

# PREVENTING THE SPREAD OF COVID-19

Updated on March 24th, 2020

**This info sheet on COVID-19 (coronavirus) covers precautions that both employers and workers can take to avoid contracting and spreading the virus. At the time of this publication, according to BCCDC, B.C. has declared a state of emergency and a public health emergency.**

## What is coronavirus?

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses which in humans can cause diseases ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases such as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS-CoV). The new coronavirus has been named COVID-19.

## What are the symptoms of coronavirus?

The symptoms of COVID-19, are similar to other respiratory illnesses, including the flu and common cold. They include:

- coughing
- sneezing
- fever
- sore throat
- difficulty in breathing

At this time, the available information suggests the incubation period is up to 14 days. The incubation period is the time from when a person is first exposed until symptoms appear.

## How does coronavirus spread?

When someone who has COVID-19 coughs or exhales they release droplets of infected fluid. Most of these droplets fall on nearby surfaces and objects - such as desks, tables, or telephones. People could catch COVID-19 by touching contaminated surfaces or objects – and then touching their eyes, nose, or mouth. If they are standing within six feet of a person with COVID-19 they can catch it by breathing in droplets coughed out or exhaled by them.

## Steps employers can take to prevent the spread of COVID-19:

- If practicable, employers should curtail non-essential work at the workplace and consider having workers work remotely (e.g. work at home)
- If it is necessary for workers to come to work, employers should put preventative measures in place such as;
  - where practicable, reconfigure the workplace to maintain appropriate distance between workers,
  - encourage physical distancing (maintain six feet distance), and
  - limit worker travel.
- Make sure workplaces are clean and hygienic by keeping surfaces (e.g. desks and tables) and objects (e.g. telephones, keyboards) clean and disinfecting regularly. Make hygiene materials such as sanitisers available, where possible.
- Reinforce personal hygiene messages such as handwashing to workers and anyone else who may enter your workplace.



## Steps workers can take to prevent the spread of COVID-19 if entering the workplace:

- Washing hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds; use hand sanitisers if you are unable to wash hands
- Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands
- Coughing or sneezing into your sleeve and not your hands
- Maintain a distance of six feet or more from others
- Staying home if you are sick to avoid spreading illness to others



Imagery from [traditioninaction.org](http://traditioninaction.org)

## Other preventative measures that can be taken to prevent the spread of COVID-19

**Social Distancing:** Social distancing is a way that you can slow the spread of COVID-19 by limiting close contact with others. This includes limiting activities outside your home, staying home when you're sick, avoid social activities in large gatherings, and if you are out in public keep six feet distance between you and others.

**Self-Monitoring:** If you have reason to believe that you have been exposed to a person with COVID-19, then monitor yourself for 14 days for one or more symptoms of COVID-19.

**Self-Isolation:** If you have been exposed/in close contact with someone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19 or travelled outside of Canada in the past 14 days then you need to self-isolate and avoid contact with other people.

**If you develop symptoms, isolate yourself from others immediately and call HealthLink at 811 for an assessment and to determine next steps.**

Please refer to the following links to keep updated about the latest information -

- [Actsafe.ca](http://Actsafe.ca)
- [Worksafebc.com](http://Worksafebc.com)
- [BCCDC.ca](http://BCCDC.ca)
- [Canada.ca](http://Canada.ca)

This info sheet was developed using various resources including BCCDC, WHO, WorkSafeBC, and Government of Canada.