

## COVID-19 and the Workplace: General Precautions and a Risk Assessment

### Can a Worker be at the Worksite?

<b>1. Is the Worker ill, or do they have an elevated temperature?</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> NO – proceed to Q. 2	<input type="checkbox"/> YES – stay at home until they are symptom-free. If the Worker is concerned about COVID-19, please refer them to the NTHSSA Operational Response for COVID-19 Preparedness at <a href="https://www.nthssa.ca/en/newsroom/public-notice-nthssa-%E2%80%93-operational-response-covid-19-preparedness">https://www.nthssa.ca/en/newsroom/public-notice-nthssa-%E2%80%93-operational-response-covid-19-preparedness</a> . <b>Please note that the NTHSSA health care providers will not be providing sick notes to employers during this time.</b>
<b>2. Does the Worker perform essential services*?</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> NO – proceed to Q. 3	<input type="checkbox"/> YES – take all reasonable protective measures (see p. 4) and perform a risk assessment (see p. 5).
<b>3. Has the Worker returned from outside the NWT within the last 14 days?</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> NO – proceed to Q. 4	<input type="checkbox"/> YES – follow the directions for self-isolation provided by the Department of Health and Social Services at <a href="https://www.hss.gov.nt.ca/en/services/coronavirus-disease-covid-19/self-isolation">https://www.hss.gov.nt.ca/en/services/coronavirus-disease-covid-19/self-isolation</a>
<b>4. Can the Worker work remotely?</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> NO – Proceed to Q. 5	<input type="checkbox"/> YES – develop a work-at-home agreement. For additional information about tele-working, visit <a href="http://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/hsprograms/telework.html">www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/hsprograms/telework.html</a> .
<b>5. Can you amend the shift schedule or work environment to increase social distancing? For example, dividing staff between two shifts, eliminating or reducing visits to homes of customers/clients, etc.</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> NO – take all reasonable protective measures (see p. 4) and perform a risk assessment (see p. 5).	<input type="checkbox"/> YES – develop a social distancing operational plan that works for your business.

**\*Essential services definition:** a service that is provided by either a public or private organization, without which the safety, health or welfare of the community, or a section of the community, would be placed in danger.

Adapted from: <https://www.ilo.org/legacy/english/dialogue/ifpdial/IIq/ch5/ex4.htm>

If you would like remote assistance from an OHS Inspector to perform a risk assessment related to COVID-19 for your worksite, please contact a WSCC OHS Inspector at 1-800-661-0792.

For all other concerns related to COVID-19, visit <https://www.hss.gov.nt.ca/en/services/coronavirus-disease-covid-19>.

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## Recommended Protective Measures for Symptom-free Workers:

- Regularly and thoroughly clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand rub (60% alcohol) or wash them with soap and water.
- Maintain a distance of 1 to 2 metres (3 to 6 feet) between yourself and anyone who is coughing or sneezing.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth.
- Be careful when touching garbage: All waste can go into regular garbage bins; take care to not touch used tissues with your hands; line the garbage with a plastic bag to make waste disposal easier and safer; and, clean your hands with soap and water after emptying the garbage bin.
- Clean and disinfect with regular household cleaners, including regularly touched items such as toilets, sink taps, handles, door knobs, light switches, cellphones, etc. frequently throughout the day.
- Make sure you, and the people around you, follow good respiratory hygiene. This means covering your mouth and nose with your bent elbow or tissue when you cough or sneeze. Then dispose of the used tissue immediately.
- Stay home if you feel unwell. If you have a fever, cough and difficulty breathing, seek medical attention and call in advance. Follow the directions of your local health authority.

## Safety Assessment:

- Staff can maintain a distance of 1 to 2 meters between themselves and customers
- Staff have access to a handwashing station with running water and hand sanitizing stations at areas that are frequently touched by staff and customers.
- Staff have access to disposable gloves when handling money and garbage.
- Cleaning supplies are available to staff to disinfect frequently touched areas.
- Staff have been educated about healthy respiratory practices (see <https://www.hss.gov.nt.ca/sites/hss/files/resources/healthy-respiratory-practices.pdf>).
- Staff returning from destinations outside of the NWT, or who have been in contact with a person with COVID-19 have been advised to self-isolate for 14 days (see <https://www.hss.gov.nt.ca/en/services/coronavirus-disease-covid-19/self-isolation> ).

## Precautions to take at the Workplace:

- Discuss respiratory hygiene practices with staff and the importance of using healthy respiratory practices.
- Provide staff with disposable gloves and disinfecting supplies, such as disinfecting wipes or sprays and paper towel, especially if all staff use communal equipment such as telephones, keyboards, cash registers, etc.
- If possible, develop a plan to prevent staff from sharing cash registers, keyboards, etc. If this is required, have staff disinfect equipment between users and use gloves.
- Consider going cashless, and encourage customers to pay by tapping. If this is not possible, ensure the keypad is cleaned after each use.
- If your customers wait in line at your place of business, place signage to encourage social distancing while waiting in line.
- Consider your shift options. Is it possible to have fewer people at the worksite over more shifts?
- Have you informed staff who are sick to stay at home and self-isolate, and to contact their public health unit or health centre if they have a fever, cough or difficulty breathing?

## References:

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public>  
<https://www.hss.gov.nt.ca/sites/hss/files/resources/self-isolation-information-sheet.pdf>

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## Sample Risk Assessment

Purpose: To ensure the health and safety of workers who are unable to work remotely.

### Step 1: Consult with workers to identify hazards and their potential for causing harm:

#### Hazards Related to Exposure

- Staff cannot maintain a protective distance of 1 – 2 meters between themselves and customers.
- Staff do not have access to a handwashing station with running water or hand sanitizing stations.
- Staff do not have access to disposable gloves when handling money and garbage.
- Cleaning supplies are not available to staff to disinfect frequently touched areas.
- Staff have not received training about healthy respiratory practices.
- Staff have recently returned from a destination outside of the NWT or have been in contact with a person with COVID-19.
- Staff do not have the option to work remotely
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### Step 2: Determine Risk of Harm

Risk = Severity x Likelihood		Severity			Hazard	Priority	Notes
		1: Minimal	2: Minor	3: Serious			
Likelihood	1: Possible	1	2	3			
	2: Probably	2	4	6			
	3: Likely	3	6	9			

Can any of these hazards be eliminated? If yes, make a note.

### Step 3: Determine hazard control measures

	Best	<b>Eliminate the hazard:</b> This removes the task, equipment, chemical, or act that is causing the hazard.
		<b>Substitute:</b> Change the work process, person, substance, tool or equipment for a less hazardous one.
		<b>Engineer:</b> Design the worksite, equipment, or process to minimize, eliminate, or contain the hazard.
		<b>Administrate:</b> Limit the worker's exposure to the hazard through safe work procedures.
	Least	<b>Personal Protective Equipment:</b> Used as a last resort to protect a worker from exposure to a hazard.

### Step 4: Implement the hazard controls

Hazard	Control Method
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
For each control, you should be able to answer yes to these questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Have you discussed the hazard(s) and control(s) to the workers?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Do you have documentation to show this?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> If training is required, have you provided this to the workers?</li> </ul>	

### Step 5: Measure the effectiveness of controls.

- Create a plan to monitor that the control is working, e.g., during inspections, as a safety toolbox topic, etc.
- If the control does not work, review and revise the control.
- Make sure you discuss all options with workers.

**Keep this hazard assessment on file for future reference.**