

March 17, 2020

Construction Management of COVID-19: Update #3

As you may know, the Premier today enacted a Declaration of Emergency to protect the public. This declaration gives the government a unique set of powers for a short period to protect the health and safety of the public. The attached release includes a list of private establishments that will be temporarily closed. He specifically noted that construction and manufacturing operations are not included in this declaration and should remain open. The message was that Ontario requires that, where possible, the economy, particularly the supply chain, should continue to operate.

Today, OGCA received feedback from our Board members concerning their ability to continue operations under the current restrictions and the need to provide for the health and safety of their employees. Overwhelmingly, they believe they can and should continue to operate with the understanding the situation continues to change, and they must continue to provide for the health of their workers. We are very impressed with their ability to adapt to this challenging situation.

We recognize that it is likely there will be construction employees who will test positive for the virus. We need a policy that not only protects those who are infected but also protects workers who come in contact with those infected with the virus. We are working on such a policy with the Chief Prevention Officer and will provide our recommendations to you as soon as they are available.

We are also engaging government on the issue of contractual performance for companies which may need to close down a site to protect their workers who may need medical care or to enter into self-isolation. The *force majeure* provisions of most contracts are extremely limiting and do not include for a pandemic or even the Premier declaring an emergency. We have drafted a policy proposal for force majeure provisions to be applied during a Declaration of Emergency to protect public health. It will soon be presented to government.

We will continue to update you on these issues as they develop.

Protecting workers during the COVID-19

Yesterday the Premier announced new measures to help workplaces and workers deal with the pandemic.

Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development Monte McNaughton introduced legislation to “protect workers during the COVID-19 Situation”.

If passed, it will provide job protection for employees unable to work for the following reasons:

- The employee is under medical investigation, supervision or treatment for the virus.
- The employee is acting in accordance with an order under the Health Protection and Promotion Act.
- The employee is in isolation or quarantine.
- The employee is acting in accordance with public health information or direction.
- The employer directs the employee not to work.
- The employee needs to provide care to a person for a reason related to the virus such as a school or day-care closure.

It is expected the legislation will pass very quickly and will be retroactive to January 25. Please see the attached announcement for more details.

Be aware that government is reevaluating the situation daily and all options are open including closing down all non-essential work places and services. At this time we are not expecting this action but we recommend you develop procedures to secure your work sites, develop a business interruption plan and communicate to workers if required.

One of your most important responsibilities is to fully communicate with your employees. Your workforce will be concerned about their health, and as an employer, it is up to you to address this by putting policies and procedures in place and communicating them to your workers.

Some job sites have been closed down and many workers don't know if they should be showing up for work. Even if your operations continue, you must continue to update your employees.

Key Messages for Employees:

We are constantly monitoring the updates posted by the Government of Canada and the Province of Ontario. At this time, authorities recognize that the number of infections will continue to grow for some time.

Visit www.Ontario.ca/coronavirus for updates and recommendations for managing the virus. It includes a self-assessment tool that you can provide to your employees if they are concerned they may have contracted the virus.

We encourage you to regularly update your employees about the situation and adjust your health and safety program to provide appropriate protection.

Consider the following actions:

- Review your Fit for Duty Policy. Make sure your policy is clear that if employees are not well or experiencing any symptoms, they must stay at home and not risk other employees.
- Develop a policy in the event that an employee tests positive. Will you isolate their crew or others? Use the authority's proposed best practices to develop this. Communicate this policy to all employees to assure them that you are acting to protect their health.
- Provide all employees with advice on protecting themselves. Better protection from the virus is the best way to reduce the likelihood of infection and will keep employees safe.
- Toolbox talks should focus on protection through good hygiene. Distribute and display the attached infographic by the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety, with ten tips for employees.
- Assure your staff that you and the government recommend they maintain their day to day activities for both work and home. Be smart about close contacts and good hygiene and get medical attention at the first sign of illness.

This is OGCA's COVID-19 update #3. We will continue to provide you with updates as the situation evolves.

Premier Ford Announces Job Protection for Workers during the COVID-19 Situation

[Ontario to Protect Workers who Take Leaves from Work](#)

March 16, 2020 11:15 A.M.

