

Frequently Asked Questions – COVID-19

Due to the volatility of the COVID-19 situation and constantly evolving evidence, the responses provided will be updated as new information becomes available. Additional references are included in the answers. The reader is advised to give greater weighting to local or provincial guidance and follow the highest standard should there be difference.

Business closures, essential businesses, and workers

1. How do I know if I need to close my business? How do I know if I can open my business?

On March 19, 2020 a state of emergency was invoked in New Brunswick that mandated certain workplaces to close. As time progresses, certain restrictions will be lifted, and the provincial government will phase-in business re-openings. The declaration and guidance documents can be accessed on GNB's website: [COVID-19 Guidance for Businesses](#).

Employers who would like more information about which businesses can operate should contact Opportunities New Brunswick at nav@navnb.ca, or call 1-833-799-7966 .

(information as of May 14, 2020)

2. Is my workplace considered essential?

WorkSafeNB does not determine which workplaces are deemed essential and which ones are not. To find out if your workplace is deemed essential, please consult the Government of New Brunswick's website.

(information as of April 17, 2020)

3. Am I considered an essential worker?

WorkSafeNB does not determine who is an essential worker and who is not. Your manager or employer will make that determination.

(information as of April 17, 2020)

Right to refuse

1. If a worker feels that a site is unsafe due to COVID-19 concerns, do they have a right to refuse?

Employees in New Brunswick have the right to refuse work if they believe it presents an unsafe situation. When this happens, employers need to consider the work refusal on a case-by-case basis, depending on the situation. The same principles apply for managing workplace health and safety and work refusals during a pandemic as they do during normal conditions.

Our website has information on [the process to file a right to refuse unsafe work](#) and additional resources.

(information as of April 17, 2020)

2. Do I have to be at my workplace to refuse work I believe is unsafe?

Under ordinary circumstances an employee is required to be at their workplace to view the work before exercising their right to refuse dangerous work. Given the unique circumstances during the COVID-19 pandemic, WorkSafeNB will accept work refusals where the employee has not gone to the worksite. In those cases, the employer must agree to this process. If all parties agree to this new process then the matter will be addressed through phone calls, emails or other remote means.

Note: If your employer requires you to be at the workplace to refuse work you believe to be unsafe and you do not attend, your protection from discriminatory action provided to you during the work refusal process could be affected and your employer could take job action.

Due to the volatility of the COVID-19 situation and constantly evolving evidence, the responses provided will be updated as new information becomes available. Last updated on September 16, 2020.

Additional information on [the right to refuse unsafe work process](#) is available on our website.

(information as of April 17, 2020)

3. My employer is asking me to travel to an area that is a high risk for COVID-19 can refuse?

Both the federal and provincial government have imposed travel bans with some exceptions. You and your employer need to check if these apply to your situation. If you believe your health and safety is endangered when asked to travel outside of New Brunswick during the COVID-19 pandemic you can refuse to do so by first advising your supervisor of your concerns. You should also explore with your employer alternative solutions to avoid travel while still carrying out the work. If the matter is not resolved to your satisfaction, you can raise the matter with your workplace JHSC, if one is established. If your organization does not have a JHSC or you are not satisfied with their response, please contact a WorkSafeNB health and safety officer at 1 800 999-9775 who will follow-up with your concerns.

[More information on the right to refuse dangerous work is available on our website.](#)

(information as of April 17, 2020)

Joint Health and Safety Committee

1. To reduce the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace, can our joint health and safety committee (JHSC) stop holding its monthly meetings?

If possible, the JHSC should continue holding meetings either by phone or web conferencing instead. If meeting in person is necessary, the JHSC can reduce the number of people attending the meeting to the strict minimum that is required for quorum, while ensuring representation from both the employer and employees. If your JHSC is unable to conduct meetings by phone or through web conferencing, it would be important to meet in a large enough room where you can keep two metres between people and ensure that the room is well ventilated.

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If these suggestions are not feasible during the pandemic situation, you will need to take reasonable measures to keep the JHSC worker reps or at least the worker co-chair informed of the health and safety issues at your workplace. Please note, COVID-19 is a serious health and safety issue and thus, the JHSC has an important role to play to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace. It's also important to note your JHSC must be consulted at Step 2 of the work refusal process if an employee is exercising their right to refuse. Your JHSC must consider how it will be able to perform this important function during the pandemic situation.

(information as of April 17, 2020)

2. Is my employer required to have an operational plan to deal with COVID-19? If so, is the employer required to consult with the Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC)?

First, your employer needs to determine if they can operate under the state of emergency imposed by the Province. If they can operate, your employer must develop a Covid-19 [operational plan](#). Since COVID-19 is a serious health and safety issue, your employer needs to consult with the Joint Health and Safety Committee, the health and safety representative, or staff affected by the plan. Providing instruction, training and supervision on the requirements of the plan is also required.

(information as of April 17, 2020)

Contaminated workplace

1. What should an employer do if they find out that a worker has been exposed to someone infected with COVID-19?

The answer to this question depends on if the worker has simply been exposed or has had [close contact](#). Public Health is advising anyone who has been exposed to someone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19 to self-monitor themselves for 14 days. If the worker has had close contact, then they must self-isolate. In either case, if the worker subsequently develops symptoms that are consistent with COVID-19, they

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should isolate and use the [Government of New Brunswick's assessment tool](#) to assess their status and next steps.

Curious about the difference between self-solation and isolation (quarantine)? Visit Health Canada's webpage, [Know the difference : Self-monitoring, self-isolation, and isolation for COVID-19](#) on website for more information.

