

Guiding Public Health Principles for Business Operators During COVID-19 Pandemic

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Operating a business during a pandemic requires the implementation of control measures to reduce the risk of illness spread amongst patrons and staff. Consideration should be given to all aspects of a business' operation to ensure this risk is reduced wherever possible.

There are differing levels of effectiveness based on the types of control measures that are implemented. While the most effective control is to eliminate the hazard, the three that are generally used from a mitigation perspective are engineering controls, administrative controls and PPE (outlined in figure 1).

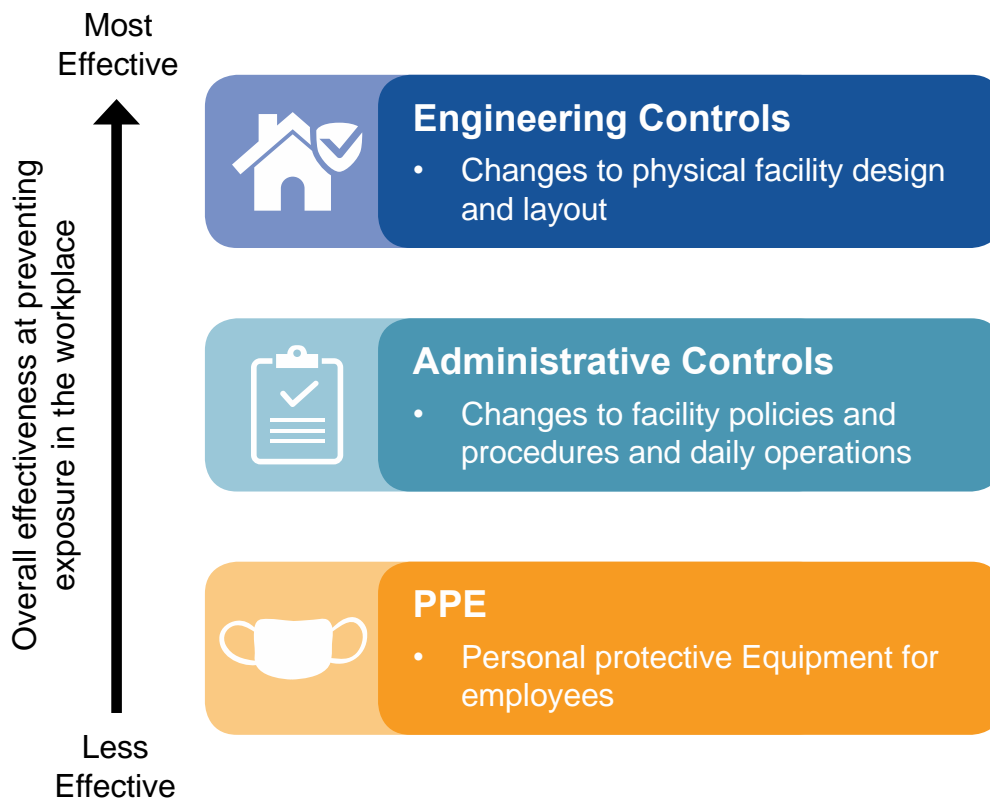


Figure 1: Hierarchy of Control Measures

A plan to safely operate your business should be developed, considering what control measures should be implemented throughout all aspects of your business. This document outlines the types of areas that risk-reducing control measures can be implemented and provides examples and links to other guidance documents to further explore these measures. A framework is also provided to assist you in considering what control measures you need and how you will implement them.

General Considerations

Premises Controls

Premises controls are modifications you can make to your business operations to reduce the risk of illness spread. These measures might be physical, or they may relate to general operation. Examples of general premises control measures include:

- Limit the number of people at your premises – this may mean having staff working from home, having a reduced number of staff working or limiting the number of patrons inside your premises at a given time
- Designate workstations and tools to individual staff or clean in between uses
- Reduce the number of meetings, the number of staff attending each meeting and/or hold meetings in large, open spaces such as outdoors
- Increase the ventilation rates of the buildings ventilation system, increase the amount of outdoor air that circulates through the ventilation system, or, open windows and doors to allow more outdoor air to circulate the building
- Prop doors open, where possible, so door handle does not need to be touched to walk through (this is not recommended in cases where safety hazards or other risks might be increased such as in food premises or pools)

