EMBRACING THE NEW NORMAL
AS WE SAFELY RETURN TO WORK
GUIDELINES FOR NEW BRUNSWICK WORKPLACES IN A COVID-19 ENVIRONMENT

WORKSAFE
TRAVAIL SÉCURITAIRE NB

VERSION 7: JUNE 1, 2021
THE CHALLENGE

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic and the restrictions necessary to reduce risk, workplaces will not be the same as we left them and we will need to adjust. And while we all try to establish a new normal at our workplaces, there will certainly be an added layer of health and safety measures (physical distancing, screening, handwashing, etc.) required to ensure the safety of our workers, our customers and our visitors.

This booklet is designed to offer the guidance that New Brunswick workplaces need to help get business back up and running safely considering the pandemic.

WHAT IS THE NEW NORMAL?

Make no mistake: the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic has changed how we work. These changes extend to how individuals commute, enter workplaces, interact with others, manage tasks, and more. As we define our new normal in a COVID-19 world, workplace health and safety and the importance of strong safety leadership are more critical than ever before.

As a business owner, you probably have many questions, such as: What are my responsibilities to workers as well as to customers or clients? How can I ensure I’m meeting provincial requirements? What does this new normal look like for my workplace, my employees, and my customers?

The first step is understanding the risk of COVID-19 exposure and transmission in your workplace. Jobs within a workplace vary, and so too will the risks of exposure. Performing an overall assessment of the workplace is important. Understanding the risks will help you determine appropriate precautionary measures.

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.

While this guide will provide requirements and recommendations for workplaces that can and those 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.
The state of EMERGENCY

and the Province of New Brunswick’s mandatory order on COVID-19

A State of Emergency was declared in New Brunswick on March 19, 2020, and continues to be regularly updated, due to the increased presence of COVID-19 and its risks to the health and safety of everyone. The following measures, which particularly affect workplaces, include:

- Every business proprietor and service provider, every employer and workplace manager must take all reasonable steps to minimize the risk of COVID-19 transmission among their employees, patrons and visitors, and must comply with all directives and guidelines from WorkSafeNB and the Chief Medical Officer of Health relevant to COVID-19 transmission. This includes government entities, charities, not-for-profit organizations, as well as for-profit businesses.

- When a workplace includes a public indoor space in which proprietors and/or employees interact with patrons, customers, clients or the general public, everyone must wear a face mask at all times except when eating or drinking. In workplaces where the public is not admitted, workers must wear a face mask when working within two metres of each other and when accessing common areas like lobbies, hallways, meeting rooms, washrooms, stairwells and elevators.*

- When physical distancing and engineering controls (such as partitions or Plexiglas) are not possible, persons must wear a face mask.

- Anyone who admits patrons to a venue at which seating is offered for purposes of eating, drinking, socialization, celebration, ceremony or entertainment must maintain a record of the names and contact information of the persons who attend and must make those records available to Public Health inspectors. Where anyone hosts, organizes or permits gatherings larger than 50, they have the same requirements.

- Every person who has been outside of New Brunswick must pre-register their travel with the New Brunswick Travel Registration Program and self-isolate for 14 days on entry to New Brunswick. There may be exceptions. Please see the Mandatory Order.

*Requirements can vary by health zone and recovery phase. Consult the Public Health website to learn of current restrictions in your area.

Face masks must cover the mouth and nose!
your RISK

understanding your workplace risks

The risk level at each workplace differs due to various job roles, workplace population, job tasks and workspace. Review your risk to COVID-19 exposure by asking yourself and your team this question: **Can your workers regularly maintain a two-metre distance from others or is close proximity part of the job?** You may have some roles that are lower risk, meaning they can usually, if not always, maintain two metres of distance, and other roles that present higher risk, meaning they cannot regularly maintain two metres.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐ people in my workplace can reliably interact with each other at least two metres apart</td>
<td>☐ people in my workplace cannot reliably interact with each other at least two metres apart</td>
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</table>

key risk reducers – in and out of the workplace

As the Government of New Brunswick and the Public Health Agency of Canada states, physical distancing, effective handwashing and avoiding the touching of one’s face are key preventive measures to contracting COVID-19. These measures are critical!

