

Frequently Asked Questions – COVID-19

Due to the volatility of the COVID-19 situation and constantly evolving evidence, the responses provided will be updated as new information becomes available. Additional references are included in the answers. The reader is advised to give greater weighting to local or provincial guidance and follow the highest standard should there be difference.

Business closures, essential businesses, and workers

1. How do I know if I need to close my business?

On March 19, 2020 a state of emergency was invoked in New Brunswick that mandated certain workplaces to close. The declaration and guidance documents can be accessed on GNB's website: [COVID-19 Guidance for Businesses](#).

Employers who have questions about their responsibilities to comply during the state of emergency should email The Department of Public Safety at helpaide@gnb.ca.

(information as of April 17, 2020)

2. Is my workplace considered essential?

WorkSafeNB does not determine which workplaces are deemed essential and which ones are not. To find out if your workplace is deemed essential, please consult the Government of New Brunswick's website.

(information as of April 17, 2020)

3. Am I considered an essential worker?

WorkSafeNB does not determine who is an essential worker and who is not. Your manager or employer will make that determination.

(information as of April 17, 2020)

Right to refuse

1. If a worker feels that a site is unsafe due to COVID-19 concerns, do they have a right to refuse?

Employees in New Brunswick have the right to refuse work if they believe it presents an unsafe situation. When this happens, employers need to consider the work refusal on a case-by-case basis, depending on the situation. The same principles apply for managing workplace health and safety and work refusals during a pandemic as they do during normal conditions.

Our website has information on [the process to file a right to refuse unsafe work](#) and additional resources.

(information as of April 17, 2020)

2. Do I have to be at my workplace to refuse work I believe is unsafe?

Under ordinary circumstances an employee is required to be at their workplace to view the work before exercising their right to refuse dangerous work. Given the unique circumstances during the COVID-19 pandemic, WorkSafeNB will accept work refusals where the employee has not gone to the worksite. In those cases, the employer must agree to this process. If all parties agree to this new process then the matter will be addressed through phone calls, emails or other remote means.

Note: If your employer requires you to be at the workplace to refuse work you believe to be unsafe and you do not attend, your protection from discriminatory action provided to you during the work refusal process could be affected and your employer could take job action.

Additional information on [the right to refuse unsafe work process](#) is available on our website.

(information as of April 17, 2020)

Due to the volatility of the COVID-19 situation and constantly evolving evidence, the responses provided will be updated as new information becomes available. Last updated on May 1, 2020.

3. My employer is asking me to travel to an area that is a high risk for COVID-19 can refuse?

Both the federal and provincial government have imposed travel bans with some exceptions. You and your employer need to check if these apply to your situation. If you believe your health and safety is endangered when asked to travel outside of New Brunswick during the COVID-19 pandemic you can refuse to do so by first advising your supervisor of your concerns. You should also explore with your employer alternative solutions to avoid travel while still carrying out the work. If the matter is not resolved to your satisfaction, you can raise the matter with your workplace JHSC, if one is established. If your organization does not have a JHSC or you are not satisfied with their response, please contact a WorkSafeNB health and safety officer at 1 800 999-2775 who will follow-up with your concerns.

[More information on the right to refuse dangerous work is available on our website.](#)

(information as of April 17, 2020)

Joint Health and Safety Committee

1. To reduce the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace, can our joint health and safety committee (JHSC) stop holding its monthly meetings?

If possible, the JHSC should continue holding meetings either by phone or web conferencing instead. If meeting in person is necessary, the JHSC can reduce the number of people attending the meeting to the strict minimum that is required for quorum, while ensuring representation from both the employer and employees. If your JHSC is unable to conduct meetings by phone or through web conferencing, it would be important to meet in a large enough room where you can keep two metres between people and ensure that the room is well ventilated.

If these suggestions are not feasible during the pandemic situation, you will need to take reasonable measures to keep the JHSC worker reps or at least the worker co-chair informed of the health and safety issues at your workplace. Please note, COVID-19 is a serious health and safety issue and thus, the JHSC has an important role to play to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace. It's also important to

Due to the volatility of the COVID-19 situation and constantly evolving evidence, the responses provided will be updated as new information becomes available. Last updated on May 1, 2020.

note your JHSC must be consulted at Step 2 of the work refusal process if an employee is exercising their right to refuse. Your JHSC must consider how it will be able to perform this important function during the pandemic situation.

