

PASSENGER VEHICLE AND TRUCK DRIVERS

CONFRONTING COVID-19

Updated December 2020

(to also include passenger vehicles)

Working during the COVID-19 pandemic?
Concerned about your health and safety?



TRAINING

▶ THE RIGHT THING. THE RIGHT WAY.



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, including proper sneeze/cough etiquette, hand hygiene and avoiding touching your face or rubbing your eyes. At all locations where you stop you should have access to clean handwashing facilities with hot water, soap and hand towels, plus time for thorough and frequent hand washing. If soap and water are not available, access to hand sanitizer containing at least 60 per cent alcohol is essential. [Health Canada](#) offers list of recalled sanitizing products you should not use.

Enhanced cleaning and disinfecting of your vehicle and any equipment is also a must considering health and research authorities agree the COVID-19 virus can survive on surfaces for hours and even days depending on the surface (Generally, the harder the surface, the longer it lasts). This is particularly important if multiple workers will be using the same vehicle. Disinfecting should take place at the start of the shift, the end of the shift and at other times as deemed necessary.

[Health Canada](#) and the [U.S. EPA](#) offer lists of acceptable disinfectant products for use against the COVID-19 virus. However, wherever possible, consider using [safer cleaning and disinfecting solutions](#) whose active ingredients include ethanol, isopropanol (isopropyl alcohol), hydrogen peroxide, L-Lactic acid, or citric acid.

In the vehicle you should have access to:

- ▶ Hand sanitizer — with a concentration of 60 per cent alcohol
- ▶ Tissues to catch coughs and sneezes
- ▶ Single-use disinfecting wipes or disinfectant products and paper towels to clean commonly touched surfaces and equipment (i.e. steering wheel, door handles, gear shift, moving cart or dolly, electronic signature pads).
- ▶ No touch trash container in truck. Dispose of all waste at end of shift (practice hand hygiene after disposal).

If wearing machine-washable work gloves, do not touch your face with gloved hands. Upon removal wash hands or use sanitizer immediately. Work wear and gloves should be removed after work or immediately upon returning home and laundered in accordance with manufacturer's instruction, using the hottest appropriate water setting and dry items completely.

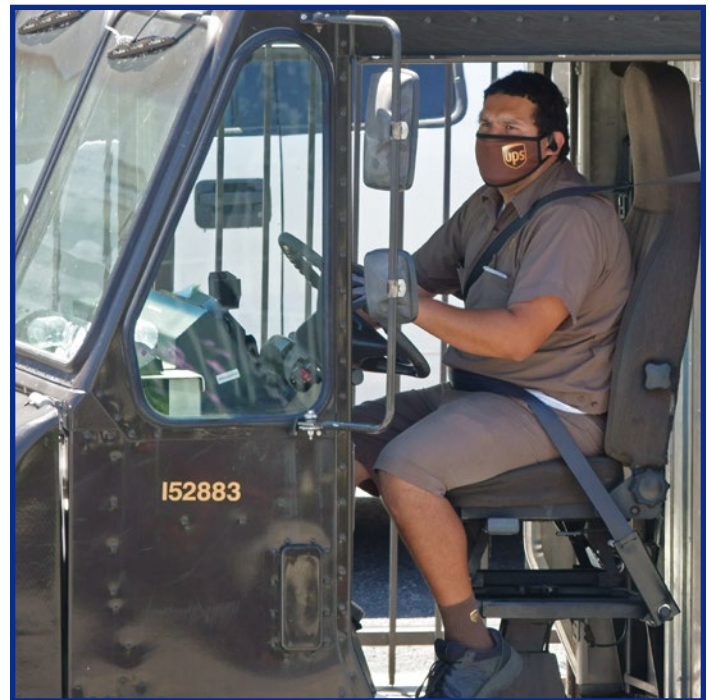
SOCIAL (PHYSICAL) DISTANCING

Self-isolation for those with COVID-19 or those experiencing symptoms or those who were exposed to a presumed or confirmed case is essential. In fact, for workers or suppliers coming to work, employers are required to implement a [screening process](#) prior to arrival or when they first enter the workplace. **Should anyone fail the screening, they should be denied entry and advised to self-isolate**, call their health care provider or Telehealth Ontario (1.866.797.0000) for additional guidance on whether or not they require a COVID-19 test.

Employers should also dedicate a location to isolate people who become ill at work until they can leave. (Surgical masks should be provided to these workers to help catch potentially infected respiratory droplets.)

For information on when workers are cleared to re-enter the workforce consult the Ontario's Ministry of Health [guidance document](#).

