

# Interim Recommendations for Garden Centres and Swimming Pools, Nurseries and Landscaping Companies - Gradual Resumption of Activities Phase

April 13, 2020

## COVID-19 preventive measures in the workplace

### Preamble

Any resumption of non-essential services must be carried out in such a way that the transmission of COVID-19 is controlled. In fact, it is critical to avoid an important increase in the number of people infected, hospitalized or in intensive care, or in deaths.

**Several conditions must be met** to ensure that COVID-19 is controlled in Quebec. Failure to comply with these conditions could lead to a significant increase in the number of cases and, as a result, to the possibility of reviewing the strategy for reopening workplaces (number, types of workplaces, physical distancing and protective measures required) in order to restore balance and ensure the sustainability of the healthcare system. These conditions are set out here (in French only): [Conditions necessary to maintain essential services and gradually open up other workplaces](#).

The preventive measures recommended by the government for the general population and the basic recommendations for all workplaces also apply to the construction sector, unless more stringent measures are specified.

- <https://www.inspq.qc.ca/publications/2911-mesures-milieu-travail-covid19> (in French only)

Special attention must be given to pregnant workers and workers with certain health conditions. Please refer to the following recommendations:

- <https://www.inspq.qc.ca/publications/2914-protection-travailleurs-immonudeprimes-covid19> (in French only)
- [https://www.inspq.qc.ca/sites/default/files/publications/2967\\_protection\\_travailleurs\\_sante\\_maladies\\_chroniques.pdf](https://www.inspq.qc.ca/sites/default/files/publications/2967_protection_travailleurs_sante_maladies_chroniques.pdf) (in French only)
- <https://www.inspq.qc.ca/sites/default/files/covid/2912-pregnant-nursing-workers-community-transmission-covid19.pdf>

**In the interest of protecting the health of employees and other persons in the workplace, employers and workers are asked to:**

- 1) Promote, through alternative work arrangements and schedules, compliance with the directives applicable to employees in mandatory isolation (teleworking, if applicable) and to those subject to other constraints (flexible work schedules).
- 2) Advise employees not to come to work if they have symptoms suggestive of COVID-19: fever, cough, difficulty breathing, loss of smell or taste, or other associated symptoms according to the following website: <https://www.quebec.ca/en/health/health-issues/a-z/2019-coronavirus/answers-questions-coronavirus-covid19/#c46790>

- Establish a monitoring system to detect and exclude from the workplace symptomatic workers before the shift begins;
  - If a worker starts experiencing symptoms in the workplace, have a procedure in place for isolating them in a room or have them wear a procedure (or surgical) mask or, if a mask is unavailable, a face covering. Call 1-877-644-4545;
  - Ensure compliance with public health recommendations for a safe return to work at the end of isolation.
- 3) Limit the **number of workers** to the minimum necessary for performing the required tasks (e.g. the same people will be able to fill, pot and transport the material to the growing areas).
- 4) Opt for consistent work teams:
- Favour stable work teams (same teams of workers per work shifts) to avoid the multiplication of interactions.
- 5) Train and inform all employees regarding the preventive measures to be put in place and that must be followed at all times in the workplace.
- 6) Promote proper **hand hygiene** by providing employees with all necessary supplies (running water, soap, alcohol-based solutions/hand sanitizer, touchless trash cans, disposable tissues, hand towels or paper towels, etc.):
- Avoid touching the face with your hands and wash hands often, especially after handling goods, items or the payment terminal;
  - 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 accessible;
  - Put up posters showing the handwashing technique:  
<https://publications.msss.gouv.qc.ca/msss/en/document-000438/>  
<https://publications.msss.gouv.qc.ca/msss/en/document-000441/>
- 7) Promote **respiratory etiquette** (coughing into the folded elbow, or into a tissue that is discarded immediately after use, then washing hands as soon as possible):
- Put up posters showing respiratory etiquette:  
<https://publications.msss.gouv.qc.ca/msss/en/document-000451/>
- 8) Promote measures of **physical distancing of two metres** between all individuals (customers or workers) **inside or outside the store**:
- Avoid all physical contact (e.g. handshakes and hugs);
  - Maintain a distance of two metres between individuals. Passing a person without contact is not a risk (e.g. in an aisle or on a staircase);
  - Avoid gatherings of people (e.g. meetings, during breaks);
  - Limit as much as possible the number of customers in the establishment at the same time and in the line-up outside;
  - Install physical markers on the floor or walls (lines, stickers, cones, wooden structures, etc.) to indicate the two-metre distance to be maintained between customers in the line-ups, at the checkouts and at the entrance;
  - Install signs or posters that remind customers of the physical distancing measures to be observed (at the entrance and in the line-up);

- Indicate on room doors (e.g. dining room) the maximum number of people that can be in the room at the same time;
- If necessary, assign a person to ensure that the process for customers waiting outside runs smoothly. This person must stand two metres away from the customers. Contact the police (911) if necessary;
- Discourage the sharing of supplies and equipment (e.g. tools, pens or pencils, communication devices, cigarettes, etc.);
- Encourage the exchange of digital rather than paper documents;
- Bring as few personal items to work as possible;
- Remove non-essential items (e.g. magazines, newspapers) from common areas.