(information as of April 17, 2020)

2. Is my employer required to have a plan to deal with COVID-19? If so, is the employer required to consult with the Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC)?

First, your employer needs to determine if they can continue to legally operate under the state of emergency imposed by the Province. If yes, the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* requires your employer to take every reasonable precaution to ensure the health and safety of their employees. Since COVID-19 is a serious health and safety issue, employers must put measures in place to protect their employees.

Additionally, under the state of emergency the employer must identify critical functions and reduce staffing to minimal levels. They must also take every reasonable step to prevent persons with symptoms of COVID-19 or having travelled out of province in the previous 14 days from entering the workplace.

Though it is advisable that the employer consult with the JHSC to put a plan into place to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace, the employer may not always be able to promptly execute needed preventive measures.

(information as of April 17, 2020)

Contaminated workplace

1. What should an employer do if they find out that a worker has been exposed to someone infected with COVID-19?

The answer to this question depends on if the worker has simply been exposed or has had [close contact](#). Public Health is advising anyone who has been exposed to someone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19 to self-monitor themselves for 14 days. If the worker has had close contact, then they must self-isolate. In either case, if the worker subsequently develops symptoms that are consistent with COVID-19, they

Due to the volatility of the COVID-19 situation and constantly evolving evidence, the responses provided will be updated as new information becomes available. Last updated on May 1, 2020.

should isolate and use the [Government of New Brunswick's assessment tool](#) to assess their status and next steps.

Curious about the difference between self-solation and isolation (quarantine)? Visit Health Canada's webpage, [Know the difference : Self-monitoring, self-isolation, and isolation for COVID-19](#) on website for more information.

(information as of April 17, 2020)

2. What should an employer do when an employee tests positive for COVID-19 and may have been in the workplace interacting with co-workers before the diagnosis was confirmed?

The employee must immediately isolate themselves and follow guidance from the appropriate regional public health officials. Public Health will determine if there is a need to inform the employer of the test results. Public Health will advise anyone who has been exposed to someone diagnosed with COVID-19 and identify any control measures that are required to be put in place.

For the management of cases and contacts, Regional Public Health will provide the direction for follow up and advise if there is a need for employer action.

Regional public health will lead the process of tracing the identity of other persons that may have been exposed. Public Health may require the employer's assistance in the process. As the employer, you are required to:

- Cooperate with Health officials and adhere to the advice provided. Additional information on the tracing process used is below.
- Report the potential exposure to WorkSafeNB by email (compliance.conformite@ws-ts.nb.ca) or calling 1 800 999-9775.
- With the guidance of Public Health, communicate with your staff and other workplace parties about measures they must take following the potential exposure. Ensure this process respects individual privacy. Public Health will also identify if any communication is needed external to your workplace.

Due to the volatility of the COVID-19 situation and constantly evolving evidence, the responses provided will be updated as new information becomes available. Last updated on May 1, 2020.

- Follow Public Health’s advice regarding closing or restricting access to the workplace to clean surfaces and equipment which the confirmed case was in contact with by following the guidelines developed by Health Canada for [Hard-surface disinfectants for use against coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#).
- If applicable, follow Public Health’s advice before re-occupying the workplace to comply with WorkSafeNB requirements.
- Introduce a screening process for employees re-entering the workplace if such a process does not already exist. WorkSafeNB has developed information on [screening process and a screening tool](#).
- Re-evaluate the workplace including the preventive measures to determine if changes are required. You can consult the following WorkSafeNB for [guidance](#).
- If necessary, re-visit the business continuity plan.

Learn more:

[Difference between quarantine \(self-isolate\) and isolate](#), Government of Canada

[Self-monitor, self-isolate and isolate](#), Government of New Brunswick

New Brunswick Department of Health – Public Health Contact Tracing Information

- All positive COVID-19 cases are reported to the appropriate regional public health office.
- Public Health staff contacts the individual who tested positive the same day they receive the results to inform them of their test result, provide instruction, and determine who they have been in close contact with.
- Public Health conducts a risk assessment based on a detailed interview with the individual.
- Public Health staff contacts all close contacts (and the workplace if appropriate) to identify any control measures that are required to be put in place.
- If one of these close contacts tests positive, then the contact tracing process begins for that individual.

