

# VEHICLE (TRUCK) DRIVERS

## Confronting COVID-19

### Working during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Concerned about your health and safety? Health and safety law says **your employer must take every reasonable precaution to protect you**. But what is reasonable in the circumstances? The precautionary principle should guide all actions. In other words, the absence of scientific certainty should not prevent prudent actions. Consider the following.

### HYGIENE AND CLEANING

Hygiene cannot be over emphasized. Hygiene notices (i.e., avoid touching your face, sneeze/cough etiquette and proper hand washing) should be posted prominently where you pick up, stop and deliver. At all locations you must have access to clean handwashing facilities with soap and hand towels, plus time for thorough and frequent hand washing.

#### In the vehicle you must also have access to:

- ▶ Hand sanitizers — with a concentration of 60 per cent alcohol
- ▶ Tissues to catch coughs and sneezes
- ▶ Wipes appropriate to ensure clean surfaces, especially commonly touched vehicle surfaces and equipment (i.e., steering wheel, door handles, dashboard, delivery carts).

Employers should provide cleaning products containing ethanol, at 62-71%, 0.5% hydrogen peroxide or 0.1% sodium hypochlorite (bleach). Cleaning should take place at the end of your shift, including disposal of all waste.

All work wear should also be laundered as soon as possible. As an added precaution, drivers should change out of their work clothes upon returning home.

### SOCIAL (PHYSICAL) DISTANCING

Space between drivers, other workers and customers is critical. **Employers should organize work to:**

- ▶ Restrict people from work who are unwell or returning from international travel and enforce 14 days of self-isolation before workers can return to work
- ▶ Reduce numbers of people wherever possible at pick up and delivery locations (i.e., cease non-essential work; staggered, shorter work hours)

- ▶ Maintain a two-metre distance (i.e., install markers at loading docks to help communicate this distance)
- ▶ Waive customer signatures for product receipt wherever possible (conduct remotely, through electronic means)
- ▶ Create spaces to separate workers who become ill at work until they can leave.

### PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

In health care settings personal protective equipment (PPE) is essential for all interactions with suspected, presumed or confirmed COVID-19 patients. In other workplaces working during the COVID-19 pandemic, this kind of protection against COVID-19 may not be necessary. Some PPE, including facemasks and gloves, can cause a false sense of security and offers limited protection. Improper use can also increase the risk of infection.

As such, public health authorities tell us PPE is not a replacement for social distancing, thorough and frequent hand hygiene, and clean work surfaces. Working with worker representatives (and union reps where there is one), employers should first examine all the ways in which workers may be exposed to COVID-19. Then consider hygiene and social distancing measures to combat potential exposures. Above measures are a good place to start. If after exhausting these measures, PPE is deemed a necessary last resort, great care must be taken in its selection and use.

See **WHSC COVID-19 information sheets on [Gloves at Work](#) and [Respiratory and Eye Protection at Work](#) for additional details.**

### FURTHER QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS?

Review our other COVID-19 resources at [www.whsc.on.ca](http://www.whsc.on.ca).

#### Need more help still?

Contact your worker member of the joint health and safety committee, worker representative, union representative if you have one, or Workers Health & Safety Centre at [contactus@whsc.on.ca](mailto:contactus@whsc.on.ca) or **1-888-869-7950**.

# Additional advice from Ontario's Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development

## OVERVIEW

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, work sites and all workplaces 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 of their rights 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.

## BEST PRACTICES

These are covered in the Workers Health & Safety Centre document above. Other WHSC COVID-19 resources found at [www.whsc.on.ca](http://www.whsc.on.ca).

For more information on worker's rights and employer obligations under health and safety law, including the worker right to refuse unsafe work, check out Workers Health & Safety Centre [online worker OHS rights posters](#) or the [Frequently Asked Questions](#) section of the WHSC website.

## RESOURCES

Stay updated with daily government updates on COVID-19:

[Government of Ontario](#)

[Government of Canada](#)

[Public Health Ontario](#).