Zero risk is not possible in any setting and this isn’t the objective. The expectation is that employers reduce risk as much as possible within their workplace. This may mean relying on a combination of controls that improve safety while allowing for economic viability.
**your CONTROL OPTIONS**

**consider the hierarchy of controls**

Whenever you have more than one option for controlling a risk, consider this hierarchy of controls chart. Physical distancing is always the most effective control, then engineering controls, and so on.

- **Physical distancing**: Restructure physical settings and responsibilities to adhere to the minimum two metre requirement (increase space between people or reduce the number of people within a space at a given time). In addition, wherever possible, give employees the option to work or access businesses and other settings from home.

- **Engineering controls**: Create physical barriers between people when physical distancing is not possible, or increase ventilation*.

- **Administrative controls**: Redistribute responsibilities to reduce contact between people, using technology for communication.

- **PPE**: Have employees wear medical PPE for health-care settings, when required, and non-medical cloth face masks to protect others, where necessary.

### PPE: What’s appropriate for your workplace?

PPE can include surgical masks, goggles, face shields, gowns, etc. The type will depend on the exposure risks to employees. The New Brunswick Chief Medical Officer of Health does not recommend the use of surgical masks by people 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 if you are well and not exhibiting any symptoms. Remember, more is not always better. Use PPE only as required to avoid unnecessary waste.

*Increased ventilation, in this instance, includes choosing outdoor rather than indoor spaces, and the addition of fresh air when available. It does not include use of fans or similar systems to blow, recirculate or mobilize air without the addition of fresh outdoor air.*
Your responsibility as an employer, whether for a business, non-profit or community organization, is to take every reasonable precaution to ensure the health and safety of your employees. Ensuring that your employees and supervisors understand their responsibilities to minimize exposure to COVID-19 is essential for maintaining a safe workplace. You’re also obligated to ensure your entire team understands and complies with the safety measures you have put in place. No matter what your risk level and choice of measures, training, communication and documentation are critical to prevent the transmission of COVID-19.

**STAY INFORMED**
Be attentive to changes. Watch and listen to reliable information outlets, such as the Government of New Brunswick, Public Health Agency of Canada and WorkSafeNB. Comply with mandatory orders issued by Public Safety and any applicable directives and guidelines for your zone from Public Health.

**INVOLVE YOUR STAFF**
Consult with staff, your joint health and safety committee or employee health and safety representative, as appropriate. Your employees can help with many aspects of communication, support and more.

**COMMUNICATE**
Inform your supervisors and employees of their rights and responsibilities to reduce the risk of COVID-19 exposure. Regularly communicate with your employees the importance of protecting themselves and others from COVID-19, changes to processes and procedures, and why these changes are required.

**PREPARE FOR AN EXPOSURE**
If an employee tests positive for COVID-19, Public Health will provide them with clear direction, including steps they must take. Public Health may also contact the employer and other employees to provide direction, if necessary.

**CREATE A COVID-19 OPERATIONAL PLAN**
You must have a documented 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. While your documented plan doesn’t need to be approved by WorkSafeNB or Public Health, it needs to be readily available. WorkSafeNB, Public Health or Public Safety could ask for it at any time.

**tip!**
Jonathan owns a small car garage in which employees can stagger shifts so there are no more than two workers in the garage at any time. They do not work directly with the public. Clients use a key drop-off box and pay for the services by phone.

Marissa owns a small clothing retail shop. She can limit the number of customers in the store at one time. There is a self-screening survey for workers and customers as they enter the shop. She has added one-way directional arrows on the floor, and while customers must be close to workers when paying for items, she has installed a Plexiglas barrier to limit exposure.
Every employer must take every reasonable precaution to ensure minimal interaction of people within two metres of each other.

- Where possible, physically mark two-metre intervals. This could include indicating where customers should wait for service, marking aisles as one-way, separating desks by two metres, blocking seating to ensure two metres is maintained, controlling entrances and exits, etc.