9) Eliminate bottlenecks for staff:

- Avoid having line-ups of people in close proximity at these locations (e.g. building entrances, room entrances);
- Avoid having line-ups of people in close proximity at these locations (e.g. building entrances, room entrances, greenhouses, narrow aisles, transplanting or potting areas);
- If necessary, slightly stagger work shifts and break times.

10) Mealtimes:

- Ensure rigorous handwashing before and after meals;
- Take the necessary measures to ensure a two-metre distance between employees in the lunchroom (e.g. larger room, rotation of meal times);
- Do not share cups, glasses, plates or utensils; wash dishes with soap and hot water.

11) Breaks:

- Ensure that social distancing measures are applied during breaks (e.g. avoid gatherings);
- Avoid the sharing of items (e.g. cigarettes, pens or pencils, cell phones, coins or dollar bills);
- Remove non-essential items (e.g. magazines, newspapers, knick-knacks) from common areas.

12) For merchandise handling (receiving and shipping):

- Favour the stability of the teams that are in contact with staff coming from outside the company (e.g. delivery staff, truck drivers, etc.);
- Ideally, organize tasks so that deliverers and suppliers can drop off merchandise at the establishment's entrance to avoid the comings and goings of workers from other businesses in the establishment;
- Have them place the merchandise on a clean surface while maintaining the two-metre distance between individuals;
- Keep the merchandise-handling operations separate from the company's other work areas where possible.

13) Customer management:

- Encourage customers to shop online and to pick up their purchases outside the store or to have purchases delivered to their home;
- Install an alcohol-based hand sanitizer dispenser at the entrance and exit, and encourage people to use it (e.g. posters);
- Ideally, have an employee at the entrance to provide instructions and direct customers, while maintaining a distance of two metres from them;
- Ask customers who have a cough, fever or breathing difficulties to postpone making their purchases. Put up posters reminding customers of these directives;
- Have customers enter one by one and do not allow pets to come in;
- Disinfect the point of contact of the customer with the basket or cart (where the customer holds it) after each use with a recommended disinfectant;
- Place arrows on the ground to ensure the flow of customers in one direction. This prevents customers from crossing or bumping into each other;
- Do not allow customers to access staff washrooms;
- Ask customers to open and close the car trunk when loading the car;
- Temporarily decline pots brought by customers;
- Order pickups by customers:
  - Encourage the prepayment of orders and avoid the exchange of bills, money or cards;
  - Notify customers of the order pickup location, giving preference to pickups along the sides of the store;
  - Plan time slots for pickups;
  - Install signs reminding customers to stay in their vehicle;
  - Inform customers of the pickup procedure: drive-through service or designated parking area for loading orders;
  - Advise customers to stay in their vehicle and to open the trunk for an employee to load the order;
  - Assign an employee to give instructions and to validate the order and the customer's identity, while maintaining a two-metre distance from the customer.

14) For financial transactions:

- For customers lining up at the checkout counter, place markers on the floor to indicate the two-metre distance to be maintained from each other;
- If it is not possible to maintain a distance of two metres between the customer and checkout employee, **install a physical separation** with a transparent material that can be cleaned and disinfected frequently (e.g. a Plexiglas panel or similar partition) to protect employees and customers;
- Close every second checkout or install physical separations between workers.

### Payment methods:

- Limit hand-to-hand exchanges of dollar bills, coins, cheques, credit cards, loyalty cards, discount coupons, etc.;
- Encourage contactless payments by card, cell phone or virtual wallet, ideally on fixed terminals that do not have to be handled;
- Perform hand hygiene between each customer if there was contact with the money, card or terminal touched by the customer, using a hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol or a soapy wet cloth available at the workstation, placed in an open leak-proof container and changed regularly. Workers should have access to running water and soap;
- **It is not recommended to wear gloves at the checkouts.** Wearing gloves for extended periods of time puts the worker at risk of touching their face and contaminating themselves;
- Keep payment terminals clean. Ideally, they should be disinfected several times a day, or if visibly dirty. Ensure that the disinfectant used is compatible with the terminal, as per the supplier's recommendations.

### 15) Transmitting or signing documents:

- Where possible, minimize the exchange of hard-copy documents (e.g. sign contracts and delivery slips electronically);
- Where hard-copy documents are required:
  - Exchange documents (transmit and retrieve) by placing them on a clean surface, while maintaining the two-metre distance between individuals;
  - Do not share a pen with others; they must use their own;
  - Set out designated pens that customers can keep if they did not bring their own pen to sign documents;
  - Clean your pen with a disinfectant wipe;
  - During the retrieval of documents, place them in an envelope and transport them in a document carrier.

