



# Temporary Foreign Workers Exempt From Federal Quarantine

Mesures de prévention de la COVID-19 en milieu  
de travail – Recommandations intérimaires



*Pour des milieux de travail en santé*  
Réseau de santé publique  
en santé au travail

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These measures apply when community transmission is confirmed by public health authorities. Based on current knowledge, it is known that COVID-19 can be transmitted by presymptomatic, symptomatic, and asymptomatic carriers of the disease. Preventive measures are therefore recommended at all times.

The prevention measures recommended by the government for the general population and the basic [recommendations for all workplaces](#) [in French only] apply, unless more restrictive measures are specified. These recommendations are based on the [hierarchy of COVID-19 control measures](#).

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

[Pregnant and nursing workers](#)

[Immunocompromised workers](#) [in French only]

[Workers with uncontrolled or complex chronic diseases](#) [in French only]

**Note:** To improve legibility, the acronym ETFW has been used to refer to temporary foreign workers who are exempt from the federal quarantine. These workers are different from temporary foreign workers (TFWs) who are not exempt from quarantine. For more information on recommendations for TFWs, see: *Travailleurs étrangers temporaires soumis à l'isolement préventif (quarantaine)* [in French only].

The Canadian Quarantine Act provides exemptions from quarantine upon arrival in Canada for temporary foreign workers who are deemed by the Chief Public Health Officer of Canada to provide an essential service.<sup>1</sup> It is the responsibility of the host company to verify that the temporary foreign workers it employs meet the exemption criteria. Workers may only be exempt from quarantine if they have no symptoms upon arrival. Despite this exemption, companies and the ETFWs they bring in **as employees, subcontractors, or clients** must still comply with provincial health measures. Although ETFWs are exempt from federal quarantine, they must still minimize their contact with others for their safety and the safety of their coworkers.

- ▶ Since they are not placed in preventive isolation, unknowingly infected ETFWs could transmit SARS-CoV-2 to anyone they come into contact with. To prevent this, ETFWs must avoid all social contact during the first 14 days of each stay in Canada.<sup>2</sup> This means that:
  - ▶ ETFWs must have their own hotel room (with meals brought to their room) or stay in individual housing;
  - ▶ They may only leave their room or housing to carry out the work expected by the host company;
  - ▶ They may only have contact with their work supervisors, and contact must be limited to what is strictly necessary for the job with the host company.
- ▶ ETFWs generally work in specialized fields and travel alone or in small groups. The length and frequency of their trips varies.

## Before leaving the country of origin

### Plan the arrival

Each host company must:

- ▶ Make a list of ETFWs it will employ and share the list with health authorities (MSSS and Direction régionale de santé publique). The host company must also:
  - ▶ Make sure ETFWs have the necessary health insurance in case they are hospitalized;
  - ▶ Prepare the workers' accommodation (see section: Accommodation recommendations for the first 14 days of the stay) ;
  - ▶ Provide ETFWs with a means of communication and contact information for someone to call in case of problems;
  - ▶ Obtain an emergency contact number for each ETFW.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/services/foreign-workers/employer-compliance/covid-faq.html> (version consulted, date modified: 2020-09-08).

<sup>2</sup> After the first 14 days, ETFWs must follow current [government guidelines for social contact](#).

## Coordination of ETFWs

- ▶ The host company must assign a coordinator for ETFWs. The coordinator is responsible for coordinating travel, ensuring basic needs are met, ensuring ETFWs practice physical distancing and hygiene, making sure someone who can speak the ETFWs' language is available at all times, and monitoring symptoms on a daily basis. The coordinator should always keep at least two meters away from ETFWs.
- ▶ The coordinator:
  - ▶ Must be able to communicate in a language understood by the ETFWs;
  - ▶ Is responsible for making sure that all ETFWs and their supervisors at the host company are aware of the preventive measures in place to keep them, their coworkers, and the community safe from COVID-19;
  - ▶ Is responsible for ensuring that ETFWs understand the strict isolation guidelines of their accommodations and have everything they need to be able to comply with them;
  - ▶ Must ensure that all ETFWs have a means of communication so they can get in touch with their contact person at any time during their stay if they need assistance for their physical or psychological well-being;
  - ▶ Must have emergency contact numbers for all ETFWs and any relevant information regarding allergies, medical conditions, necessary purchases, etc. The coordinator must keep this information confidential.