- Adopt a passive screening process for staff and visitors before they enter the workplace. Passive screening could include signage/self-screening survey for workers and customers to self-administer before entering the workplace.

- Promote frequent handwashing. Ensure handwash stations have adequate soap, and both handwash stations and sanitizer are readily available.

- Adopt rigorous cleaning procedures. Evaluate the workplace for shared objects and common areas. Increase the frequency of cleaning of touched surfaces/objects, such as door handles, handrails, ATMs, etc.

- Inform staff on proper coughing/sneezing etiquette (into your sleeve or into a tissue and safely throwing out the tissue).

- Provide necessary personal protective equipment (PPE); face masks and training on the proper use and maintenance of the equipment.

- Ensure all employees are fully aware of the preventive measures, and there are clear guidelines and instructions as well as enforcement of the measures. Employees must know how to lower their risk and what to do if that risk is compromised.

- Clarify where mask use is required in your workplace following the requirements of Public Health.
Kristin owns a hairstyling salon. To keep herself, employees and clients safe, she has eliminated walk-ins and there is no waiting room – all clients must book their appointment in advance by phone or online. Before the appointment, each client is actively screened. Kristin has marked designated areas on the floor where clients can stand and wait, and all clients must sanitize their hands before and after each service. She wasn’t able to install barriers between the work stations so half of her staff work Monday, Wednesday and Friday and the other half work Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. The clients and the stylists all wear face masks and no cash is exchanged. Kristen keeps a log book of all clients, the time of their appointments, and their contact information.

Luc owns an Italian restaurant. As part of his COVID-19 operational plan, he has posted screening signage at his entrance. Recently, he adopted a reservation system with pagers so that patrons can wait outside instead of in the cramped lobby area of the restaurant. The system also records the party’s name and contact information for potential contact tracing. He has installed physical barriers between seating areas where physical distancing isn’t possible and rearranged other parts of the restaurant to ensure physical distancing. He has also restricted party size to align with current guidelines by Public Health. Luc has trained his staff on physical distancing, mask use, and how to best serve clients with minimal interaction within two metres. He thoroughly cleans the restaurant before opening and has established enhanced sanitization practices. As an additional measure, he has designated one staff person per shift to ensure the safety measures are working and to make adjustments, if necessary.

Every restaurant is unique in size, footprint, staffing, etc. The individual measures that can be implemented determine the venue’s capacity.
Every employer must take every reasonable precaution to ensure minimal interaction of people within two metres of each other.

**stay safe measures:**

All of the precautions for workplaces that can keep workers, clients and customers two metres apart continue to apply. In addition:

- Install a physical barrier, such as a plastic guard, if possible, to help protect workers from potential exposure before considering other options. See your CONTROL OPTIONS.


- Face masks are mandatory in indoor public areas. In workplaces where the public is not admitted, workers must wear a face mask when working within two metres of each other (and, where the use of engineering controls is not feasible) and when accessing common areas like lobbies, meeting rooms, lunch rooms, hallways, washrooms, stairwells and elevators.

- Keep visitor and employee logs for access points and rooms where physical distancing is not possible. Appointment books and reservation lists with names and contact information can replace logs for tracing visitors.

**Active vs. passive screening**

In most cases, passive screening will apply to New Brunswick workplaces. Passive screening is generally in the form of signage, asking workers and visitors to screen themselves. Active screening is required when workplaces cannot maintain two metres between people and engineering controls are not feasible. Active screening occurs when an employer actively seeks information to determine the health status of people entering the workplace.

- Active screening must be conducted by a designated individual who asks workers the screening questions and requires a response. An electronic active screening system that prompts the person to respond and documents the response is permitted.

- You must actively screen employees at the start of each shift. Employees in high-risk groups (travelled outside of the province in the previous 14 days or have potential exposure to a positive case) may benefit from active screening on a more frequent schedule (such as every 12 hours).