TORONTO — Ontario is acting immediately to protect workers during the COVID-19 crisis. Today, Premier Doug Ford and Monte McNaughton, Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development, announced that the government intends to introduce legislation that, if passed, would immediately provide job-protected leave to employees in isolation or quarantine due to COVID-19, or those who need to be away from work to care for children because of school or day care closures.

"While everyone's concerns about their health and safety is top of mind, the last thing we need is anyone worrying about job security as the COVID-19 situation evolves," said Premier Ford. "That's why I directed the Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development to draft legislation that will protect workers and their families during this difficult period."

"Mothers and fathers who need to care for children or dependants shouldn't have to worry about losing their job," said Monte McNaughton, Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development. "The same goes for people who receive medical or public health advice and are required to take precautions as a result. They shouldn't have to worry about losing their job. In this time of uncertainty, we need to support employees who must isolate or quarantine themselves, or who need to care for a loved one."

The proposed legislation would, if passed, provide job protection for employees unable to work for the following reasons:

- The employee is under medical investigation, supervision or treatment for COVID-19.
- The employee is acting in accordance with an order under the Health Protection and Promotion Act.
- The employee is in isolation or quarantine.
- The employee is acting in accordance with public health information or direction.
- The employer directs the employee not to work.
- The employee needs to provide care to a person for a reason related to COVID-19 such as a school or day-care closure.

The proposed legislation would also make it clear that an employee will not be required to provide a medical note if they take the leave. The measures would be retroactive to January 25, 2020, the date that the first presumptive COVID-19 case was confirmed in Ontario.

Many workers will be eligible for Employment Insurance sickness benefits. As well, we are reviewing current access and eligibility to emergency assistance which is available through the Ontario Works (OW) program to support individuals who are impacted by the coronavirus and who are not able to meet their basic living expenses.

"The health and well-being of Ontarians continues to be our government's number one priority," said Christine Elliott, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health. "We are actively working with our partners at all levels in the health care system and implementing enhanced and comprehensive measures to prevent the spread of this virus and protect the health of all Ontarians."

"These job protections could also contribute significantly to limiting the spread of COVID-19," said Rod Phillips, Minister of Finance. "We are giving everyone the tools they need to put their health and the health of others first, without fear of losing their jobs."

Visit Ontario's [website](#) to learn more about how the province continues to protect Ontarians from COVID-19.

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[Available Online](#)
[Disponible en Français](#)

Prevent the Spread

5 Healthy Hygiene Habits

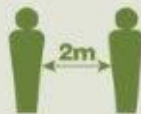
to protect against viruses



- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, or cough into your sleeve.



- Throw away used tissues immediately.
- Wash your hands, especially after using tissues.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs on your hands can transfer into your body.



- Stay home or keep your distance when you are ill or not feeling well. Stay at least 2 metres away to prevent infecting people around you.

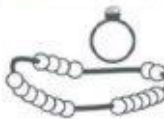


Be ready for the flu and other infectious diseases in the workplace.



How to wash your hands

1 Remove any rings or other jewellery.



2 Wet and lather your hands and wrists with soap. When using bar soap, set it on a rack to dry after use.



3 Scrub for 15-20 seconds: palm to palm, between and around fingers, back of each hand, fingertips and under nails.



4 Rinse thoroughly under running water.



5 Dry hands with a single use towel or air dryer.



6 Protect your hands from touching dirty surfaces while in the washroom, and as you leave.



information and updates



Public Health Agency of Canada



Provincial and territorial governments



Local health authorities



Local Media

10 Tips for Employers



- Provide hand washing facilities and extra sanitizing gels in key places.
- Make sure work surfaces are kept clean including door knobs and hand railings as well as shared telephones, keyboards, and boardroom tables.



- Increase the distance between workstations.
- Make sure ventilation systems are working properly.

- Allow working from home where possible.
- Develop corporate policies that let workers know what to expect in terms of sick leave and leave to care for families. Make sure workers know that they can – and should – stay home if they are not feeling well.



- Encourage workers to get a seasonal flu shot.
- Create a business continuity plan that details how you will continue to function during or after a flu and infectious disease outbreak.
- Cross train workers so that others can cover job duties if necessary.

www.ccohs.ca/outbreaks/



Staying home when sick and handwashing are the most effective ways to help slow the spread of a virus.

CCOHS.ca
Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety