

Working During a Pandemic

Pandemics can occur at anytime without warning. These unprecedented times call for enhanced measures to ensure the health and safety of clients as well as workers in the workplace. Employers have obligations to protect workers from hazards in the workplace as set out in the *Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA)* and its regulations and the directives that come from the Chief Medical Officer of Health.

While pandemic situations change rapidly, the legislation and regulations used to govern Ontario's workplaces don't. Employers must continue to comply with the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* and associated regulations, as well as public health directives issued by the Chief Medical Officer of Health. The Government may declare a State of Emergency which then enables the creation for temporary orders that employers must comply with to ensure the health and safety of their employees.

It is important that all parties in a workplace communicate their roles and responsibilities. Employers need to ensure all health and safety policies are updated and posted for all employees to see. Any employee who has a concern should raise it with their supervisor or health and safety representative. This will help ensure that the employer has taken all reasonable precautions.

Protecting Yourself and Your Co-Workers

In this case, COVID-19 is spread through close contact. To help prevent the spread, enhance sanitation and personal hygiene practices:

- Wash your hands for 20 seconds with soap and water, or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer (70%+ alcohol).
- Sneeze and cough into your sleeve.
- Dispose of used tissues immediately and wash your hands afterwards.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth.
- Avoid contact with people who are sick.
- If you feel unwell, stay home.
- Disinfect frequently touched/used areas such as doorknobs, sinks, faucets, toilets, tables, remotes, light switches, handles, etc.
- Wear long sleeve shirts, long pants, gloves, masks (if available) and other personal protective equipment while working.
- Wear gloves when interacting with frequently touched items. Immediately remove the gloves when completed and wash your hands. Do not touch your face, phone, or any other object with your gloves on.
- Wash your work clothes immediately when you get home.
- If you begin to feel flu-like symptoms, go home and call your local public health unit for further directions.

Employers should also focus on ensuring:

- Access to soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Clean washroom facilities
- Sanitizing commonly touched surfaces or areas

- Avoiding the sharing of equipment (hand tools, power tools, yard maintenance equipment, etc.). If sharing is necessary, employers should ensure that there is sanitization of the equipment between use.
- Post signage on hygiene in highly traffic areas.

For further information on workplace infection prevention and control, please contact your local health unit.

Enhanced Health and Safety Policies

All employers need to post and communicate all health and safety policies to employees and contractors. Enhanced policies should cover the sanitization of sites and workspaces, how employees and contractors report illnesses, how to ensure physical distancing, and how work will be scheduled.

In order to ensure physical distancing, employers should consider:

- staggering start times, breaks, lunches
- staggering shifts (ex: extend the workday to have less people on site at any one time)
- restricting the number of people on-site and where they are assigned to work
- planning day operations through site planning to ensure physical distancing (2m +) between workers during any particular shift
- controlling site movement (ex: limiting the movement of material, limiting number of workers who can gather in one space, etc.)
- holding meetings in an outside space to enable physical distancing
- limiting unnecessary on-site contact between workers, and between workers and outside service providers, and encourage physical distancing in these areas
- placing signage on enhanced sanitization measures, hygiene practices, and physical distancing in high traffic areas

Employee Monitoring

During a pandemic, it is important that employers track where employees have worked. If an employee tests positive, the local public health unit will ask employers to provide information on where the employee worked as well as the contact information of any other employee who may have been exposed in the workplace.

If Someone in the Workplace Gets Sick

The Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development has reporting requirements for this type of situation. If an employer is advised that a worker has tested positive due to exposure at the workplace, or that a claim has been filed with the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB), the employers must notify the Ministry of Labour in writing within four days and the workplace health and safety committee or a health and safety representative.

Acknowledgement of Receipt of Pandemic Policy

I, _____ acknowledge that I have received a copy of **CAMP NAME**'s "Working During a Pandemic" Policy. This document outlines the goals, the policies and procedures of the business during these unprecedented times, as well as their expectations of me and my responsibilities as an employee. I further acknowledge that I have read the "Working During a Pandemic" policy and that I understand the contents set forth therein.

I acknowledge, understand and agree to comply with the policies that have been outlined.

Employee name _____ Date _____

Signature _____