Masking requirements can change depending on the phase of recovery. Check with Public Health on current requirements.
Joe is the general manager of a fish-processing facility. He had to close the facility in the early days of the pandemic because they couldn’t implement appropriate measures to keep workers safe. To reopen, he has done a risk assessment of the workplace and reorganized some parts of the process to provide two-metre distancing between workstations. Where they could not achieve proper distancing, he installed Plexiglas barriers. Not all areas were able to be modified and, as such, he has added a second shift to the facility to reduce the number of workers on site at any given time.

Jason has a patching business. The actual work of patching potholes requires at least two people working closely together and his crews travel to multiple work sites each day. In the work vehicles, it’s not possible to install physical barriers. Jason has implemented an active screening process that he diligently follows.
additional requirements for GATHERINGS

stay safe measures:

All of the precautions for workplaces that can keep workers, clients and customers two metres apart continue to apply. In addition:

• Organizations that offer seating and admit patrons for eating, drinking, socialization, celebration, ceremony or entertainment must maintain a record of the names and contact information of the persons who attend and must make those records available to Public Health inspectors.

See the Public Health website for additional requirements in your region.
crossing the BORDER and your WORKPLACE

People crossing inter-provincial borders can bring significant health risks to New Brunswick. To reduce the risk, the Government of New Brunswick has been monitoring and limiting travel to and from the province.

For detailed travel information, see Safely entering or re-entering New Brunswick to work amid COVID-19 (worksafenb.ca) and Travel Information (gnb.ca).

INTERNATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS
Workers entering New Brunswick from international locations are also subject to the federal Quarantine Act. Please contact the Canadian Border Services Agency to obtain the requirements.

Pre-register your travel
Check to see if you must pre-register for travel by going to gnb.ca or calling 1 833 948-2800.

Failing to comply with these requirements could result in significant fines plus a victim surcharge and administration fees!
working TOGETHER

a new normal calls for adaptation and quick response to challenges

As the world emerges from the current pandemic, organizations must make some fundamental shifts – shifts that address biological, physical and emotional challenges. We are confident that you will adapt and respond to the challenges, but it requires thoughtfulness and planning. We need to change our fundamental behaviours of how work gets done, how we keep our facilities clean and how we interact with co-workers and customers. As we continue to adjust to the new normal, we must continue to strive for injury-free and disease-free workplaces.

Still have questions? We’re here to help.

your RESOURCES

WorkSafeNB
worksafenb.ca
prevention@ws-ts.nb.ca
1 800 999-9775

Service New Brunswick
snb.ca
helpaide@gnb.ca
1 844 462-8387

Check out resources at the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety! ccohs.ca/products/publications/covid19/

Public Health is providing guidance for communities and community partners. There may be specific guidelines relevant to your workplace! www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/departments/ocmoh/cdc/content/respiratory_diseases/coronavirus/community_guidance.html

Download the COVID Alert app!
Connect with WorkSafeNB by Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube!
Sign up for E-News at worksafenb.ca/e-news
COVID-19 OPERATIONAL PLAN TEMPLATE

To ensure workplaces have documented their risk assessment and risk mitigation measures consistent with Public Health guidance and the Occupational Health and Safety Act and regulations, all employers must develop a written COVID-19 operational plan.

You must comply with the provisions of the Mandatory Order. Please see the most recent order at the Government of New Brunswick website.

You do not need to submit the operational plan to WorkSafeNB. Individual COVID-19 operational plans will not be reviewed or approved by WorkSafeNB or Public Health. However, plans will need to be produced during inspections or if a complaint is made and an investigation follows by one of the regulatory bodies. The following template may serve as a starting point for your COVID-19 operational plan. It helps guide you through some of the key areas to consider when assessing the risk surrounding the safe opening and continued operations of your workplace. Additional guidance from an industry association may also be available to help you address industry- or workplace-specific needs. If you operate across various provinces, requirements specific to New Brunswick must be included in your plan.

This template has been developed for workplaces in the Yellow Phase alert level. Your operational plan needs to include planning for Public Health phase changes. Workplaces that can stay open need to check Public Health guidance for requirements for screening, distancing, masking, record keeping and other measures according to your colour alert level.