(information as of April 17, 2020)

2. What should an employer do when an employee tests positive for COVID-19 and may have been in the workplace interacting with co-workers before the diagnosis was confirmed?

The employee must immediately isolate themselves and follow guidance from the appropriate regional public health officials. Public Health will determine if there is a need to inform the employer of the test results. A visitor and employee log for access points and rooms where physical distancing is not possible must be shared with Public Health.

Public Health will advise anyone who has been exposed to someone diagnosed with COVID-19 and identify any control measures that are required to be put in place.

For the management of cases and contacts, Regional Public Health will provide the direction for follow up and advise if there is a need for employer action. Regional public health will lead the process of tracing the identity of other persons that may have been exposed. Public Health may require the employer's assistance in the process. As the employer, you are required to:

- Cooperate with Health officials and adhere to their advice. Additional information on the tracing process used is below.
- If the case is confirmed positive by Public Health, the employer must report the exposure to WorkSafeNB by email (compliance.conformite@ws-ts.nb.ca) or by calling 1 800 999-9775.
- With the guidance of Public Health, communicate with your staff and other workplace parties about measures they must take following the potential exposure. Ensure this process respects individual privacy. Public Health will also identify if any communication is needed external to your workplace.

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- Follow Public Health's advice regarding closing or restricting access to the workplace to clean surfaces and equipment which the confirmed case was in contact with by following the guidelines developed by Health Canada for [Hard-surface disinfectants for use against coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)
- If applicable, follow Public Health's advice before re-occupying the workplace.
- Re-evaluate the workplace including the preventive measures and the screening process for employees re-entering to determine if changes are required. You can consult the following WorkSafeNB resource for [guidance](#).
- If necessary, re-visit your business continuity plan and your operational plan.

Learn more:

[Difference between quarantine \(self-isolate\) and isolate](#), Government of Canada [Self-monitor, self-isolate and isolate](#), Government of New Brunswick

[Embracing the new normal](#), WorkSafeNB

New Brunswick Department of Health - Public Health Contact Tracing Information

All positive COVID-19 cases are reported to the appropriate regional public health office.

- Public Health staff contacts the individual who tested positive the same day they receive the results to inform them of their test result, provide instruction, and determine who they have been in close contact with.
- Public Health conducts a risk assessment based on a detailed interview with the individual.
- Public Health staff contacts all close contacts (and the workplace if appropriate) to identify any control measures that are required to be put in place.
- If one of these close contacts tests positive, then the contact tracing process begins for that individual.

As is the case for all contact tracing of cases, Public Health nurses and teams work daily with new cases to trace the contacts and have them self-isolate. If there is workplace exposure or exposure to the public, Public Health determines what communications are needed within workplaces or with the public or media outlets.

Every individual is entitled to privacy when it comes to Personal Health Information and confidentiality is respected and adhered to during all aspects of the Public

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Health investigation. Note that employers cannot require employees to submit their personal lab results as a condition of absence or presence at work.

(information as of July 10, 2020)

Contact with someone tested or confirmed

1. Does an employee who has had contact with someone being tested for COVID-19 need to self-isolate? If an employee lives with someone being tested for COVID-19, do they need to self-isolate?

Employers are required to prohibit persons from entering the workplace if:

- They have travelled for personal reasons, inside Canada but outside the Atlantic provinces in the previous 14 days.
- They have travelled outside the country (for work or for personal reasons) in the previous 14 days.
- They are exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19.
- They have been directed by a physician to self-isolate.
- They were in [close contact](#) within the last 14 days with someone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19.

These persons need to self-isolate for 14 days. If an employee who is not symptomatic was in close contact with someone being tested for COVID-19, the employee will need to self-monitor and check with their employer to find out if the employer prefers that they stay home. If the person being tested is [subsequently diagnosed with COVID-19](#), the employee will need to self-isolate.

(information as of July 16, 2020)

2. If an employee lives with someone who travelled and the traveller must self-isolate for 14 days, should the non-traveller come to work?

If you are living with or coming into contact with someone who has returned from travel outside of the Atlantic provinces for personal reasons or outside of Canada

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and who is not symptomatic, you may still go to work, provided that the traveller complies with all [self-isolation requirements](#) set by the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health. Furthermore, you and the traveller will both need to self-monitor for 14 days. If you or anyone else within your household develops symptoms consistent with COVID-19, you will need to [self-isolate](#) until COVID-19 is ruled out. If COVID-19 is confirmed, follow Public Health's advice.

(information as of August 14, 2020)

3. One of my employees has advised me that she has an appointment to be tested for Covid-19 tomorrow. What precautions should she take and what should I do in my workplace until the test results are received?

You should assume that the test may come back positive and in the interim, [clean and disinfect](#) any areas where the employee had been in contact or isolate the affected area (s) until you are notified of the results. If possible, close off the potentially contaminated areas until the test is confirmed. If the test is confirmed positive, follow the advice provided by Public Health. If there were occasions when this employee was not able to maintain two metres distance with other employees or visitors within the workplace, you must share the log of these occasions with Public Health. This will be important for contact tracing purposes. As for your employee, she should self-isolate and wait for further instructions from the Department of Health.

(information as of May 14, 2020)

4. I have an employee who has just completed 14 days of self-isolation because they had recently returned from travel or had close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19. What steps do I need to take to ensure it is safe for the employee to return to work? Should I ask that the employee seek a doctor's note?

The evidence shows that if a person is returning from 14 days of self-isolation and did not exhibit symptoms self-isolation, they should be considered healthy. A doctor's note is not necessary in this instance provided that the employee confirms they are healthy and shows no symptoms of COVID-19.