NOTE: Employers must report (in writing and within four days) all known, work-related, positive test results for COVID-19 to the Ministry of Labour, the joint health and safety committee or health and safety representative, and trade union (if applicable).



Ensuring two metres between drivers, other workers, passengers and customers is also critical. To achieve this, **employers should ensure:**

- ▶ Reduced numbers of people wherever possible at pick up and delivery locations (i.e., cease non-essential work; staggered, shorter work hours)
- ▶ Contactless delivery and pick up process to ensure two metre physical distancing (waive customer signatures or conduct electronically)
- ▶ Clear markers installed at loading docks to help communicate two metre distance
- ▶ When driving with passengers because of business necessity, where possible the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention and University of Guelph recommend among other precautions
 - ▶ Reduced numbers in the vehicle
 - ▶ Seating arrangement that maximizes distance between driver and passenger (i.e., in vehicles with a back seat the passenger sits on the right hand side)
 - ▶ Plexiglass barriers between the driver and a back seat passenger.

ENHANCED VENTILATION

With research confirming the **airborne transmission of the COVID-19 virus** scientists and engineers have advised workplaces should implement **enhanced ventilation** in indoor spaces, especially in smaller confined spaces. While some high end vehicle manufacturers have begun introducing **enhanced vehicle air filtration systems**, research has found **opening vehicle windows**, even a bit, also helps. **Opening all windows wide was found to be best**, but weather conditions may not always allow this option.

According to study findings, **the next best option**, for a four door/window vehicle at least, was to **open the window opposite the driver and then behind the driver** (with the passenger sitting on the right). When windows opposite to vehicle occupants are open the air flow enters the vehicle behind the driver, sweeps across the interior behind the passenger and exits out the passenger-side front window. In such a manner potential cross-contamination between the driver and passenger is reduced.



PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

Before using PPE, employers should first work with joint health and safety committees, worker health and safety representatives (and union reps where applicable) to examine all the ways in which workers may be exposed to the COVID-19 virus. Then consider the precautions promoted by public health authorities, including those mentioned above, and how best to implement them.

Remember when PPE is deemed necessary, **great care must be taken** in its selection, use, cleaning, laundering and disposal. Also keep in mind, some PPE can cause a false sense of security, offers limited protection and can also increase the risk of infection if used improperly. For instance, for most workers, including drivers, nitrile (synthetic rubber) gloves to protect against COVID-19 are not advised, as in most cases they only serve to spread the virus. The [World Health Organization](#) and [Public Health Agency of Canada](#) advises hand washing/sanitizing offers superior protection.

In terms of **non-medical masks and face coverings**, the position taken by public health authorities has evolved significantly, especially in non-health care work settings. The [U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC), for instance, now recognizes these masks as both a source control blocking the release of exhaled respiratory droplets and aerosols and as personal protection for the mask wearer. They add however the level of mask protection is dependent on design, fit and materials used. See the **WHSC COVID-19: [Respiratory and Eye Protection](#)** resource document for details.

Here in Ontario, the **universal use of masks** or face coverings that cover the nose, mouth and chin is **now mandatory** in all indoor public spaces, including workplaces (even those not open to the public) and on public transit. In vehicles with passengers both the driver and the passenger must wear masks. Lone drivers will only need a mask when delivering to an indoor location.

Public health authorities warn though, non-medical masks, nor PPE alone will prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus and must be used as part of a **wide range of controls**, including enhanced ventilation, physical distancing, thorough cleaning and disinfection of surfaces and frequent hand hygiene.



TRAINING AND INFORMATION

Beyond taking all reasonable precautions to protect workers from hazards, including the COVID-19 virus, employers also have a general requirement to provide information, instruction, **competent supervision**. Training, and not just the sharing of information, is a **key way employers meet this legal obligation**. WHSC **COVID-19 Training**, offered through WHSC virtual classrooms, can assist workplaces seeking to achieve compliance.

Employers must also ensure workers required to use PPE are trained in its proper use, care and limitations. Further still, most workers must be properly trained in Globally Harmonized WHMIS. With new cleaning and disinfecting products being introduced during the pandemic the need for this training is greater than ever. **WHMIS training must result in the workers being able to use information required by WHMIS** to protect their health and safety [s. 7(3), WHMIS Reg.]. This training must be developed and implemented in consultation with the joint health and safety committee or health and safety representative. See WHSC **WHMIS Resources** for details.

Properly trained, **certified JHSC members** are also mandatory and critical to securing safer, healthier workplaces.



FURTHER QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS?

Review our other COVID-19 resources at www.whsc.on.ca.

Contact a **WHSC Training Services Representative** directly, or reach out to us at 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.

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](#).