As is the case for all contact tracing of cases, Public Health nurses and teams work daily with new cases to trace the contacts and have them self isolate. If there is workplace exposure or exposure to the public, Public Health determines what communications are needed within workplaces or with the public or media outlets.

Due to the volatility of the COVID-19 situation and constantly evolving evidence, the responses provided will be updated as new information becomes available. Last updated on May 1, 2020.

Every individual is entitled to privacy when it comes to Personal Health Information and confidentiality is respected and adhered to during all aspects of the Public Health investigation. Note that employers cannot require employees to submit their personal lab results as a condition of absence or presence at work.

(information as of April 17, 2020)

Contact with someone tested or confirmed

1. If an employee had contact with someone who is being tested for COVID-19, do they need to self-isolate? If an employee lives with someone who is being tested for COVID-19, do they need to self-isolate?

The declaration of a state of emergency in New Brunswick requires employers to prohibit workers from coming to work if they have travelled outside the province in the previous 14 days, are exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19, or have been directed by a physician to self-isolate. If you come into [close contact](#) with someone who is being tested for COVID-19, but is not symptomatic, [self-monitor](#) and check with your employer if they prefer you come to work or remain at home. If this person is subsequently diagnosed with COVID-19, you will need to self-isolate. For more information, please consult the following [link](#).

(information as of April 17, 2020)

2. If an employee lives with someone who travelled and the traveller must self-isolate for 14 days, should the non-traveller come to work?

If you are living with or coming into contact with someone who has returned from travel outside of New Brunswick and, who is not symptomatic, you should discuss with your employer whether they prefer you come to work or remain at home. At the very least, you will need to [self-monitor](#).

(information as of April 17, 2020)

Due to the volatility of the COVID-19 situation and constantly evolving evidence, the responses provided will be updated as new information becomes available. Last updated on May 1, 2020.

3. One of my employees has advised me that she has an appointment to be tested for Covid-19 tomorrow. What precautions should she take and what should I do in my workplace until the test results are received?

You should assume that the test may come back positive and in the interim, clean and disinfect any areas where the employee had been in contact. If possible, close off the potentially contaminated areas until the test is confirmed. If the test is confirmed positive, follow the advice provided by Public Health. As for your employee, she should self-isolate and wait for further instructions from the Department of Health.

(information as of April 17, 2020)

4. I have an employee who has just completed 14 days of self-isolation because they had recently returned from travel outside of New Brunswick within the last 14 days or had close contact within the last 14 days with a confirmed case of COVID-19. What steps do I need to take to ensure it is safe for the employee to return work? Should I ask that the employee to seek a doctor's note?

The evidence we have so far is that if a person is returning from 14 days of self-isolation and did not exhibit symptoms when they went into self-isolation, they should be considered healthy. A doctor's note is not necessary in this instance provided that the employee confirms they are healthy and shows no symptoms of COVID-19.

(information as of April 23, 2020)

5. I have an employee who has just completed 14 days of self-isolation because they been under investigation by Public Health, as a case or a close contact of a case of COVID-19. What steps do I need to take to ensure it is safe for the employee to return to work? Should I ask that the employee to seek a doctor's note?

Public Health is monitoring all individuals suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19 in New Brunswick. Under the guidance of a medical officer, they will provide a letter to the worker and employer that the individual is able to leave self isolation and return to work or other public places. This documentation will not include details of any diagnosis or testing due to privacy legislation.

(information as of April 23, 2020)

Pre-existing health condition

1. I have a pre-existing health condition that could make contracting COVID-19 more dangerous for me. Can I exercise my right to refuse dangerous work? (Pre-existing Health Condition of Employee)

Your employer has a legal obligation under the *Human Rights Act* to accommodate any health condition you may have. This requirement existed before the COVID-19 pandemic began and continues even with the pandemic.

As for your situation with respect to the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, the New Brunswick Department of Health has developed guidelines for limiting the risk of contracting COVID-19 in both social and work settings. All New Brunswick employers are required to adopt these guidelines. If you have a concern regarding COVID-19 because of your personal health condition you should raise this with your employer. Depending on the circumstances at your workplace, your employer may be able to provide additional protections for you specifically. However, whether additional measures can be provided or not, so long as your employer takes reasonable precautions to ensure your health and safety then you are obligated to go to work as required.