Physical Distancing

Physical distancing is reducing the close contact of individuals and striving to allow for a 2-metre separation between staff and patrons. Examples of general physical distancing measures include:

- Increase distance between workstations
- Provide physical barriers (such as plexiglass) between workstations
- Rearrange seating in common areas (meeting rooms, break rooms, waiting rooms) to achieve 2-metre separation
- Visually identify 2m distances so staff and patrons can identify if they are standing too close to others
- Direct foot traffic in one direction
- Allow for 5 square meters (53.8 square feet) per person to achieve physical distancing
- For calculating how many people you can allow in your business, the following approach is recommended:
 - Determine how much floor space is available – this is your total floor space minus floor space used by aisles, furniture, display cases, etc. For example: 1000 m² (total space) – 300 m² (used space) = 700 m²

- Divide the available floor space by the 5 m² needed for each person:
- $700 \text{ m}^2 / 5 \text{ m}^2 = 140$ which is the maximum number of people who should be in the premises at any given time

Increased Cleaning and Sanitation

Increasing your current cleaning and sanitation schedule, to be more frequent and ensure it covers all common touch points within your operations, will help reduce the spread of illness. Examples of general cleaning and sanitation measures include:

- Sanitizers should be verified for their efficacy by the following steps:
 - Use the list on Health Canada's website to identify if your current sanitizer has been reviewed and confirmed effective against SARS-CoV-2:
<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/disinfectants/covid-19/list.html>
 - Contact your sanitizer supplier/manufacturer to determine if the sanitizer has been evaluated and confirmed to be effective against SARS-CoV-2.
 - Switch to a bleach water solution at a concentration of 500ppm (made by mixing 10mL of bleach with 990mL (approx. 1 L) of water. Note: On food contact surfaces, this will require a rinse step after 5-minute contact time.
- Common touch points should be cleaned and sanitized at least twice per day, more often if used frequently; these include door handles, buttons, washrooms, etc.
- If workstations must be shared, they should be cleaned and sanitized between users
- Develop a cleaning checklist so no areas are missed
- Have separate cleaning and sanitizing equipment in the different areas of your business

Hand Hygiene and PPE

Proper hand hygiene is vital to reducing the risk of illness. This should be done in conjunction with good cough and sneeze etiquette, avoiding touching your face and, where necessary, using personal protective equipment. Examples of general hand hygiene and PPE measures include:

- Handwashing stations should be fully stocked with liquid hand soap, paper towel and warm, running water to promote proper handwashing
- Signs can be posted to remind of proper hand washing techniques
- Incorporate hand washing breaks to encourage frequent handwashing
- Provide alcohol-based hand sanitizer (60-90% alcohol) for hand hygiene
- Personal Protective Equipment – this may be needed when close contact cannot be avoided, however, physical barriers and/or a change to the general flow of business are preferred measures

- Respiratory etiquette should be followed – coughing or sneezing into a tissue or elbow; discard any tissues after a single use
- PPE – if staff choose to wear gloves, proper hand hygiene must be practiced as regularly as it would if no gloves are worn – glove use does not replace hand washing
- PPE – if staff choose to wear masks, they should avoid touching their faces and adjusting the mask as this may increase their risk
- Donning and doffing procedures (how to safely put on and take off PPE) should be shown to staff

Staff/Patron Illness Policy

Ensuring ill staff members do not come to work and reminding patrons that they are not to enter your premises if symptomatic will reduce risk of illness. Examples of general staff and patron illness measures include:

- Staff should be advised not to report to work if they are exhibiting symptoms of illness
- Sick notes should not be requested as this puts strain on the healthcare system
- Patrons should be advised not to come into your premises if they are ill

Staff/Patron Education

After control measures are implemented, staff and patrons must be informed of their existence. Having a plan to safely operate your business will only be effective if the plan is followed. Examples of general education measures include:

- Staff should be informed of control measures and any required actions
- Check-ins should occur to ensure staff understand the measures and their responsibilities
- Reminders should be ongoing so staff do not become complacent
- Owners/managers should set an example by following all measures
- Patrons should be educated of the measure in place – this may be verbally by staff or with signs and other markers
- Multiple methods of education are best – signage, verbal, visual cues

Site Specific Considerations

When considering the specific aspects of your business identify where control measures will be needed and consider how you will implement these measures. This section includes questions you may ask yourself about the various aspects of your business and examples of control measures that you might implement. Links to more information are also included for various items.

