
To: Signatory Contractors
From: FCA International
Subject: **COVID-19: Health and Safety from the Employer's Perspective**
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With the number of positive cases of COVID-19 increasing in Canada and worldwide, employers may be faced with challenges such as how to protect the health and safety of their workers from the spread of infection.

What can you expect as a contractor from your clients?

Clients may be requesting a Risk Assessment and a Policy which outlines the Employer's procedures for preventing the spread of infections and handling ill workers. There are even clients who may request that your workers sign a waiver before entering a facility or job site. Clients may want to confirm if workers have been in close contact with an infected person, traveled outside of Canada and if they show signs or symptoms of infection. Having a documented procedure on how an Employer handles these cases can therefore be highly valuable.

What can you do to protect your employees from the spread of infection?

With the current information available on COVID-19, here are the **top 5** controls that employers can put in place to protect their employees:

- Re-schedule any non-essential work or work from home when possible
- Ensure there are adequate hand washing facilities available to workers, which can include soap and warm water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Encourage workers who are sick to stay home. If employees have traveled out of country—request they work from home or stay home to self-isolate for a 14-day period
- Ensure a regular cleaning regime is in place so that commonly touched surfaces are cleaned and disinfected
- Ensure that physical and social distancing is in place, allowing a minimum of 6 feet of clearance between each employee and members of the public

Building a risk assessment

Performing a risk assessment is key to recognizing hazards and ensuring adequate controls are in place to help protect your workers from the spread of infection. Here are some questions you should ask yourself to identify if your workers may be at **higher risk** of becoming infected:

- Are jobs taking place in high risk environments such as airports, border crossings, healthcare facilities, laboratories or waste management facilities?
- Are workers required to travel for business?
- How many people are working at projects, offices and sites at a given time?

Identify any **control measures** that you may already have in place or that you may need to develop such as:

- Hand hygiene safe practices and washing facilities available

- Procedures in place to isolate workers who are sick, who have traveled outside of Canada or who have been in close contact with someone infected
- Training program which could include how to properly wash your hands, good hygiene practices and how to recognize signs and symptoms of the virus
- Posters to demonstrate how employees should properly wash their hands and techniques for sneezing and coughing
- Personal Protective Equipment available to your workers
- Re-scheduling work that is taking place in high risk environments
- Toolbox talks or safety meetings

A procedure detailing how an Employer handles ill workers can be beneficial to not only protect the health and safety of other workers but also to ensure a fair and respectful work environment. Here are a few things to consider when developing a **Policy and Procedure**:

- Resources available to your workers if they are sick
- Infection prevention control measures that are currently in place to protect your workers
- Isolation period
- Modified work available to workers
- Procedure to be followed if a worker reports signs or symptoms or has tested positive for COVID-19
- Communication and reporting procedures to be followed
- Privacy and confidentiality
- Employer and Employee responsibilities

Discrimination in the workplace

The spread of COVID-19 has also led to discrimination and stigma towards certain groups of people. Here are some tips on what you can do to avoid discrimination in the workplace:

- Ensure that your workplace violence and harassment Policy includes discrimination in the workplace
- Keep medical information provided by a worker private and confidential
- Re-communicate the company's workplace violence, harassment and discrimination Policy.

It is important to note that the COVID-19 outbreak is changing rapidly, and Employer's should be monitoring the situation and adapt their communicable disease program as required.

Questions, comments or feedback? Please direct to FCA International at (866) 322-3477 or by email at fca@finishingcontractors.org.