverings should be discarded (disposable) or changed (washable) between clients; care should be taken to avoid contamination of surfaces when removing/changing used protective coverings.
- For any soiled towels, sheets, uniforms, laundry etc., minimize shaking and disturbance; if possible, arrange to ensure the laundering of items using the warmest appropriate water setting for the items and dry items completely. Clean and disinfect hampers or other carts for transporting laundry and sanitation equipment.
- If using a third party delivery service, ensure they are up-to-date with the latest COVID-19 prevention knowledge and are following safe practices.
- Implement all measures to ensure physical distance and separation between people.
- Where appropriate, safely work/meet in outdoor spaces.
- Where appropriate, recommend ventilating spaces by opening doors.

In addition to the above recommendations, your workplace should consider protective equipment as part of a complete hazard assessment. Equipment is only effective if people understand its limitations and wear it correctly. Workers need to be trained in the fit, use, storage, cleaning, maintenance and limitations of the protective equipment that they wear. Workers must use protective equipment as required by their employer.
Persons who provide personal care services in the business must wear appropriate personal protective equipment. Ensure PPE training includes the fit, use, care, putting on and taking off, maintenance, cleaning and limitations of the PPE as per manufacturer’s instructions.

Some examples of PPE include:
- Surgical/procedure masks – should be disposed of and replaced when soiled or damp
- Goggles or Face Shields - should be assigned to individuals, not shared and can be reused regularly if kept clean. Monitor if goggle or face shield use results in workers touching their faces more often because of heat or discomfort.
- Overcoats or aprons – ensure disposal is appropriate or that laundering instructions are being followed.
- Gloves – Should be used as necessary for work with any chemical hazards (e.g. hair dyes, cleaning products)

**EVALUATION**

COVID19 has presented all of us with challenges we have never seen before. It’s important to consider that any of the adjustments we are making today, may need further adjustment tomorrow.

It is recommended that you take a look at your preventative measures on an ongoing basis, and adjust them if they are not working well enough or causing other issues with your work. For example, if you decided to use goggles, but they are impeding your vision, or are making other tasks unnecessarily difficult, you may want to try a face shield instead. Or, if you decided you needed a certain kind of disinfectant that is no longer available, identifying alternative disinfecting products or solutions or switching to good soap and water practices may be reasonable substitutes.

Bottom line? Plan to make regular check-ins and adjustments part of your COVID-19 infection prevention plans.

*For anyone who thinks they may have been exposed to or are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, please start by visiting the Ministry of Health website and taking a self-assessment: [https://covid-19.ontario.ca/selfassessment/#q0](https://covid-19.ontario.ca/selfassessment/#q0). Please do not visit an assessment center unless you have been referred by a health care professional. Do not call 911 unless it is an emergency.

**RESOURCES**

Stay updated with daily government updates:
- Government of Ontario
- Government of Canada
- Public Health Ontario

Ontario government and agency-issued resources about COVID-19

The [Ontario Ministry of Health](https://www.ontario.ca/en/health-and-social-services) is providing consistent updates on the provincial government’s response to the outbreak, including:
- status of cases in Ontario
- current affected areas
- symptoms and treatments
- how to protect yourself and self-isolate
- updated Ontario news on the virus

[Public Health Ontario](https://www.publichealthontario.ca/) is providing up-to-date resources on COVID-19, including:
- links to evolving public health guidelines, position statements and situational updates
- synopsis of key articles updating on the latest findings related to the virus
- recommendations for use of personal protective equipment
- information on infection prevention and control
The Ontario government is supporting employers by setting up a portal to assist them in finding supplies and equipment through the Workplace PPE Supplier Directory.

OTHER COVID-19 RESOURCES

Health Canada outlines the actions being taken by the Government of Canada to limit spread of the virus, as well as what is happening in provinces and communities across the country. It also maintains a live update of the number of cases by province.

The World Health Organization is updating the latest guidance and information related to the global outbreak and spread beyond Canadian borders.

It also provides the most up-to-date information on:
- current research and development around the virus
- a COVID-19 situation “dashboard”
- emergency preparedness measures
- live media updates on the spread of the virus

Public Health Ontario: Guide to Infection Prevention and Control in Personal Service Settings

This resource does not replace the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA) and its regulations, and should not be used as or considered legal advice. Health and safety inspectors apply the law based on the facts in the workplace.

For more information visit www.wsps.ca/COVID19

NOTE: This document is intended for informational purposes only to provide an overview of the potential hazards posed in the workplace due to COVID-19. It is not intended as medical advice, to provide a comprehensive risk assessment for all workplaces, or to replace any legislated workplace safety obligations. Due to the ongoing evolution of the situation in Ontario and around the world, this document may be used as a guide for Employers in addition to guidance delivered by public health authorities such as the World Health Organization (WHO), Ontario Ministry of Health, Public Health Ontario and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Any use which is made of this document by any Employer, or any reliance on or decisions to be made based on it, are the responsibility of the Employer. WSPS and its partners, officers, directors, employees, agents, representatives, suppliers and service providers accept no responsibility for any errors or omissions in content or for damages of any kind or nature suffered by any Employer or any third party as a result of use of or reliance on this communication.