

# Guidance on worker procedures (handling paperwork) during COVID-19

## Overview

**This is not a legal document and employers are advised to seek legal advice.**

Employers and constructors 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 coming from the Chief Medical Officer of Health.

Workers should raise any concerns to their:

- Supervisor
- Joint health and safety committee
- Health and safety representative

This will help ensure the employer has taken all reasonable precautions.

Ontario is currently in the midst of a global pandemic. While the COVID-19 situation is changing rapidly, the legislation and regulations used to govern Ontario's workplaces are not.

Under Ontario law, employers have the duty to keep workers and work sites safe and free of hazards. Workers have the right to refuse unsafe work. If health and safety concerns are not resolved internally, a worker can seek enforcement by filing a complaint with the ministry's Health and Safety Contact Centre at 1-877-202-0008. Failure of the employer or constructor to comply with the OHSA and its regulations could result in a stop-work order upon inspection by the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development.

## Recognize hazards and assess risks

**How does the coronavirus spread?** Coronaviruses are spread mainly from person to person through close contact. For example, in a household, workplace, or health care centre. Some human coronaviruses spread easily between people, while others do not.

During the course of the day, your hands touch many surfaces. Once contaminated, your hands can transfer the virus to your eyes, nose, or mouth. From there, the virus can enter your body and make you sick.

In most commercial environments, handling paperwork (e.g., signing for deliveries, issuing work orders) is a normal part of business. This may require being in close contact with other people to exchange documents.

As a truck driver, shipper, or receiver you should be aware of some of the precautions to take when handling shipment-related paperwork (e.g., shipping documents, bills of lading).



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## Controls

### 1. Maintain physical distancing

Everyone in Ontario should be practising physical distancing to reduce their exposure to other people. They should do their best to avoid close contact with people outside of their immediate families. Close contact includes being within two (2) meters (6 feet) of another person.

### 2. Use alternative forms of communication

- Use technology for communication (e.g., text messaging and mobile phones) rather than having in-person conversations as much as possible.
- Where possible, use technology to send and receive paperwork (e.g., scanning equipment and electronic proof of delivery).
- Do not share pens. Request that others use their own pen or stylus when signing. If required to share, use disinfectant wipes to clean pens and styluses.

### 3. Clean and disinfect regularly

- Regularly disinfect any areas that you are frequently in contact with or are used by other people (e.g., tables, desks, tablets, pens, door handles).
- Have sanitizer or soap present and visible for all staff to use.
- Monitor your supplies and refill them regularly.
- Wash your hands frequently before and after transferring paperwork.
- Use appropriate PPE when cleaning potentially contaminated surfaces.
- Dispose of gloves and soiled materials in regular garbage.
- Remove garbage from the facility regularly, and wash hands after disposal.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.

**If you start to feel symptoms of COVID-19.** Anyone who begins to feel unwell (fever, new cough, or difficulty breathing) should return home and self-isolate immediately.

People who are self-isolating should seek clinical assessment over the phone; either by calling their primary care provider's office or Telehealth Ontario (1-866-797-0000). If you need additional assessment, your primary care provider or Telehealth Ontario will direct you. If you need immediate medical attention you should call 911 and mention your travel history and symptoms.

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## Evaluate

Review procedures with your supervisor or employer. If the procedures are not working, communicate with your supervisor/employer to modify. Also, notify your supervisor/employer if more resources are needed – pens, clipboards, sanitizing resources and other.

Follow-up and evaluation are essential to ensure the effectiveness of controls and solutions implemented. You should also determine the following:

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For more information visit [ihsa.ca/COVID-19](https://ihsa.ca/COVID-19)



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- Has the hazard been eliminated or the risk minimized appropriately?
- Is there a better way to control the risk?
- Is the control being used consistently and as planned? Monitor behaviour and practices, and your improvement over time.
- Continuously engage your workers, and communicate recommendations and adjustments with supervisors.

**Stay home if you are feeling ill.** If you detect symptoms, you should immediately distance yourself from others and go home. If possible, avoid using public transit. Ensure you notify your supervisor so that they are aware of the situation and can also notify others who may have been exposed.

For Ontario residents, anyone who suspects that they have contracted COVID-19 should call 811 (NOT 911) instead of going to the hospital or a family doctor. Direct toll-free phone numbers for Ontario residents are: 1-866-797-0000 or TTY: 1-866-797-0007. Visit the Ontario Ministry of Health's website and taking their [self-assessment](#).

### Resources

Stay updated with daily government updates on COVID-19:

[Government of Ontario](#)

[Government of Canada](#)

[Public Health Ontario](#)