### 16) Travel:

- Limit travel between cities and regions as much as possible. If such travel is essential to the company's operations, avoid travel to and from health regions that allow only essential travel by workers who provide priority services:
  - List of these regions: <https://www.quebec.ca/en/health/health-issues/a-z/2019-coronavirus/answers-questions-coronavirus-covid19/>
- **Company vehicles:**
  - a. If possible, have one worker per vehicle.
  - b. In a vehicle with two or more workers sitting within two metres of one another:
    - Strictly enforce the measure of excluding from the workplace any person with fever, cough, difficulty breathing or a loss of their sense of smell in the absence of nasal congestion;
    - **Opt for consistent teams in the same vehicle** to avoid the multiplication of interactions;
    - Maintain the same position, driver or co-pilot, for the entire work shift as much as possible;
    - Avoid the sharing of supplies and equipment (e.g. tablets, pens or pencils, communication devices, cell phones, etc.);

- Avoid recirculating the air in the vehicle and roll down the windows if the weather permits;
- Clean high-touch surfaces of the vehicle with a recommended disinfectant (e.g. dashboard, steering wheel and gear shift knobs, mirror, seat belt, interior door handle, exterior door handle) using pre-moistened wipes or other cleaning product and paper towels, especially when there is a change in drivers and at the end of each shift;
- Provide workers with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. A possible alternative is a wet, soapy cloth placed in an open, watertight container and changed regularly.

17) Visite chez un client (livraison, travaux extérieurs) :

- Perform hand hygiene before and after the visit, and before and after any interaction with a customer where items are exchanged;
- Maintain a two-metre distance at all times with customers as well as with colleagues;
- Workers whose tasks **already require them to use respiratory protective equipment (RPE) against aerosols or particles** will be protected if they work less than two metres apart. The following measures must nevertheless be implemented:
  - Avoid all physical contact:
    - Add safety goggles with side shields, if not already worn. Prescription glasses do not provide adequate eye protection.
  - When the worker completes these tasks, they must remove the work gloves normally worn as well as the safety goggles (protective eyewear) and RPE safely<sup>1</sup> and place non-reusable equipment in a trash can or other designated containers or resealable bags, then dispose of them;
  - Disinfect reusable equipment (e.g. protective eyewear, reusable masks) using a product compatible with this equipment. Work gloves can be machine-washed in hot water with regular detergent;
  - Ensure that workers wash their hands or use an alcohol-based solution after removing their 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 reorganizing work to reduce the number of workers;
  - If applicable, install physical barriers (solid partitions) between workers;
  - If it is impossible to maintain a two-metre distance or install physical barriers, you should:
    - Opt for small, consistent teams to avoid the multiplication of interactions;
    - Keep the same position during tasks, as much as possible;
    - Avoid sharing tools and equipment;
    - Clean tools and equipment on each shift, with the maintenance products normally used.

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<sup>1</sup> Remove gloves, wash hands with an alcohol-based solution, remove protective eyewear, wash hands with an alcohol-based solution, remove mask holding it only by the elastics without touching the paper and, lastly, wash hands using alcohol-based solution.

- **If tasks absolutely require being within two metres** of one or more people for more than 15 minutes without physical barriers:
  - In addition to the gloves usually worn, workers should also wear a (surgical) procedure mask and protective eyewear (safety goggles or a visor). This measure is recommended only if the wearing of goggles or visors does not pose a risk to worker safety (e.g. problem of light diffraction).
- Before leaving the working area:
  - Remove the work gloves normally worn as well as the safety goggles (protective eyewear) and the procedure (surgical) mask safely and place non-reusable equipment in a trash can or other designated containers or resealable bags, and dispose of them;
  - Disinfect reusable equipment (e.g. protective eyewear or visor, if reusable) using a product recommended for this equipment. Work gloves can be machine-washed in hot water with regular detergent;
  - Ensure that workers wash their hands or use an alcohol-based solution after removing their equipment.

18) **Cleaning and disinfection** measures:

- Draw up a list of surfaces to be disinfected, assign a person in charge of the task for each shift and keep a record of the disinfections;
- Use a recommended disinfectant <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/disinfectants/covid-19/list.html> or a chlorine solution (bleach: 1 part bleach and 9 parts water);
- Disinfect **lunchrooms** after each meal and **restrooms and locker rooms** on each work shift using the disinfecting product normally used;
- Clean high-touch surfaces (e.g. tables, counters, shelves, door handles, telephones, computer accessories and cash registers, pens and pencils) regularly, using the cleaning product normally used;
- Clean **tools and equipment** before and after each shift, with the maintenance products normally used;
  - For handling activities (reception and shipping of merchandise), pay close attention to forklift truck controls and pallet truck handles.
    - In production areas, clean the hoses, valves, irrigation and sprinkler systems, heating and lighting system, spreader, etc.
- Remove work clothes at the end of each shift. Clean them following the usual procedure.

19) Have a pandemic response plan in place that is 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**  
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**Note:** The preceding recommendations are based on the latest available information at the time of writing. The current situation and our knowledge concerning the SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) virus are evolving rapidly, and the recommendations set out in this document are consequently subject to change.

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The French version is entitled *Recommandations intérimaires pour les centres de jardin et piscines, pépinières et entreprises d'aménagement paysager – Phase de reprise progressive des activités* is also available on the website of the Institut national de santé publique du Québec at: <https://www.inspq.qc.ca/publications/2979-centres-jardin-piscine-covid19>