Do patrons or staff gather as a part of your business?

- [Mass gatherings](#) have been prohibited by Order of the Provincial Health Officer – if your business falls into the category outlined in this Order you must ensure no more than 50 people gather at any given time
- If your business hosts gatherings of less than 50 people, physical distancing principles should be followed ensuring patrons and staff can maintain a distance of 2 meters between each other

Do you need to limit the number of patrons/staff at your business?

- The number of staff and patrons on your premises should be limited to ensure a physical distance of 2 meters can be achieved at all times between patrons/staff (see calculation in physical distancing section)
- Where possible, patrons can be given appointment times to ensure physical distancing can occur. Times should be staggered in such a way as to ensure the first patron has left prior to the next patrons' arrival.
- Business that can be conducted in a virtual manner should be – online, video call, phone call, etc.

Do staff members closely interact with patrons or other staff members?

- Elimination of a hazard is the best form of control, while we cannot eliminate the hazard outright, we can eliminate exposure to the hazard. This includes such measures as conducting consultations or meetings over the phone rather than in person.
- Engineering controls are the best control types for reducing risk when close contact must occur. These include physical changes to your premises such as plexiglass barriers between staff members or staff and patrons.
- Administrative controls are the next level of controls for reducing risk. These include measures such as assigning the staff into small work groups who are in contact with each other but not other groups.
- Personal Protective Equipment is the risk controlling measure implemented when close contact must occur and neither engineering nor administrative controls are possible. Proper education on how to wear PPE is required to ensure it does not actually increase risk to the person using it.

Does your business have a sick policy?

- Staff should not be coming to work while they have symptoms of illness. If their symptoms are that of respiratory illness (cough, fever, difficulty breathing, etc.) they can phone the NH COVID-19 assessment line for guidance 1-844-645-7811
- Sick notes should not be requested of ill staff members as this puts increased burden on the medical system
- Symptomatic patrons should not be visiting your business. [Signs](#) can be posted to remind patrons of this.

Do you offer delivery of a product?

- Deliveries should be managed in a way to reduce risk to both the person delivering the product and the person receiving the product
- Key points of consideration are
 - Contactless delivery
 - Online payment (if applicable and possible)
 - Sanitation of point of sale device after each use
 - Sanitation of common touch surfaces in the vehicle
 - Hand hygiene for the delivery person – hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol during delivery and hand washing before leaving and when returning to the business

Is [transportation](#) part of your business?

- Passengers should be reduced and spaced apart as much as possible. Buses can leave a row of seats between passengers; smaller vehicles should have the passenger sit in the backseat and opposite side of the driver.
- If staff members must travel together, have the same staff members travel together.

Are there/will you need line-ups at your business?

- Line-ups should be managed in such a way as to ensure physical distancing can occur. Marking points on the floor 2 meters apart is a good way to remind patrons to maintain the appropriate distance from others.

Do you have washrooms at your business?

- If washrooms can accommodate multiple people, the number of patrons/staff within at any given time may need to be limited
- Increased cleaning and sanitation should occur in washroom facilities – to a minimum of twice per day, possibly more if usage is high or hours of operation are long
- A staff member should be assigned with ensuring washrooms are fully stocked at all times

Do you have a staff room?

- Breaks should be staggered so as to reduce the number of staff in the staff room at any given time
- Seats should be arranged to allow for 2 meters between them
- Increased cleaning and sanitation should occur for all common touch surfaces such as door handles, tables, light switches, etc. – assign someone to this new cleaning schedule, as needed
- Staff members should wash their hands when starting a break and before returning to their work area

Does your business provide accommodations for patrons or staff?

