

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

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. Step 5 of the COVID-19 Safety Plan requires employers to monitor their workplace and update safety plans as necessary.

This guide will help you review your safety plan to ensure it's effective and functioning properly. This guide includes checklists that you can use to review each of the first five steps described in WorkSafeBC's [COVID-19 Safety Plan](#).

Step 1: Assess the risks at your workplace

The first step in developing an effective COVID-19 Safety Plan is to assess the risks at your workplace. This includes doing a walk-through to identify areas where there may be a risk of COVID-19 transmission, either through close physical proximity or through contaminated surfaces. The following checklist will help you determine how well you did your risk assessment.

- Did you involve workers in your risk assessment? Workers can offer valuable information about their workday that might help identify areas where people congregate or surfaces that should be included in the cleaning plan.
- Did you involve your joint health and safety committee (or worker health and safety representative, if applicable)?
- Have you considered all the areas where people gather? This includes not only the main work areas but also break rooms, kitchens, washrooms, change rooms, and meeting rooms?
- Have you considered all the places where workers are close to customers or other members of the public? Consider entrances and exits, shop floors, aisles, service counters, and registers.
- Have you considered vehicle transportation? Do workers travel together or with members of the public? Do workers use vehicles that others may have driven?
- Have you identified the tools, machines, and equipment that workers share?
- Have you considered surfaces that people touch often, such as light switches, doorknobs, steering wheels, cash registers, phones, photocopiers, and washroom facilities?

Step 2: Implement protocols to reduce the risks

You should have a unique set of protocols to address the risks that are specific to your workplace. Consider your work practices, workplace configuration, and equipment.

- Did you review the [industry-specific protocols](#) on worksafebc.com that apply to your industry? Did you also review and consider other protocol pages that may contain useful information? For example, many workplaces may benefit from office protocols, even if the workplace is not in an office building.
- Did you review materials provided by your health and safety association, or other professional or industry associations?
- Have you been complying with all the [orders, guidance, and notices](#) issued by the provincial health officer that are relevant to your industry?

- Have you reviewed your protocols since developing your original COVID-19 Safety Plan to ensure they are still appropriate?
- Have you selected the most appropriate controls that provide the highest degree of protection to your workers? When selecting controls, follow the [hierarchy of controls](#). For more information on selecting controls, see the [COVID-19 Safety Plan](#) and [Controlling Exposure](#).

Physical distancing

Limit the number of people in your workplace and ensure physical distance wherever possible.

- Have you identified workers who can work from home to reduce the number of people in the workplace? Are these workers currently working from home?
- Are you restricting the number of customers allowed in the workplace?
- Have you established and posted [occupancy limits](#) for the workplace and for rooms where occupancy needs to be managed, including kitchens, break rooms, elevators, and washrooms?
- Have you removed or rearranged furniture in work areas, including kitchens, break rooms, change rooms, and other locations where workers may be close to one another?
- Where possible, have you set up workstations so they are at least 2 m (6 ft.) apart?
- Have you modified work schedules so fewer people are onsite at any one time?
- Have workers reported any issues related to physical distancing in the workplace? Have you resolved these issues?

Barriers

If your workers can't keep physically distant from others, you should use [barriers](#) wherever possible to reduce the risk of transmission.

- Have you installed barriers at permanent work locations where people will be close to one another?
- Have your barriers been installed and maintained correctly?
- Have you had any issues with barriers, such as people moving around them to communicate?
- Have workers reported any issues relating to barriers in the workplace? Have you resolved these issues?

Masks

If people will be close to one another and barriers aren't feasible, you should use masks to reduce the risk of transmission.

- If workers are using masks, are all other appropriate protocols still being followed (i.e., physical distancing and barriers)? Remember, masks are not meant to replace other safety measures.
- Does your mask policy include the use of masks that are appropriate for the workplace and work processes?
- Do workers know how to [use and care for masks](#)?
- If customers will be close to workers, have you required or encouraged the customers to use masks?
- Have workers reported any issues relating to masks in the workplace? Have you resolved these issues?

Cleaning and hygiene

Every workplace must implement effective cleaning and hygiene practices.

- Does your cleaning plan include all the high-contact surfaces identified in your risk assessment?
- Have you reviewed the information on [cleaning and disinfecting surfaces](#)?
- Have you provided appropriate training and materials for workers who have to clean the workplace?
- Have you developed an appropriate cleaning schedule for your workplace?
- Have you adjusted workplace schedules to allow time for proper cleaning?
- Have workers reported any issues related to cleaning the workplace? Have you resolved these issues?
- Have you developed and communicated policies for good hygiene practices? For [handwashing](#) and [cover cough and sneezes](#) posters, go to [worksafebc.com](https://www.worksafebc.com).

Step 3: Develop policies

Policies support workers and employers by letting everyone know what's expected of them and how to conduct themselves safely. Make sure your policies are up to date and that everyone in your workplace knows them.

- Do you have a daily health check to ensure that workers and others with symptoms of COVID-19 are not entering the workplace? Your process may include daily sign-in sheets, questionnaires, or online forms. This should be supported by workplace signage that reminds workers and others that they should not enter the workplace if they are ill.
- Have you reviewed WorkSafeBC's [COVID-19 Safety Plan](#) for examples of other policies you may need to consider, such as a [working alone policy](#) and a [work from home policy](#)?
- Do you have a [violence prevention policy](#), and have workers received training in violence prevention? Workers may be at risk of violence from members of the public reacting to your workplace restrictions or policies.
- Have workers raised concerns about violence in the workplace? Have you addressed these concerns?
- Have you communicated your policies to your workers and trained them? Have you reinforced your policies?
- Have you reviewed your policies since developing your original COVID-19 Safety Plan to make sure they're still appropriate?
- Are you monitoring whether or not workers are following the policies?

Step 4: Develop communication plans and training

Employers have a responsibility not only to develop a COVID-19 Safety Plan but also to make sure the plan is being followed. This means making sure that everyone knows what they need to do and that someone is responsible for monitoring the workplace to make sure protocols are being followed.

- Do all your workers know your workplace protocols and policies?
- Are supervisors monitoring workplace protocols to make sure they are being followed?

- Have you posted signage that reinforces policies and procedures for workers and members of the public?
- Have you trained new workers on your policies and protocols?
- Have workers raised concerns about workers or members of the public not following protocols? What have you done to address these concerns?

Step 5: Monitor your workplace and update your plan as necessary

Workplaces change, so your COVID-19 Safety Plan should also change. As work processes, staffing, and work arrangements change over time, you should review and update your COVID-19 Safety Plan to address changing risks in the workplace.

- Have you reviewed your workplace protocols and policies to make sure they are still appropriate?
- Have you accounted for changes to your workplace in your COVID-19 Safety Plan?
- When was the last time you updated your plan? Does it still reflect your current workplace conditions? Have you posted your current plan?
- Have you communicated changes to your plan to workers?
- What process do you have in place for regular review of your plan?
- Do you have a mechanism for workers, joint committee members, and worker representatives to raise concerns about policies and protocols? How do you address these concerns?