## Arrival in Québec

### At the border: triage of symptoms

At the border: workers who have symptoms when they arrive at Canada Customs will be intercepted and taken charge of by quarantine officers.

### After entry into Canada: host company takes charge of the workers

As soon as they leave the border crossing, ETFWs are under the responsibility of the host company.

The coordinator must:

- ▶ Check all ETFWs for symptoms of COVID-19 using this [questionnaire which is available in English, French, and Spanish](#). In some cases, the coordinator may need to have another person there to read the questionnaire or translate it into another language. Monitor and document symptoms associated with COVID-19 on a daily basis.
- ▶ Get in touch with the host company and public health authorities if someone has symptoms;
- ▶ **If any ETFWs answer “yes” to a question on the screening questionnaire, they should be tested with a Rt-PCR (NAAT).**<sup>3</sup> They must also be placed in strict isolation. They must wear a good quality medical (surgical) mask.<sup>4</sup> They should not go to work or leave their isolation area while awaiting their test result;

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<sup>3</sup> Nucleic acid amplification test.

- ▶ **If ETFWs answer “no” to all questions on the screening questionnaire, they do not need a NAAT and may go to work subject to the conditions described below.**
- ▶ Inform ETFWs of the current health guidelines for preventing the transmission of COVID-19 and ensure that the health guidelines are respected, including keeping a minimum of two metres away from others. ETFWs must wear good quality<sup>4</sup> medical (surgical) masks whenever in proximity to anyone else and always when it is impossible to stay two metres apart, or a physical barrier must be installed so workers can work safely.
- ▶ Ensure the safety of ETFWs for the duration of their stay and provide an emergency communication system that ETFWs can use at any time, especially if their health deteriorates and they need to obtain immediate medical assistance.

### Instructions for transporting ETFWs to their accommodations

- ▶ If ETFWs did not come in their own vehicle, cars can be rented for each of them and reserved exclusively for their use.
- ▶ ETFWs may also take a taxi to their accommodation provided that:
  - ▶ They do not sit in the front passenger seat;
  - ▶ There is a physical barrier (partition) between the front and back seats that complies with SAAQ (Société de l'assurance automobile du Québec) [safety guidelines](#) [in French only];
  - ▶ The taxi driver follows the recommendations in the following document: <https://www.inspq.qc.ca/en/publications/2938-drivers-taxi-ride-sharing-industry-covid19>.

## Accommodation recommendations for the first 14 days of the stay<sup>5</sup>

- ▶ Strict isolation is mandatory in the accommodation.
- ▶ No outings are permitted other than to go to and from work.
- ▶ The ETFW coordinator must be clearly identified to ETFWs and must be reachable at all times should any needs or problems arise.
  - ▶ Please note that in the event of an emergency, ETFWs should be told to call 911.
- ▶ ETFWs may not have any social contact other than with the people assisting them during their stay.
- ▶ Ensure the psychological health of ETFWs by making sure that psychosocial factors are taken into account during the isolation period. ETFWs must be provided with the means to communicate with their families as well as individual entertainment activities such one-player games, radio, and television. For more ways to maintain psychological health in the workplace during the COVID-19 pandemic:
  - ▶ Refer to the [INSPQ](#) information sheet and the [IRSSST](#) notice [in French only].

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<sup>4</sup> Ideally, masks should comply with the American Society of Testing and Materials (ASTM) F2100 criteria. Type IIR EN 14683 masks can also be used.

<sup>5</sup> After this 14-day period, please refer to the accommodation recommendations for temporary foreign workers (information sheet and tool) available at: <https://www.inspq.qc.ca/en/covid-19/occupational-health>

## Accommodations

- ▶ Must be a room or individual accommodation with private restroom facilities and access to necessary services (kitchen or room service, laundry) so workers can remain completely isolated, with no contact with others except what is necessary for work and without using common areas.
- ▶ To avoid ETFWs having to leave their accommodations, the host company must provide:
  - ▶ Food or meals;
  - ▶ Soap and alcohol-based hand sanitizer;
  - ▶ Other cleaning and disinfecting products;
  - ▶ A COVID-19 kit for each person accommodated containing good quality<sup>6</sup> medical (surgical) masks, eye protection (goggles or face shield), overclothes (e.g., smock), disposable gloves, alcohol-based hand sanitizer, and a first aid kit that meets regulatory requirements.

## Upkeep of accommodations (hotel, housing, etc.)

- ▶ For information on managing and maintaining accommodations, see:

[www.inspq.qc.ca/publications/2963-mesures-hotels-accueillent-personnes-isolement-covid19](http://www.inspq.qc.ca/publications/2963-mesures-hotels-accueillent-personnes-isolement-covid19) [in French only].

## Outings

### Outings

- ▶ ETFWs may go outside by themselves to get some fresh air, but must remain on the grounds of the accommodation facility.
  - ▶ Practice hand hygiene before and after going out and practice respiratory etiquette at all times;
  - ▶ Follow health regulations and stay a minimum of two metres away from others at all times;
  - ▶ No other outings are permitting during the first 14 days of each stay, except to go to work;
  - ▶ Workers must wear a good quality<sup>6</sup> medical (surgical) mask when they leave their room or housing. Masks may be removed outside as long as workers stay at least two meters away from others.

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<sup>6</sup> Ideally, masks should comply with the American Society of Testing and Materials (ASTM) F2100 criteria. Type IIR EN 14683 masks can also be used.

## Travel to job sites

- ▶ The same instructions apply to travel to job sites as for travel from the airport to accommodations.

## Guidelines for job sites

### General guidelines for the first 14 days (in addition to the recommendations for specific sectors)

- ▶ Workers must wear a good quality<sup>7</sup> medical (surgical) mask at all times.
- ▶ Medical masks should be changed at least every four hours or sooner if they get wet or become damaged.
  - ▶ Exceptions include when wearing other protective equipment (PPE) necessary to perform a task (e.g., a welding mask for welding or respirator necessary to protect against other hazards inherent in the job). In these cases, medical masks should be taken off and PPE donned.
- ▶ Where possible during the first 14 days:
  - ▶ Set a different work schedule for ETFWs so they do not cross paths with other workers;
  - ▶ Have ETFWs use low-traffic entrances during the least busy periods;
  - ▶ Take different break and meal times from other employees;
  - ▶ Provide a workspace that is isolated from other workers;
  - ▶ Install alcohol-based hand sanitizer dispensers at ETFW workstations;
  - ▶ ETFWs should eat their meals at their workstations or in a room reserved for them and should stay out of the cafeteria;
  - ▶ If the company is employing multiple ETFWs at the same time, they must each respect the above rules and avoid gathering;
  - ▶ Whenever possible, ETFWs should always use the same restroom facilities.
- ▶ ETFWs must sign a log each time they enter the workplace.

### Other recommendations:

- ▶ Follow the recommendations for specific sectors that apply to all workers. See the fact sheets for specific sectors at: <https://www.inspq.gc.ca/en/covid-19/occupational-health>.

## Return to the country of origin at the end of the work period

It is the responsibility of ETFWs to comply with the entry requirements of their countries of origin.

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<sup>7</sup> Ideally, masks should comply with the American Society of Testing and Materials (ASTM) F2100 criteria. Type IIR EN 14683 masks can also be used.

**Note:** The above recommendations are based on the information available at the time of writing. Given that the situation and knowledge of the SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) virus are evolving rapidly, they are subject to change.

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### GRAPHIC DESIGN

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The French version is entitled *Les travailleurs étrangers temporaires exemptés de la quarantaine fédérale* is also available on the website of the Institut national de santé publique du Québec at: [www.inspq.qc.ca/publications/3071-travailleurs-etranagers-temporaires-quarantaine-covid19](http://www.inspq.qc.ca/publications/3071-travailleurs-etranagers-temporaires-quarantaine-covid19)

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