

OHS/ES eNews

During the current COVID-19 pandemic, you will receive special editions of eNews with the latest developments in Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) and Employment Standards (ES).

COVID-19: a workplace health and safety concern

COVID-19 is a respiratory virus that can be spread either directly or indirectly.

- Direct infection can happen if:
 - Someone coughs or sneezes on you.
 - You shake hands with someone who is sick and then touch your eyes, nose or mouth.
- Indirect spread can happen from contaminated surfaces, tissues, cloth or paper.

The OHS Resource Portal has a [COVID-19 coronavirus](#) section with bulletins related to minimizing risk from respiratory viruses.

Mental health at work

Canadian Mental Health Association: Alberta

- [COVID-19 outbreak: Protecting your mental health](#)

Government of Canada

- [COVID-19 and mental health @ work](#)

COVID-19 information

Visit [Guidance for workplaces](#), [Supports for businesses](#), [Open to public businesses](#) and [Restrictions on businesses](#) for up-to-date information.

- [COVID-19 Chief Medical Officer health care PPE guidelines](#)
- [Guidance for managers and operators of industrial work camps](#) (UPDATED)
- [Hazard assessment and control](#)
- [Working from home during a pandemic](#)

Alberta Health Services

- [Frequently asked questions](#)
- [Novel coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [Mental Health Help Line](#)

Contact OHS

1-866-415-8690 (toll-free)
780-415 -8690 (Edmonton)
TTY: 1-800-232-7215
TTY: 780-427-9999 (Edmonton)
[Report a serious incident](#)
[Online incident reporting service](#)

Contact ES

1-877-427-3731 (toll-free)
780-427-3731 (Edmonton)
[Ask an Employment Standards question](#)

When do I report a COVID-19 incident to Alberta OHS?

All serious incidents and potentially serious incidents, including those related to COVID-19, must be reported to OHS. These include the following:

- Fatalities and hospitalizations (admitted to hospital) related to incidents where COVID-19 was acquired as a result of the worker's engagement in a work activity.
- Incidents where a worker at the work site is "exposed" to confirmed or suspected cases of COVID-19 (potentially serious incidents).
- A COVID-19 "exposure" would include the following:
 - Incidents where the work site is not following the rules, procedures, and guidance related to COVID-19 protection and a worker is exposed to a confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19; or
 - Incidents where the COVID-19 controls in place have failed and a worker is exposed to a confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19.

More information can be found in the [Reporting and investigating injuries and incidents bulletin](#).

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COVID-19 publications by industry

Industry associations and other Canadian jurisdictions have published best practices that may be useful when protecting workers and others at the workplace from COVID-19. Learn more [here](#).

Alberta Construction Association

- [Pandemic planning for the construction industry](#)

Alberta Hotel and Lodging Association

- [COVID-19 and your hotel](#)
- [Sample property closure checklist.docx](#)

Alberta Liquor Store Association

- [Common COVID-19 safety measures you can implement in-store](#)

Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety

- [COVID tips for retail](#)
- [COVID-19 tip sheets for high-risk and essential occupations and industries](#)

Employment Standards

Employers must notify their employees of the time that work starts and ends.

- Employers can notify employees by posting notices where they can be seen by employees, or by other reasonable notification methods.
- Employers are typically required to provide at least 24 hours' written notice prior to a change in shifts.
- Due to COVID-19, temporary rules allow employers to provide written notice of change in shift schedules as soon as is possible.
- At least eight hours of rest is required between shifts.

Learn more [here](#).

Quick links

- [COVID-19 info for Albertans](#)
- [Alberta OHS legislation](#)
- [Employment Standards](#)
- [Partnerships in Injury Reduction](#)
- [Alberta Queen's Printer](#)

Certificate of Recognition (COR)

To allow auditors to conduct COR documentation-only audits remotely, the auditor and employer must agree on a process for the safe transfer of health and safety records. Electronic file transfer via e-mail or drop box is preferred to maintain social distancing measures. However, if electronic file transfer is not feasible, the employer and auditor need to make their own arrangements for safe-pick-up and return of paper records and/or USB drives. For more information, contact your [certifying partner](#).

Workers' Compensation Board - Alberta (WCB)

Only report COVID-19 cases to WCB when a worker, who is at greater risk of contracting the virus while at work, loses time from work after contracting the virus. There is no need to report cases where a worker is exposed to the virus but does *not* develop symptoms. For more detailed information about reporting COVID-19 to WCB, see their [worker](#) and [employer](#) fact sheets.

Employers can receive timely updates regarding WCB business information through WCB's digital newsletter, *Worksight* magazine. To receive a monthly copy by email, please [subscribe to Worksight](#). View the [latest edition](#), which includes an update on premium relief for employers and ongoing support being provided to injured workers.

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If in doubt with respect to any information contained within this material, or for confirmation of legal requirements, please refer to the current edition of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, *Occupational Health and Safety Regulation* and *Occupational Health and Safety Code*, *Public Health Act* Order, or other applicable legislation. Further, if there is any inconsistency or conflict between any of the information contained in this material and the applicable legislative/*Public Health Act* Order requirement, the legislative/*Public Health Act* Order requirement shall prevail.

This material is current to May 15, 2020. The information, law, requirements, and policies are constantly changing during this unprecedented global pandemic. It is important that you keep yourself informed of the current requirements.

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