(information as of July 7, 2020)

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5. I have an employee who has just completed 14 days of self-isolation because they been under investigation by Public Health, as a case or a close contact of a case of COVID-19. What steps do I need to take to ensure it is safe for the employee to return to work? Should I ask that the employee to seek a doctor's note?

Public Health is monitoring all individuals suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19 in New Brunswick. Under the guidance of a medical officer, they will provide a letter to the worker and employer that the individual is able to leave self isolation and return to work or other public places. This documentation will not include details of any diagnosis or testing due to privacy legislation.

(information as of April 23, 2020)

6. I have employees that are exhibiting symptoms and I've sent them home to call 811 for COVID -19 testing. However, they have not been scheduled for testing. What are my obligations regarding letting them back into the workplace without receiving official COVID-19 test results? What if they are still symptomatic?

COVID-19 symptoms may resemble those of other illnesses.

The Public Health Agency of Canada lists cough, fever and difficulty breathing among the most common [symptoms](#) of the coronavirus. These can also be symptoms of the flu, common cold or any number of other ailments. If an employee is currently symptomatic, they must self-isolate and dial 811.

If 811 determines a person's symptoms could indicate COVID-19, that person would be referred for appropriate testing. If an employee tests positive for COVID-19, Public Health will provide them with clear direction. Public Health will determine if there is a need to inform the employer of the test results. If the test result is negative for COVID-19, you may still consider asking the employees to stay home until their symptoms subside.

(Information as of September 9, 2020)

Pre-existing health condition

1. I have a pre-existing health condition that could make contracting COVID-19 more dangerous for me. Can I exercise my right to refuse dangerous work? (Pre-existing Health Condition of Employee)

Your employer has a legal obligation under the Human Rights Act to accommodate any health condition you may have. This requirement existed before the COVID-19 pandemic began and continues even with the pandemic.

As for your situation with respect to the Occupational Health and Safety Act, the New Brunswick Department of Health has developed guidelines for limiting the risk of contracting COVID-19 in both social and work settings. All New Brunswick employers are required to adopt these guidelines in their COVID-19 operational plan. If you have a concern regarding COVID-19 because of your personal health condition you should raise this with your employer. Depending on the circumstances at your workplace, your employer may be able to provide additional protection for you specifically. However, whether additional measures can be provided or not, so long as your employer takes reasonable precautions to ensure your health and safety then you are obligated to go to work as required.

If you are required to wear a respirator and based on your pre-existing condition you are not medically fit to do, then your employer cannot require you to wear that respirator.

Restrictions on respirator use will be identified through your employer's code of practice on respiratory protection. Your employer then has the legal obligation to find different work for you that is reasonably safe given your specific condition.

If this response does not address your specific situation, please contact the [New Brunswick Human Rights Commission](#).

(information as of July 10, 2020)

2. What if I live with a person who has a pre-existing condition that makes COVID-19 more dangerous for them? Can I exercise my right to refuse to go to work based on the grounds that it endangers someone else? (Pre-Existing Health Condition of Household member for Employee)

While your employer is not legally obligated to protect the vulnerable person you are living with, your employer still has an obligation to follow the guidelines for limiting your risk of contracting COVID-19 in the workplace. Given your specific circumstances, your employer may be willing and able to provide you with increased protection. You should exercise care to ensure you are following the guidelines to reduce the risk and use all personal protective equipment required in your job.

As long as your employer takes reasonable precautions to ensure your health and safety and prevent you from coming into contact with the virus, then you are obligated to go to work as required.

(information as of April 17, 2020)

3. My partner has serious health issues. I work with the public and I am afraid of contracting COVID-19 and transmitting the disease to my partner. How do I minimize this risk?

It is important for you to discuss your concerns with your supervisor. It may be possible to modify your work to reduce your exposure to the public during this time. However, at a minimum, WorkSafeNB would expect that your employer is following the guidelines outlined by the Public Health:

- appropriate protocols in place for cleaning of surfaces (perhaps even an increase in the frequency);
- enough sanitary equipment (access to soap and water, hand sanitizer, disinfectants, etc.) for frequent and regular use;
- training for staff on procedures and practices, especially in the event of a symptomatic customer

If you do not believe the proper precautions are in place, you can exercise your right to refuse by first letting your supervisor know of your concerns and if the matter is

not resolved to your satisfaction, you can raise the matter with your JHSC, if one is established at your workplace. If you are still not satisfied, please contact a WorkSafeNB health and safety officer at 1 800 999-9775 who will follow-up with your concerns.

[More information on the right to refuse dangerous work is available on our website.](#)

(information as of April 17, 2020)

4. What duties do I have as an employer to accommodate an employee who suffers from a pre-existing medical condition making them vulnerable to develop complications if they contract COVID-19?

As an employer, you are legally obligated under the NB *Human Rights Act* to accommodate any health condition your employee has, to the point of undue hardship. Vulnerable populations to COVID-19 include, but are not limited to, those who:

- Are over 65 years old,
- Have underlying medical conditions, such as chronic lung disease or moderate to severe asthma.
- Suffer from serious heart conditions.
- Are immunocompromised.

If an employee discloses a pre-existing health condition that makes them vulnerable to COVID-19, first examine each of their tasks. Determine their risk of exposure to COVID-19 while performing each of those tasks. If the risk of exposure is high or medium, consider ways you can reduce their exposure. In your operational plan, you should have already identified controls to reduce exposure to all employees as much possible. These controls include screening people entering the workplace, ensuring physical distancing, installing barriers and providing personal protective equipment, such as a mask or respirator. An employee's health condition may not permit them to wear respiratory equipment. You are legally obligated to consider other tasks that the employee could perform to reduce their risk. Discuss with the employee on how to reduce their exposure, as they may have solutions. Unionized employees may want union representation as well, and this should be permitted.