- The Province of BC has developed guidance for the [Hotel Sector](#)
- The BCCDC has guidance for [Industrial Camps](#)

Does your business offer food service or food for sale?

- Dine in food service must be limited according to Provincial Health Officer Order to [Food Service Establishments and Liquor Services](#)
- Tables must be arranged so as to allow for 2 metres separation between parties
- Restaurant capacity must not exceed 50% of regular capacity limits
- Take-out, delivery and drive thru service may still be offered
- Guidance on this topic can be found on the BCCDC website under [Food Businesses](#)
- The Province of BC has developed guidance for [Food and Beverage](#)
- The Province of BC has developed guidance for [Retail Food and Grocery Stores](#)

Do staff members use personal items while working?

- Hand washing or sanitizing should occur after contact with personal items such as cell phones

Does your business include a play area for children?

- Structures in a play area can be closed from access or put on an increased cleaning and sanitation schedule
- Toys that cannot be cleaned easily should be removed
- Toys that remain should be cleaned and sanitized at least twice per day and removed from the area if they have been mouthed
- Signs encouraging handwashing before and after play should be posted

Has your business been Ordered by the Provincial Health Officer to close or reduce service levels?

- Keep up to date on the latest Orders from the Provincial Health Officer at: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/about-bc-s-health-care-system/office-of-the-provincial-health-officer/current-health-topics/covid-19-novel-coronavirus>

Are there more guidance documents available for specific premises?

- The BCCDC has many guidance documents for various business, premises and other topics. Some of these guidance documents include: Recreation Facilities, Faith-Based Organizations, Malls and Stores and many more.
- The Province of BC has posted all Orders made by the Provincial Health Officer and other guidance documents.
- WorkSafe BC has developed a Safety Plan template and posted resources relating to safe work practices.
- British Columbia Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC) guidance and information relating to COVID – 19: <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19>
- Province of BC website with Orders and Guidance documents: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/about-bc-s-health-care-system/office-of-the-provincial-health-officer/current-health-topics/covid-19-novel-coronavirus>
- WorkSafe BC resources can be found at: [https://www.worksafebc.com/en/forms-resources#sort=%40computeditemdatefield343%20descending&f:language-facet=\[English\]&tags=Covid-19|a96b6c96607345c481bb8621425ea03f](https://www.worksafebc.com/en/forms-resources#sort=%40computeditemdatefield343%20descending&f:language-facet=[English]&tags=Covid-19|a96b6c96607345c481bb8621425ea03f)

Building Your Plan

This framework will guide you as you consider the aspects of your business where control measures should be implemented and what those measure will be.

Business Name:

What are the aspects of my business that require mitigation measures?

Staff Areas:

-
-
-

Patron Areas:

-
-
-

Procedures/policies to update/create:

-
-
-
-

Total Square floor space (metres):

Total number of people that can be present at my premises at any given time (see calculation above):

*What types of **premises controls** should I put in place?*

-
-
-
-

Who will be responsible for doing this?

-

What items will I need to purchase?

-
-
-

*What types of **physical distancing** control measures should I put in place?*

-
-
-
-

Who will be responsible for doing this?

-

What items will we need to purchase?

-
-
-

*What **increased cleaning and sanitation** control measures should I put in place?*

-
-
-
-

Do I need to assign staff to additional cleaning duties?

- No
- Yes

-
-

Do I need to create additional cleaning checklists?

- No
- Yes

-
-

What additional cleaning supplies do I need to purchase?

-
-
-
-

*What **hand hygiene and PPE** control measure should I put in place?*

-
-
-
-

What needs to be in place to encourage proper hand hygiene?

-
-
-

What supplies will I need to purchase?

-
-
-

Who will be responsible for doing this?

-

*What **Staff Illness Policy** updates do I need to make?*

-
-
-

How will I inform my staff of these updates?

-

*How will I **educate** staff and patrons on these control measures?*

-
-
-

Who will be responsible for doing this?

-

How often should staff be reminded of these measures?

-

How will I check-in with staff to ensure they understand and complying with the measures?

-
-

How will patrons be made aware of these measures?

-
-

Is there anything else I would like to include in this plan?

-
-
-