

Communicable Disease Prevention

A GUIDE FOR NEW BRUNSWICK EMPLOYEES

This guide is not meant for workplaces that have an existing infection prevention and control (IPC) plan related to communicable disease, such as health care authorities and long-term care facilities.

As COVID-19 vaccinations have become widely available, the risk of transmission and its serious consequences have significantly decreased. However, the virus still circulates amongst the population, like other communicable diseases.

A communicable disease is an illness caused by an infectious agent or its toxic product that can be transmitted from one person to another. Examples include COVID-19, norovirus and seasonal influenza.

Under the *Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Act* (see [Section 12](#)), all employees must ensure the health and safety of themselves and others in the workplace.

The health risk associated with communicable diseases, including COVID-19, may increase from time to time or seasonally. This may occur at a local or regional level, or within a certain workplace.

Employee checklist:

- ❑ Follow all preventive measures (cleaning schedules, health and safety policies, screening protocols, etc.) set by your employer.
- ❑ Know who in your organization is responsible for monitoring and assessing communicable disease-related information issued by the Chief (or regional) Medical Officer of Health and WorkSafeNB. This information includes orders, guidance, advice and recommendations.
- ❑ Stay home when you are sick. If you experience symptoms of COVID-19, [get tested](#). Talk to your supervisor about possible virtual work options. If staying at home is not an option, wear a mask and physically distance yourself from others as much as possible.
- ❑ If you're able to be vaccinated, get vaccinated. Encourage your co-workers to get vaccinated for COVID-19 and other vaccine-preventable diseases.

If you are not vaccinated, for any reason, your risk of contracting a communicable disease is much higher than those who have been vaccinated. You may also risk infection to others.

- ❑ To understand the level of risk in the workplace, your employer may ask you for your vaccine status. Any health-related information provided to your employer must be kept confidential.
- ❑ Participate in any training or information sessions your employer provides on health and safety policies.
- ❑ When you cough or sneeze, use a tissue; dispose of the tissue and wash your hands afterward. If you do not have a tissue available, cough into your sleeve or elbow.
- ❑ Keep a face mask close at hand for times of elevated risk or when risk is unknown.
- ❑ Wash your hands frequently. Use the hand-hygiene facilities provided by your employer. This may include sanitizer when facilities with running water are not readily available.
- ❑ If you're a member of a joint health and safety committee or a health and safety representative, consult with your employer to identify and resolve workplace health and safety issues.
- ❑ Participate in workplace inspections to ensure preventive measures are working properly.
- ❑ Know the procedure for raising health and safety concerns in your workplace.
- ❑ If you don't feel safe in your workplace, talk to your supervisor.



- ❑ Be kind to colleagues who, for whatever reason, may not have been vaccinated or those who choose to wear a mask on a regular basis. Help maintain an environment of support and care.
- ❑ Be mindful that some aspects of mitigating communicable disease in the workplace may raise privacy and confidentiality issues. Talk to your employer if you have concerns.
- ❑ Plans can change and your workplace may need to adjust policies. During a period of elevated risk, Public Health may provide direction to your employer. Follow any requirements set by your employer.

If you have further questions, visit worksafenb.ca or email prevention@ws-ts.nb.ca.