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Be aware that some employees may reveal that they have a pre-existing health condition that you were not previously aware of, as it was not an issue for them until now. You have a duty to accommodate these employees. You do not need to know all the details of the employee's diagnosis to accommodate them, just enough information to accommodate them properly. Do not ask for a copy of their medical file or for general medical information, as this is considered private information. For more information on the duty to accommodate, please contact the [New Brunswick Human Rights Commission](#).

(information as of May 20, 2020)

Guidelines to protect workers

1. Our workplace is permitted to operate during the COVID-19 state of emergency. How do we keep our workplaces safe during COVID-19? Under which conditions are we allowed to re-open?

You must follow all guidance and requirements contained in the State of [Emergency and Mandatory Order](#), comply with the recommendation from the [New Brunswick Chief Medical Officer of Health](#), and implement any guidance issued by Public Health or WorkSafeNB with respect to your individual industry or occupation.

Further, you must have a documented operational plan that specifically addresses COVID-19. This requirement applies to all workplaces, whether you have continued to operate during the pandemic or are planning your re-opening. In order to create an effective operational plan, the employer must conduct a risk assessment to determine the feasibility of physical distancing (i.e. can 2 metres of separation be maintained between persons) as well as the engineering, administrative controls and/or Personal Protective Equipment controls necessary to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 exposure. The operational plan then documents the specific prevention controls that the employer has put into place. You can find more information on the requirements and guidelines

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recommended, prevention control measures, and an operational plan template in WorkSafeNB's [Embracing the New Normal guide](#).

(information as of May 13, 2020)

2. Our workplace is permitted to operate during the COVID-19 state of emergency and we have some common areas, such as lunchrooms, staff changing areas and conference rooms that all employees use throughout the day. How we can ensure that these common areas remain safe for employees?

There are several things you can do to keep common areas safe. Here are some suggestions:

- Limit the number of people to each common area to ensure those using the space can maintain a distance of at least two metres apart from each other. Staggering breaks, limiting the number of chairs and organizing seating to ensure two metres between each chair are examples of limiting the numbers.
- Remove objects that cannot be easily cleaned (newspapers, magazines, fabric furniture, etc.).
- Increase frequency of environmental cleaning throughout the day.
- Unless regularly performed by designated cleaning staff, require employees to disinfect any surface or object in the common area they may contact.
- Unless performed immediately by cleaning staff, require employees to clean the surfaces and objects they may contact during their breaks.
- Ensure handwashing facilities and/or hand-sanitizing products and disinfecting and cleaning supplies are readily available in the common areas.

Finally measures taken needs to be documented in the operational plan. For more information on an operational plan, please review [WorkSafeNB's Embracing the New Normal guide](#).

3. What precautionary measures are required to mitigate the risk of transmission of COVID-19 when a workplace CANNOT maintain a two-metre separation between people?

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The most effective way to prevent the spread of COVID-19 is to ensure employees and customers practise physical distancing. This requires maintaining at least two metres of separation between employees, customers, and visitors.

If an employer cannot consistently maintain a two-meter separation between people due to work activities, this [guide](#) (page 11) provides recommendations for workplaces that cannot maintain two-metre distancing. WorkSafeNB encourages all workplaces to think outside of the traditional work environment and consider alternate working arrangements, such as working remotely, flexible hours, staggered start times, and the use of virtual meetings rather than in-person.

(information as of May 13, 2020)

4. What precautions must tradespersons take when they enter a home to perform their work??

Employers must have a documented operational plan that specifically addresses prevention controls related to COVID-19, based on the exposure risk faced by employees. To create an effective operational plan, the employer must conduct a risk assessment to determine the engineering, administrative controls and/or PPE controls necessary to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 exposure. You can find more information on the operational plan, prevention control measures, and an operational plan template in WorkSafeNB's Embracing the new normal guide. In this context, tradespersons should consider the following when developing their operational plan: A tradespersons must first inquire if anyone in the home is experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 ([refer to the screening questionnaire for a list of symptoms](#)) or if they have been advised to self-isolate. This verification should be done when the homeowner requests a service call. If the client is ill or has been advised to self-isolate, determine if the work is urgent or essential. If it is urgent or essential, request that anyone who is ill or must self-isolate remain in another room during your visit and that high touch surfaces are sanitized before you arrive.

If the client advises you that everyone on site is healthy and when you arrive someone is coughing or appears ill, leave the premises immediately and inform them you will do the work later. When in a house or outdoors stay two metres away from others, wash your hands often, avoid touching surfaces and clean and sanitize tools between clients. Depending on your work, you may be required to wear personal protective equipment such as gloves, masks and eye protection.

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Please note that workers must be actively screened before agreeing to provide service to a client. If the worker is experiencing symptoms consistent with COVID-19 or has been advised to self-isolate, they must not carry out the work.

(information as of May 22, 2020)

5. What guidelines are available that will help ensure employees are safe when traveling together for work purposes?

Every effort must be made to avoid having employees travel in the same vehicle during work activities. The employer should consider implementing alternate transportation options (for example, the use of personal vehicles).

- If more than one person must travel in the same vehicle, consider installing physical barriers (such as plexiglass) inside the vehicle. Before installing a physical barrier, ensure that it can be installed without introducing additional hazards - such as restricting the driver's field of vision or inhibiting escape in the event of an accident. Ensure that the barrier is made of a material that is easily cleaned.
- If installing a physical barrier is not possible and employees must travel together, they must be [actively screened](#) before entering the vehicle.
- Maintain a log of employees travelling together. This must be made available to Public Health for contact tracing purposes if it's identified that a person who tested positive for COVID-19 was present in the vehicle.
- Limit the number of persons traveling together to:
 - 2 people for small - medium size vehicles and trucks (normally seat 4 to 5 people)
 - 4 people for large vehicles such as SUVs normally seating 6 or more people and large trucks that normally seat 5 or 6.
 - 8 people for 15 passengers vans
- Employees must keep as much space between each other as possible. Persons must not sit directly beside each other, and a passenger must sit in the back seat diagonally across from the driver if traveling in a medium-small vehicle. Employees must keep their same seats throughout the day.

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- The use of non-medical or fabric face coverings, or full-face shields is mandatory if a distance of 2m cannot be maintained. Note that [special precautions](#) must be taken when such coverings are used.
- At a minimum, the vehicle must be cleaned and disinfected at the start and end of the shift. It will need to be cleaned and disinfected more often if it is used to transport other employees and/or used for other activities (such as lunch breaks). Controls must be in place to ensure that vehicle sanitization is maintained
- When employees are speaking inside the vehicle, they should look straight ahead in order to limit direct face-to-face interaction.
- Remember that proper hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette is key to reducing the transmission of the virus. Ensure hand washing or sanitizing supplies are available at all times.

This information may be modified as the Covid-19 outbreak evolves in NB.

(Information as of September 9, 2020)

6. Under what conditions can we use cubicle walls as physical barriers?

Cubicle walls may serve as physical barriers if:

- They are a minimum of 137.2 cm (54") or high enough to provide a shield when workers are seated in their workspace. If cubicle walls are less than 54 inches and are not high enough to provide a shield when the worker is seated, another approach to achieve adequate physical distancing is a staggered or 'checkerboard' placement of employees at workstations. Additionally, ensure that employees are not facing each other in the adjusted configuration.
- They are constructed of a material or are of sufficient thickness that prevents droplets from passing through the wall.
- They are covered in a material that allows for easy disinfecting. In the event of a positive case of COVID-19 in the workplace, if cubicle walls are fabric it is recommended that they be disinfected according to the manufacturer instructions. If the instructions do not include specific guidelines in respect to

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COVID-19, the fabric should be covered by a material that can be easily cleaned or replaced.

- The seating configuration within the cubicle should not position the worker to face the opening (this increases risk of potential exposure through the opening).
- Supplies are provided for the cleaning and disinfection of work surfaces.
- Surfaces are cleaned and disinfected at least twice daily by designated employees (employees may be tasked to clean and disinfect their own work area).

(Information as of May 5, 2020)

7. What What precautions can we take when receiving and handling mail and parcels in our workplace during COVID-19?

The Public Health Agency of Canada has stated that there is no known evidence of COVID-19 spreading through contact with mail or parcels as they generally take days or weeks to be delivered. However, you can take these precautions to prevent exposure:

- Sanitize any parcels and envelopes that have a plastic coating with disinfectant approved by [Health Canada](#) for COVID-19.
- Envelopes and parcels that cannot be sanitized should be set aside for a minimum of 24 hours. Designate a location to keep them isolated.
- When handling envelopes, open the envelope, remove the contents (ensuring that they do not touch the outside of the envelope) and place the contents on a clean surface.
- Discard packaging material.
- Do not touch your eyes, nose or mouth when handling mail.
- Wash your hands thoroughly immediately after handling mail.
- Remember to allow physical distancing for mail service personnel (whether they are picking up mail or delivering it to you).

(Information as of May 20, 2020)

8. What is the difference between active and passive screening? When must employees be actively screened and when can they be passively screened?

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Active screening is done by an organization's designated individual(s). The designate asks the [screening questions](#) to everyone entering the workplace. If a non-contact thermometer is available (infrared) temperature checks must also be done.

At a minimum, employees must be screened at the beginning of their shift.

Active screening is required when:

- It is not possible to maintain 2 metres distance between workers, clients and/or visitors within the workplace at all times.
- Co-workers must travel within the same vehicle.
- A resident from outside the Atlantic provinces has been approved to work on site after submitting a self-isolation plan to WorkSafeNB. These workers must be actively screened for the first 14 days after entering the province. In this case, they may perform temperature checks on themselves and the screening questions may be asked by telephone.

Please note that with active screening, it is also possible to use an electronic system to ask the screening questions if the person is prompted to respond to the questions and the system records the answers.

Passive screening, on the other hand, is when individuals are asked to screen themselves before entering the workplace. Typically, a sign is posted at the entrance to the workplace listing the [screening questions](#) (same questions used when conducting active screening). People must answer the questions before entering the workplace (they are permitted to enter if they answered no to all the questions). In passive screening, the answers are not recorded and temperature checks are not conducted.

Passive screening is conducted when it is possible to maintain 2 metres distance at all times between workers, clients and/or visitors within the workplace. Employees must screen themselves at the beginning of their shift.

In both cases, any person exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 may not enter the workplace. They must self-isolate, dial 811 and follow instructions provided by Public Health.

(Information as of August 20, 2020)

Cleaning

1. How should our cleaning staff be protecting themselves against COVID-19 and how can they ensure they are properly disinfecting workstations?

WorkSafeNB recommends following specific guidelines developed by Health Canada for [Hard-surface disinfectants for use against coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#), including:

- use the right disinfectant product
- follow the directions on the label and consult with the supplier data sheet (SDS) if available
- ensure employees have been instructed and trained on the safe use of the product
- If the supplier requires personal protective equipment (PPE) such as gloves and goggles, the employee should be trained in how to use and the proper removal to prevent cross-contamination.

For high-touch surfaces such as door handles and phones, Health Canada recommends cleaning these often with either:

- regular household cleaners or
- [diluted household bleach](#) () - sodium hypochlorite (5.25%) (diluted bleach prepared in a ratio of 1 teaspoon (5 mL) per cup (250 mL) OR 4 teaspoons (20 mL) per litre (1000mL)).

Health Canada has approved several [hard-surface disinfectants for use against COVID-19](#).

(information as of April 17, 2020)

First aid

Due to the volatility of the COVID-19 situation and constantly evolving evidence, the responses provided will be updated as new information becomes available. Last updated on September 16, 2020.

1. My first aid certificate has expired and because of COVID-19 social distancing measures, I can't take a first aid course to re-certify. What should I do, and can I continue to provide first aid in my workplace?

As a result of revisions to New Brunswick's *Mandatory Order* issued on May 8, 2020, training providers can now begin to schedule safe first aid training following COVID-19 operational guidelines.

Training courses will not be available until training providers complete a COVID-19 operational plans and put in place control measures to ensure classroom training can be delivered safely.

If you and your employer are confident regarding your ability to provide first aid, you can continue to be the designated first aid provider. WorkSafeNB will not be enforcing first aid training requirements found in Regulation 2004-130 – *First Aid Regulation* until such time as training is readily available and the 2-month backlog has been addressed.

To refresh your knowledge, you could review your first aid manual, take the online portion of a blended course or follow a refresher course through virtual learning.

(information as of May 26, 2020)

2. Can I complete the entire first aid course virtually with a First Aid Training Provider approved by WorkSafeNB?

No. Some of the content in the required first aid course modules must be delivered in a classroom setting. For example, the module on Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation and choking requires the participant be able to **perform** correct artificial respiration and chest compression methods on adult casualties with different injuries or illnesses such as cardiac arrest and choking emergencies. Furthermore, adult learning principles indicate that instruction is most effective when the participant gets hands-on experience, repetition and practice. Coaching (observation and correction) by the instructor ensures that the participant can correctly apply the lifesaving techniques.

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WorkSafeNB has [approved first aid training providers](#) who offer blended learning (combination of computer based and practical training) to **re-certify** designated first aid providers. The in-class portion must continue to be performed in-class.

Please note that currently:

- Students cannot practise on each other or another person during the classroom portion
- First time certification of new first aid providers can be obtained through blended learning.

(information as of July 10, 2020)

3. My first aid certificate has not expired, but my First Aid Training Provider is not delivering in-class yearly refreshers at this time. What should I do?

Subsection 8(7) of Regulation 2004-130 - *First Aid Regulation* requires that a designated first aid provider receive six hours of practice on first aid skills each year during the period they hold a valid certificate. The intent of this provision is to ensure that first aid providers maintain their skills during the three-year certification period.

Please review the [legislative interpretation](#) that explains how to accomplish this. During the pandemic, because of physical distancing restrictions, the six hours of practice can be 6 hours of first aid virtual refresher training, (with or without instructors) provided that the training is delivered by an [approved first aid training agency](#)

(information as of July 10, 2020)

Well-being

1. Should I go to work if I feel sick?

Do not go to work if you are experiencing flu-like symptoms such as a fever, coughing, and a general feeling of being unwell. Please note that COVID-19 symptoms vary between individuals and for some, symptoms are mild whereas they may be more severe for others. If your symptoms are consistent with [COVID-19](#)

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[symptoms](#) (please refer to the [Government of New Brunswick's assessment tool](#) to assess their status and determine next steps.

(information as of May 1, 2020)

2. How do I help employees cope with stress during the COVID-19 outbreak?

Employees in the workplace may be affected by the anxiety and uncertainty created by the COVID-19 situation. It's important to remember that mental health is just as important as physical health, and to take measures to support mental well-being.

Everyone reacts differently in stressful situations. It is normal to feel sad, anxious, confused, scared or even angry during a crisis and these feelings will change over time.

We encourage you to share tools to help employees cope with their feelings. The [Canadian Mental Health Association](#) and many Employee Assistance Programs offer toolkits and resources that can help.

Here are some resources that can help with maintaining mental health in the workplace during this time.

- [WorkSafeNB - Managing anxiety and worry during COVID-19](#)
- [Mental Health Commission of Canada](#)- Has a "resource hub" dedicated to COVID-19.
- [Mental Health and Psychosocial Considerations During COVID-19 Outbreak](#) (World Health Organization) – These mental health considerations were developed by the WHO's Department of Mental Health and Substance Use as messages targeting different groups to support for mental and psychosocial well-being during COVID-19 outbreak.
- [COVID-19 and Mental Health](#) (Canadian Mental Health Association) – Tips and information on how to reduce and manage anxiety in the workplace due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

(information as of April 17, 2020)

Working from home

Due to the volatility of the COVID-19 situation and constantly evolving evidence, the responses provided will be updated as new information becomes available. Last updated on September 16, 2020.

1. My employer has directed me to work from home. Do you have any suggestions?

As workplaces try to prevent the spread of COVID-19, employees may find themselves working from home. While working from home has clear advantages, it's important to remember that new workspaces can pose concerns. Where you work and how your work is important to your health and safety. That's why WorkSafeNB developed a tool to help. Visit [Working safely from home as we navigate COVID-19](#) for more information.

It is also important that if you feel discomfort in your home setup, address it as soon as possible. Check out our education material on the topic, [Office Ergonomics– Guidelines for Preventing Musculoskeletal Injuries](#). For more information, please call 1-800-999-9775 and ask to speak to a WorkSafeNB ergonomist.