Just as viruses can mutate, guidelines related to COVID-19 can change. As an employer, you’re responsible for keeping up to date on current guidelines and to change your plans as required. Refer to New Brunswick Public Health and WorkSafeNB websites for updates that may affect your workplace.

This template is available in an editable Word format. This document and linked resources are also available in French.
COVID-19 OPERATIONAL PLAN TEMPLATE

Company / Organization Name: ________________________________________________________________

Plan Owner: ____________________________________________________________________________

Plan Implementation Date: ________________

Plan Revision Date: ______________________

Plan has been reviewed to assess any new risks or changes to regulatory guidelines (suggest monthly review):

________________________________________  ________________  ___________________________  ________________
Name                                        Date                                               Name                                        Date

________________________________________  ________________  ___________________________  ________________
Name                                        Date                                               Name                                        Date

________________________________________  ________________  ___________________________  ________________
Name                                        Date                                               Name                                        Date
Effective Risk Mitigation – Infection and Prevention Controls

The best prevention controls in a workplace are achieved by first focusing on physical distancing and taking every reasonable step to restructure physical settings to increase space between people. Once you have exhausted all reasonable options in this category, move to the next stage within the inverse pyramid and conduct the same exercise, and so on until you reach PPE as a final step, if required.

* Increased ventilation, in this instance, includes choosing outdoor rather than indoor spaces, use of air filtration, and the adding of fresh air when available. It does not include the blowing of fans or recirculating or mobilizing existing air.
<table>
<thead>
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<th>Action Item</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Public Health requirements (applies to EVERY workplace / organization)</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Risk Assessment</strong></td>
<td>Risk Assessment</td>
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<td>Complete a risk assessment to determine the engineering, administrative</td>
<td>Guideline Health Canada</td>
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<td>controls and/or PPE controls necessary to mitigate the risk of COVID-19</td>
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<td>exposure.</td>
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<td>Determine whether you need isolation elements as part of the operational</td>
<td>Safe entering or re-entering New Brunswick to work</td>
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<td>plan for your workplace.</td>
<td>amid COVID-19 FAQ</td>
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<td><strong>Physical Distancing</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Implement a two-metre physical distance protocol.</td>
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<td>• Consider both employees and visitors/customers.</td>
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<td>• Arrange furniture to promote the two-metre rule.</td>
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<td>• Provide visual cues (ensure two-metre markings on floor, directional</td>
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<td>movement for patrons, no-stopping areas in narrow hallways, etc.).</td>
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<td>• Determine if installation of physical barriers such as partitions or</td>
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<td>Plexiglas is feasible.</td>
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<td>Establish a protocol to ensure people don’t congregate in groups (stagger</td>
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<td>start and break times, virtual rather than in-person meetings, limit</td>
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<td>access to common areas, etc.).</td>
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<td>Evaluate options to reduce staff onsite, such as having some staff work</td>
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<td>from home, changing shift times and, implementing flexible work hours.</td>
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<td>Evaluate the risk of employees coming closer than two metres in all parts</td>
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<td>of the facility. Starwells, entry and exit points and narrow hallways</td>
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<td>can present a challenge. Consider implementing one-way traffic zones</td>
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<td>where possible (one stairwell for walking up, a different one for walking</td>
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<td>down).</td>
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<td><strong>Hand and Respiratory Hygiene</strong></td>
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<td>Promote frequent handwashing.</td>
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<td>Have handwash stations readily available and equipped with running hot/</td>
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<td>cold water and adequate soap and paper towel.</td>
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<td>Have minimum 60% alcohol-based hand sanitizer readily available.</td>
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<td>Communicate frequently about good respiratory hygiene/cough etiquette.</td>
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<td>Evaluate the workplace for shared objects and common areas and increase</td>
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<td>frequency of cleaning of touched surfaces/objects (minimum twice daily).</td>
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## Public Health requirements (applies to EVERY workplace / organization)

### Screening and Monitoring

Determine if your workplace must implement a passive or active screening process. For more information on screening, see page 11 of the *Embracing the New Normal* guide.