If you are required to wear a respirator and based on your pre-existing condition you are not medically fit to do, then your employer cannot require you to wear that respirator. Restrictions on respirator use will be identified through your employer's code of practice on respiratory protection. Your employer then has the legal obligation to find different work for you that is reasonably safe given your specific condition.

Due to the volatility of the COVID-19 situation and constantly evolving evidence, the responses provided will be updated as new information becomes available. Last updated on May 1, 2020.

If this response does not address your specific situation, please contact the New Brunswick Human Rights Commission.

(information as of April 17, 2020)

2. What if I live with a person who has a pre-existing condition that makes COVID-19 more dangerous for them? Can I exercise my right to refuse to go to work based on the grounds that it endangers someone else? (Pre-Existing Health Condition of Household member for Employee)

While your employer is not legally obligated to protect the vulnerable person you are living with, your employer still has an obligation to follow the guidelines for limiting your risk of contracting COVID-19 in the workplace. Given your specific circumstances, your employer may be willing and able to provide you with increased protection. You should exercise care to ensure you are following the guidelines to reduce the risk and use all personal protective equipment required in your job.

As long as your employer takes reasonable precautions to ensure your health and safety and prevent you from coming into contact with the virus, then you are obligated to go to work as required.

(information as of April 17, 2020)

3. My partner has serious health issues. I work with the public and I am afraid of contracting COVID-19 and transmitting the disease to my partner. How do I minimize this risk?

It is important for you to discuss your concerns with your supervisor. It may be possible to modify your work to reduce your exposure to the public during this time. However, at a minimum, WorkSafeNB would expect that your employer is following the guidelines outlined by the Public Health:

- appropriate protocols in place for cleaning of surfaces (perhaps even an increase in the frequency);
- enough sanitary equipment (access to soap and water, hand sanitizer, disinfectants, etc.) for frequent and regular use;

Due to the volatility of the COVID-19 situation and constantly evolving evidence, the responses provided will be updated as new information becomes available. Last updated on May 1, 2020.

- training for staff on procedures and practices, especially in the event of a symptomatic customer

If you do not believe the proper precautions are in place, you can exercise your right to refuse by first letting your supervisor know of your concerns and if the matter is not resolved to your satisfaction, you can raise the matter with your JHSC, if one is established at your workplace. If you are still not satisfied, please contact a WorkSafeNB health and safety officer at 1 800 999-2775 who will follow-up with your concerns.

[More information on the right to refuse dangerous work is available on our website.](#)

(information as of April 17, 2020)

Guidelines to protect workers

1. How do we keep our workplaces safe during COVID-19?

Workplaces must adopt an employee screening process for staff and visitors before they enter the workplace. WorkSafeNB has a [sample self-screening tool for employers with recommendations for implementation](#), along with recommendations workplaces should follow to keep their staff and visitors safe.

The [Public Health Agency of Canada \(PHAC\) recommends several workplace strategies to improve health and safety during COVID-19](#). Here is a summary of these workplace strategies:

- Have staff work from home if possible.
- Reduce staff to critical functions only in the workplace.
- If possible, consider other ways the work can be done (flexible hours, staggering start times, and use of email rather than meetings).
- Leaders should be regularly communicating with staff the importance of protecting themselves and others from COVID-19.
- Ensure employees in the office can practice social distancing – at least two metres space of separation between each other as well as with clients.

Due to the volatility of the COVID-19 situation and constantly evolving evidence, the responses provided will be updated as new information becomes available. Last updated on May 1, 2020.

- Evaluate the workplace for shared objects and common areas and increase frequency of cleaning of touched surfaces/objects.
- Encourage frequent handwashing and ensure handwash stations are equipped with adequate soap and hand sanitizers are readily available.
- Consider alternative approaches to business travel, such as virtually attending meetings. If travel is necessary, out of province travellers must self-isolate for 14 days [with some exceptions](#).
- Modify sick leave policies to allow employees to self isolate when ill.
- Access business continuity plans.

For more information on these workplace strategies, please visit [WorkSafeNB's website](#) and [Public Health Agency of Canada's website](#).

(information as of April 17, 2020)

2. Our workplace is permitted to remain open during the COVID-19 state of emergency and we have some common areas, such as lunchrooms, staff changing areas and conference rooms that all employees use throughout the day. How we can ensure that these common areas remain safe for employees?

