

# Interim Recommendations for Workers on Construction Sites

March 31 2020

## COVID-19 Preventive Measures in the Workplace

These measures apply when sustained community transmission is confirmed by the public health authorities

To protect the health of employees and those who frequent the workplace, employers and workers are asked to:

- 1) Promote, through **arrangements in work methods and schedules**, compliance with the instructions given to employees who are in compulsory isolation (telework), and to those with other types of constraints (flexible hours, telework).
- 2) Advise workers not to **report to work** if they have symptoms suggestive of COVID-19 (fever, cough, difficulty breathing or other symptoms that could manifest themselves according to the following site:  
<https://www.quebec.ca/en/health/health-issues/a-z/2019-coronavirus/instructions-directives/#c48262>
  - If a worker begins to experience symptoms in the workplace, have a procedure that allows for the worker to be isolated in a room and have him wear a procedural (or surgical) mask if available. Call **1-877-644-4545**.
- 3) Promote **hand hygiene** by providing workers with the necessary material (running water, soap, hydro-alcoholic solutions, non-contact garbage cans, disposable tissues, towels or disposable paper, etc.).
  - Wash hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
  - Use an alcohol-based gel (60% or more) for at least 20 seconds if soap and water are not available.
  - Avoid touching eyes, nose or mouth with potentially contaminated hands.
  - All workers must be given the opportunity to clean their hands before entering the work site, when they leave the work site, before eating, before breaks, before smoking, and when using the toilet.
- 4) Follow **respiratory etiquette** (cough into a bent elbow or into a tissue that is discarded immediately after use, then wash hands as soon as possible).
- 5) Whenever possible, favour physical barriers between individuals; otherwise, promote **social distancing** measures, such as:
  - Avoid all physical contact (e.g. handshakes, hugs, etc.).
  - If workers must work closely, avoid skin-to-skin contact.
  - Always keep the same groups of workers for teamwork and keep as few workers as possible in these groups.
  - Respect a distance of two metres between individuals. Coming across someone who is less than two metres away for a few minutes without contact is not a risk.
  - Avoid face-to-face meetings and gatherings.

- Avoid sharing material and equipment (e.g. tablets, pencils, communication devices, cigarettes, change or paper money, etc.).
- Favour the exchange of digital documents rather than paper documents.
- Limit outings and travelling to the bare minimum.

**Pay particular attention to the following situations:**

**a) Areas acting as **bottlenecks** (e.g. site entrance, dining and break areas):**

- Avoid line-ups of people standing close together at these areas.
- If necessary, slightly displace shift and break schedules.
- Hydroalcoholic solutions should be made available on the construction site and in rooms.
- Posters reminding people of the importance of hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette and social distancing should be posted in these areas.

**b) Meal times:**

- Ensure thorough hand-washing before and after eating.
- Have the workers eat in rooms large enough so that there is a distance of more than two metres between each of them. Arrange for additional trailers if necessary.
- If no other room is available, modify meal period schedules so as to have a limited number of workers in the dining room at all times.
- Have workers who are in the same group eat together at the same time, in the same room, day after day.
- If workers are eating outdoors, ensure that the minimum distance of two metres between workers is respected.
- Do not share food.
- Do not exchange cups, glasses, plates, silverware; wash dishes in hot water with soap.
- Instead of community water coolers with dispensers, provide individual water bottles to avoid having many people touching the dispenser.
- Pay attention to mobile canteens and ensure that only one person serves the workers in order to limit contact with utensils and serving dishes.

**c) Breaks:**

- Ensure that social distancing measures are applied during breaks (e.g. avoid gatherings). If necessary, space out breaks.
- Do not share objects or food (e.g. cigarettes, coffee mugs, etc.).
- Bring as few personal items as possible on site.
- Remove non-essential items (magazines, newspapers) from common areas.

6) If a 2-metre distance cannot be maintained at all times, adjustments must be made in the following contexts:

**In all cases:**

- Strictly enforce the exclusion of individuals from the workplace if they present a cough, fever, breathing difficulties, or other symptoms that could manifest themselves, according to the following site:  
<https://www.quebec.ca/en/health/health-issues/a-z/2019-coronavirus/answers-questions-coronavirus-covid19/#c46790>.

**And**

- For tasks where workers **already use respiratory protective devices (RPEs) and eye protection against aerosols or particles**, they will be protected even if they are working less than two metres from each other. However, the following measures must still be applied:
  - Avoid all physical contacts.
  - Add protective eyewear, if not already mandatory.
  - Once the worker completes these tasks, they should remove gloves, protective eyewear and the RPE safely<sup>1</sup> and dispose of non-reusable equipment in the trash or in dedicated containers or resealable bags, then discard them.
  - Disinfect reusable equipment (e.g. protective eyewear, reusable mask) with a product suitable for the equipment.
  - Ensure that hands are washed or that a hydro-alcoholic solution is used after the removal of equipment.
- For tasks where workers are **not exposed to aerosols or particles in the course of their work, and therefore do not normally require respiratory protection**:
  - Consider the possibility of reorganizing work in order to reduce the number of workers and aim for a distance of at least two metres between each worker whenever possible.
  - If applicable, install physical separations (solid partitions) between workers.
  - For company vehicles and heavy machinery where two workers are seated less than two metres apart:
    - Favour having the same people in the same vehicle to avoid multiple interactions.
    - Maintain the same position, driver or co-driver, for the entire shift as much as possible.
    - Avoid sharing material and equipment (e.g. tablets, pencils, communication devices, etc.)
    - Clean the dashboard, steering wheel, stick shift and door handles with alcohol-soaked wipes or a hydro-alcoholic solution regularly during the shift, especially before eating (if inside the vehicle) and where drivers and co-drivers are required to alternate.

In addition, **adjustments** must be made in the following contexts:

**a) Vehicles transporting workers from one area of the construction site to another:**

- If possible, favour individual transport.
- Always have the same workers assigned to the same locations for each transport.

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<sup>1</sup> Remove the gloves, wash your hands with a hydroalcoholic solution, remove the eyewear, wash your hands with a hydroalcoholic solution, remove the mask by holding it by the elastics without touching the paper, and finish by washing your hands with a hydroalcoholic solution.

- Organize the space in order to prevent any physical contact between workers and respect, whenever possible, the 2-metre distance between them (e.g. condemn certain seats, leave every second seat empty, provide for more frequent transport to reduce the number of workers per transport or consider using a larger vehicle).
- Clean the vehicle after each use.

**b) Corporate vehicles and heavy machinery** where two or more workers are seated less than 2 metres apart:

- Favour having the same people in the same vehicle to avoid multiple interactions.
- Maintain the same position, driver (operator) or co-driver (assistant), for the entire shift as much as possible.
- Avoid sharing material and equipment (tablets, pencils, communication devices such as microphones, megaphones, etc.).
- Clean the dashboard, steering wheel, levers, stick shift and truck door handles with alcohol-soaked wipes or a hydro-alcoholic solution regularly during the shift, especially before eating (if inside the vehicle) and where operators and assistants must alternate.

**c) Outdoor workers:**

*Working outdoors does not generally represent a high risk of transmission in the absence of physical contact.* However, if a 2-metre distance is not possible or if physical barriers are not available:

- Prevent gatherings.
- Favour small teams of the same workers to avoid multiplying interactions.
- Maintain the same position during tasks as much as possible.
- Avoid sharing tools and equipment.
- Clean tools and equipment on every shift with the usual cleaning products.
- If tasks absolutely require that more than three to five workers work within two metres of each other for a period of at least 15 min without physical barriers:
  - It is recommended that they wear a procedural mask and protective eyewear in addition to the gloves usually worn. Wearing a visor that covers the face including the chin could be an alternative to the procedure mask and protective eyewear.
    - This measure is recommended only if wearing protective eyewear or visors does not pose a risk to worker safety (e.g. light diffraction problem).

Before leaving the working area:

- (1) Safely remove gloves, protective eyewear and procedural (surgical) mask and dispose of them in the trash or in dedicated resealable containers or bags, then discard them.
- (2) Disinfect reusable equipment (e.g. eye protection or visor if reusable) with a product suitable for the equipment.
- (3) Wash your hands or use a hydro-alcoholic solution after removing the equipment.

**d) Handling and exchanging paper documents:**

Wherever possible, minimize the handling and exchange of paper documents (e.g. construction plans and specifications, purchase orders for receipt of materials). When paper documents are required:

- Place the documents on a clean surface to read and annotate them, while respecting a 2-metre distance between individuals.

- Do not share a pen with others; everyone must use their own.
  - Provide extra pens that can be left with individuals who must sign documents and did not bring their own pen.
  - When collecting documents, place them in an envelope.
- 7) Frequency of disinfection of **toilets (comfort station and chemical toilets)**: In the present context, we recommend disinfecting at least twice per shift, i.e.: once in the middle of the shift and once at the end of the shift.
- Adding sanitary facilities beyond the number required by regulations can help reduce contact between workers.
- 8) Frequency of **lunch room cleaning**: before breaks and before lunch time to prevent contamination from other uses of the trailer or dining area, and at the end of the shift.
- 9) Clean **frequently-touched surfaces** (refrigerators, microwaves, tables, counters, door handles, telephones, computer accessories, pencils, etc.) with the usual cleaning and disinfecting products on each shift, or whenever a new user takes over the workspace.
- a) For tools and work equipment:**
- At the end of each shift, clean and disinfect shared tools and work equipment.
- b) For company vehicles and heavy machinery**, clean with the usual products at least once between shifts.
- Pay particular attention to the steering wheel, dashboard, levers, inner and outer door handles, interior mirror, and any other surfaces regularly touched while driving the vehicle.
- 10) The usual practice of wearing work gloves should be maintained.
- Remove gloves before entering the vehicle cabin (interior) and before eating, placing them in a resealable bag or container.
  - Wash hands with soap and water or a hydro-alcoholic solution each time gloves are removed.
  - Put gloves back on if necessary once outside the vehicle cabin or dining area for routine tasks.
- 11) Remove **work clothes** at the end of the shift. Proceed with cleaning according to usual procedures, and ensure that they are properly dried.
- 12) Have a pandemics contingency plan adapted to the specific context of your workplace and see to its implementation (<https://publications.msss.gouv.qc.ca/msss/en/document-000969/>)

## SAT-COVID-19 Working Group

### Institut national de santé publique du Québec

**Note:** The above recommendations are based on information available at the time of their drafting. Given that the situation and knowledge of the SARS-CoV-2 virus (Covid-19) are evolving rapidly, the recommendations in this document are subject to change.

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