Prepare for the possibility that an employee tests positive for COVID-19 and may have been in the workplace. Inform your employees of the procedures to be followed.

### Receiving payment for good and services

Use electronic payment devices (if possible). We encourage you to use the tap option or clean devices after each use.

If you must handle money, ensure regular handwashing and have minimum 60% alcohol-based hand sanitizer readily available.

### Contact Tracing

Determine if your workplace must keep records and contact information of employees, visitors, patrons or persons entering the workplace.

### Cleaning and Disinfection

Ensure availability of all necessary supplies for cleaning and disinfecting.

**Washrooms**
- Equip with hot and cold running water under pressure, liquid soap, paper towel, toilet paper and garbage containers where possible.
- Hand-washing posters must be posted.

If multiple stalls and sinks are provided in washrooms, consider whether you need to limit access through maximum numbers allowed in the space at one time.

### Mask Use

Ensure employees, clients and visitors follow current Public Health guidelines on mask use. This may include procedures for selection, use, decontamination (if applicable), storage, handling, limitations, inspection requirements, change-out requirements and employee training.

Consider implementing a self-isolation unit. Isolate persons showing signs of COVID-19 immediately at the workplace. Keep the person isolated until they are picked up to avoid contaminating others.

Provide mental health support to all workers, including access to an employee assistance program (EAP) or information on public health supports, if available.
<table>
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<tr>
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**Public Health requirements (applies to EVERY workplace / organization)**

If your workplace CANNOT ensure minimal interaction of people within two metres of each other – the requirements listed below must be implemented

Where feasible, install physical barriers (clear plastic guard, cubicle walls of appropriate design, curtains).

**If physical barriers are not possible:**

- Implement active screening processes.
- Implement enhanced handwashing and sanitation/cleaning practices in shared areas and for shared items.

**Provide personal protective equipment such as:**

- Hand protection (nitrile, rubber or latex gloves)
- Eye protection (safety glasses, goggles or face shield)
- Other PPE as determined necessary through the risk assessment

In areas/rooms where minimal interaction of people within two metres of each other is not possible, maintain a visitor and employee log. 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 that area.
## Occupational Health and Safety Act and Regulation Requirements

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<tr>
<td>Communicate to employees and supervisors their responsibilities under the OHS Act and regulations.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communicate to all employees their three rights under the OHS Act.</td>
<td>OHS Guide-Three Rights</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provide employee orientation, information and training on the new policies and processes implemented regarding COVID-19.</td>
<td>OHS Guide-New Employee Orientation</td>
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<td>Provide employee training on the work refusal process.</td>
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<td>Right to Refuse</td>
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<td>Keep records of visitor and employee log (with confirmation those individuals were actually screened), as well as orientation, training and inspections.</td>
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<td>Ensure supervisors are knowledgeable of guidelines and processes established by Public Health.</td>
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<td>Ensure all employees receive information, instruction and training on the personal protective equipment required to protect against COVID-19.</td>
<td>Interpretation</td>
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<td>Provide, maintain and make available personal protective equipment.</td>
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<td>Implement a disciplinary process for correction of employee violations of company policies and procedures.</td>
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<td>Consult on any new policies and processes established in relation to COVID-19 (JHSC or health and safety representative, if any, or employees).</td>
<td>OHS Guide-JHSC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provide competent and sufficient supervision to ensure employees are complying with policies, procedures and processes established.</td>
<td>OHS Guide topic-Supervision</td>
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<td>Communicate to all staff the requirement to co-operate with Public Health if there is a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 in the workplace. Public Health will advise the employee and/or the employer if there is a need to communicate with the employer or workforce during contact tracing. If the employer is advised of a positive case, they must then report it to WorkSafeNB.</td>
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<td>FAQ</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Include guidance that is not provided in this template and is recommended by your industry association or other resources.

| Sector Specific Additional Resources | | | | |