(information as of July 10, 2020)

Personal Protective Equipment

1. We are having trouble getting N95 respirators to do our work. Is it possible to use alternative respirators that are not NIOSH approved?

With a potential shortage of NIOSH approved N95 particulate respirators, a review of the General Regulations, 91-191 and the cited standard for respiratory protection CSA Z94.4-93 was completed. The CSA standard is not restrictive to NIOSH performance standard and therefore other product classification may be adopted. Based on Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and 3M's evaluation of alternative respirators, WorkSafeNB deems the following as equivalent respirators:

- KN95 from China;
- P2, P3 from Australia;
- PFF2, PFF3 from Brazil and Europe;
- DS/DL2, DS/DL3 from Japan;
- Special, 1st class from Korea; and
- N95 from Mexico.

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It is important to note that a fit-test is still required for each of these respirators and they should not be used unless the employee has passed the fit-test. For more information on regulatory requirements for respirators visit the [respirator topic page](#) on the [OHS App Guide](#).

Please note: The NB Chief Medical Officer does not recommend the use of surgical masks or N95 respirators as protection from COVID-19 by people outside the health care sector who have no symptoms of respiratory infection (unless under isolation precautions as directed by Public Health). It is NOT necessary to wear an N95 respirator or a surgical mask if you are well and not exhibiting any symptoms. Improperly worn, they may actually increase your risk of infection. Surgical masks and N95 respirators are urgently needed for our health care workers.

For Healthcare:

Health Canada, the regulator for medical devices in Canada, accepts the NIOSH certification as an appropriate quality standard for N95 masks used by health care providers. Health Canada states that equivalent alternate standards are also acceptable.

It is recommended that you consult with Health Canada for their opinion on the list of equivalent respirators provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Learn more: [Center for Disease Control](#); [3M Science Applied to Life™](#)

(information as of May 13, 2020)

2. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) needs for cleaning staff of medical clinics. Do the cleaners need to don further PPE beyond gloves in this setting?

Following discharge of patients with suspect or confirmed COVID- 19 the room must be cleaned using PPE which includes:

- Surgical or Procedural mask
- Gloves
- Eye protection (goggles or face shield)

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(information as of May 13, 2020)

3. Do we need to get employees fit tested to use an N95 respirator? If so, how can we get them fit tested as quickly as possible? Can we do the fit testing internally?

It is necessary to have the employees fit tested before they are required to use a respirator, including a disposable N95 respirator. Fit testing helps ensure a proper seal so that air breathed in is adequately filtered. It is essential to explore different brands and sizes to achieve the proper fit. Any facial hair that is in contact with the respirator will prevent a proper seal from being achieved. Therefore, it is necessary to be clean shaven where the respirator seal is to stick to the skin.

Fit testing can be conducted internally if there is a competent person trained in your workplace to do so and you have the equipment required to conduct the tests. There are two types of fit testing: qualitative and quantitative. The qualitative test relies on the user's sense of taste or smell, or reaction to an irritant to detect a leakage. Quantitative test measures the actual amount of leakage into the facepiece.

Learn more about [fit testing and other requirements of a code of practice for respiratory protection](#).

(information as of July 10, 2020)

4. Can we use face shields instead of face coverings (community mask, bandana) when maintaining two-metres of physical distancing is not possible?

If employees in the workplace cannot maintain at least two-metres distance, all applicable requirements in the [Embracing the new normal guide](#) must be addressed in the employer's operational plan and meet compliance standards. This includes (where possible) the installation of physical barriers. If physical barriers are not possible, workers must wear face coverings. Additional requirements include active screening, an employee and visitor log, and enhanced hygiene and cleaning practices.

Public Health states, the purpose of face coverings is to protect the people around the user. Face shields are designed to protect the user. Therefore, shields should not be used as a substitute to face coverings unless a face covering introduces a hazard to the worker. This must be demonstrated by a risk assessment and be part of the employer's COVID-19 operational plan. One example where face coverings should be worn are those occupations

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that deal directly with the public. For example, servers in a restaurant setting would not be allowed to wear a face shield. Whereas, due to the work environment in the same restaurant, kitchen staff would benefit more from wearing a face shield for their own protection.

If a face shield must be used it should extend below the chin and to the ears and there should be no exposed gap between the forehead and the shield's headpiece. Using a face shield over a face covering is not prohibited.

Other examples of when a face covering can introduce a hazard are highly flammable environments or corrosive environments, extreme wet, hot and cold environments, etc.

Please note that the Canadian Lung Association, the Canadian Thoracic Society, and Asthma Canada all support public health recommendations on mask use. There is no evidence that wearing a face mask will aggravate an underlying condition. If an individual experiences challenges with wearing a mask, it is recommended that they be advised to develop strategies to address these challenges and to look for different types and styles of face masks that they may find more comfortable.

For healthcare workers:

- Use of a face shield is an [added protective measure](#) when working within two-metres of others to help reduce exposure to a splash, spray, or droplets from those who may be infected.
- Face shields can substantially [reduce the short-term exposure](#) to large infectious aerosol particles, but smaller particles can remain airborne longer and flow around the face shield more easily to be inhaled.
- [Potential disadvantages](#) of wearing face shields continuously include the potential for self-contamination, altered clarity of vision, or discomfort.

(information as of September 15, 2020)

Privacy

- 1. When screening employees for symptoms of COVID-19 as they come into work, how can we ensure that their temperature is taken accurately? Are there privacy concerns? Does the employee have the right to refuse to have their temperature taken?**

Due to the volatility of the COVID-19 situation and constantly evolving evidence, the responses provided will be updated as new information becomes available. Last updated on September 16, 2020.

Employees must give informed and voluntary consent before an employer can take and record their temperature.

To help ensure that their temperature is taken accurately, consider asking a trained medical professional to take temperatures if one is available on site. The medical professional may also train others to take temperatures. The training should be documented.

If there are no trained medical professionals on site, the employer should designate one or more management-level personnel to take temperatures. This individual should review the directions to use the thermometer or scanning equipment to ensure proper use. That individual should also be trained, and the training process should be documented.

If the temperature is being recorded, employees may also be concerned about the privacy of this data. Only record the information that is necessary. The information collected when taking the temperature must be kept confidential and in a secure location. Access to the information should be limited to those who need the information to make decisions. Employees should be informed that employers may need to disclose the information to Public Health, if the employee's temperature is above 38°C. Employees should also be informed of the process to access their records. It is best to keep a digital copy of the data with secured access. The information should be destroyed once the outbreak is over. Communicate the steps taken to keep the data private with employees.

Despite these efforts, an employee may refuse to have their temperature taken. Though the employee has this right, the employer must ensure that they are taking every reasonable precaution to ensure the health and safety of all employees in the workplace. The employee should be informed that if they refuse to have their temperature taken, the employer can refuse their entry into the workplace. The employer would not be obligated to pay an employee after such a refusal.

(information as of May 8, 2020)

Border issues

1. One or more of my workers will have to cross the border into New Brunswick from another Canadian province or territory. Will they have to self-isolate for 14 days?

There are four scenarios under which workers entering the province for work purposes are not required to self-isolate for 14 days before attending work.

- 1) The worker and the work to be undertaken fulfill one of the exemptions defined by the Government of New Brunswick, such as work that is unplanned, urgent, and where services are not available in New Brunswick. For more information see the GNB [Travel Information website](#).
- 2) A worker that resides in one of the three other Atlantic provinces is coming to work in New Brunswick.
- 3) A New Brunswick worker is returning from work in another Canadian province or territory.
- 4) A worker from outside of Atlantic Canada is coming into New Brunswick to perform work under the approved [isolation components of an operational plan](#).

Entry into New Brunswick under any other scenario will require the worker to self-isolate for 14 days before attending work. Please note that any travel into New Brunswick is subject to the [Government of New Brunswick traveller registration system](#).

(information as of July 16, 2020)

2. I am a New Brunswick-based worker but sometimes I need to travel outside the Atlantic provinces for work. When I return to New Brunswick, will I be able to continue working or will I have to self-isolate for 14 days?

Answer: New Brunswick residents performing work in another Canadian province or territory are not required to self-isolate upon return to New Brunswick and are permitted to continue to work in New Brunswick under the conditions described in the employer's operational plan.

Due to the volatility of the COVID-19 situation and constantly evolving evidence, the responses provided will be updated as new information becomes available. Last updated on September 16, 2020.

(information as of July 16, 2020)

3. I am a New Brunswick-based employer but would like to contract workers from outside the Atlantic provinces. Will these workers be permitted to come into the province? If so, can they start working right away?

Answer: As an employer, you have two options. The first option is to provide accommodations and necessities to them while they self-isolate for 14 days before attending work and to ensure they remain at their accommodations during the self-isolation period. In this first option, the workers are not able to go to work right away. The second option is to submit the isolation components of your operational plan to WorkSafeNB 15 business days before the workers' planned arrival. With an approved application, the workers will be permitted to enter the province and attend work as soon as they arrive. The workers must follow all requirements described in the employer's isolation plan, including, but not limited to, travel only to and from accommodations and/or worksite, self-isolation while off work, and strict adherence to infection prevention control measures while at work and while travelling. You, as the employer must provide oversight and supervision to ensure that the rules are being followed during work and off duty during the first 14 days. To submit the isolation components of your operational plan for review, please visit WorkSafeNB's webpage [Safely entering New Brunswick to work amid COVID-19](#).

(information as of July 16, 2020)

4. I am a New Brunswick-based employer and require workers from outside of the province for urgent or essential work at my facility. Are these workers exempt from self-isolation?

Answer: For more information on exemptions from self-isolation, please visit the [Government of New Brunswick's travel information webpage](#).

(information as of July 16, 2020)

5. I am a New Brunswick-based worker but sometimes I need to travel outside of Canada for work. When I return to New Brunswick, will I be able to continue working or will I be required to self-isolate for 14 days?

Due to the volatility of the COVID-19 situation and constantly evolving evidence, the responses provided will be updated as new information becomes available. Last updated on September 16, 2020.

Answer: If you have been outside of Canada, you must complete self-isolation for 14 days as stipulated by the *Federal Quarantine Act*. For more information on entry into Canada and Canada-U.S. border restrictions, visit the [Government of Canada](#) p and the [Canada Border Services Agency](#) or call 1 800 461-9999.

(information as of July 16, 2020)

6. I am a New Brunswick-based employer but would like to employ workers from outside of Canada. How can I bring these workers into the province?

Workers entering from another country must complete self-isolation for 14 days as stipulated by the *Federal Quarantine Act*. However, there are certain exemptions to this self-isolation requirement, depending on the work being done. For more information on entry into Canada and Canada-U.S. border restrictions, visit the [Government of Canada webpage](#) and the [Canada Border Services Agency webpage](#) or call 1 800 461-9999.

Important Note: If your workers are found to be exempt from self-isolation under the *Federal Quarantine Act*, you still need to comply with the provincial entry and self-isolation requirements. Therefore, you need to submit the isolation component of your operational plan to WorkSafeNB as described above.