There are several things you can do to keep common areas safe. Here are some suggestions:

- Limit the number of people to each common area to ensure those using the space can maintain a distance of at least two metres apart from each other. Staggering breaks, limiting the number of chairs and organizing seating in such a way to ensure two metres between each chair are examples of limiting the numbers.
- Remove objects that cannot be easily cleaned (newspapers, magazines, fabric furniture, etc.).
- Increase frequency of environmental cleaning throughout the day.
- Unless regularly performed by designated cleaning staff, require employees to disinfect any surface or object in the common area they may contact.
- Unless performed immediately by cleaning staff, require employees to clean the surfaces and objects they may contact during their breaks.

Due to the volatility of the COVID-19 situation and constantly evolving evidence, the responses provided will be updated as new information becomes available. Last updated on May 1, 2020.

- Ensure handwashing facilities and/or hand-sanitizing products and disinfecting and cleaning supplies are readily available in the common areas.

(information as of April 17, 2020)

3. What measures are required to mitigate the risk of transmission of COVID-19 in a workplace?

Any guidance issued by Public Health with respect to your individual industry or occupation must be implemented as a first step.

To minimize the risk of transmission of COVID-19, all workplaces must:

- Adopt a screening process for staff and visitors before they enter the workplace. A sample self-screening tool for employers with recommendations for implementation is available [here](#).
- Take every reasonable step to ensure minimum interaction of people within two metres of each other.
- Ensure that proper hand-washing and enhanced sanitation/cleaning practices are enforced in areas where multiple people handle tools, goods, supplies, equipment or other shared items.

(information as of April 17, 2020)

4. What precautionary measures are required to mitigate the risk of transmission of COVID-19 when a workplace CANNOT maintain a two-metre separation between people?

Any guidance issued by Public Health with respect to your individual industry or occupation must be implemented.

If an employer cannot consistently maintain a two-metre separation between people due to essential work activities that require brief sporadic interaction with others, or if there will be unavoidable periods of close interaction, the following steps must be taken:

- First consider the installation of a physical barrier, such as a clear plastic guard, that can protect workers from potential exposure. If not possible,
- All persons entering a workplace must be [actively screened](#) for symptoms of COVID-19.

Due to the volatility of the COVID-19 situation and constantly evolving evidence, the responses provided will be updated as new information becomes available. Last updated on May 1, 2020.

- Active screening must include temperature checks of all persons, provided a non-contact thermometer (e.g. infrared) is available. Disposable thermometers may be used provided a proper procedure to maintain a non-contact temperature check is implemented.
- For personnel working 24-hour shifts, active screening, including temperature checks, must be conducted a minimum of four times during normal waking or active working hours, spaced in intervals of not more than five active working hours.
- Any person exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 must not enter the workplace or, if already mid-shift, be immediately asked to leave the workplace. Dial 811 immediately for instructions.
- Proper hand-washing and enhanced sanitation/cleaning practices must be followed in areas where multiple people handle tools, goods, supplies, equipment or other shared items. Limit tools to one person if possible. Tools or equipment which must be shared, must be disinfected before and after use.
- A risk assessment to determine the engineering and/or PPE controls necessary must be completed, and adequate personal protective equipment must be provided such as:
 - Hand protection (nitrile gloves)
 - Eye protection (safety glasses, goggles, or face shield)

Learn more: [Risk assessment and mitigation tool for business](#), Public Agency of Canada

- Every effort must be made to avoid having employees travel in the same vehicle during work activities. If employees must travel together, special precautions must be taken. For more detailed information on how employees can safely travel together, please consult our FAQ on this topic.
- The NB Chief Medical Officer does not recommend the use of surgical masks or N95 respirators by people who have no symptoms of respiratory infection (unless under isolation precautions as directed by Public Health). It is NOT necessary to wear an N95 respirator or a surgical mask if you are well and not exhibiting any symptoms. Improperly worn, they may actually increase your risk of infection. Surgical masks and N95 respirators are urgently needed for our health care workers.
- The use of non-medical face masks, full face shields, and/or fabric face coverings is recommended in situations where physical distancing is not possible, provided that all requirements above have been met and every reasonable step has been taken to keep close interactions as brief and infrequent as possible.
- If an employer requires the use of non-medical masks, face shields and/or fabric face coverings, a procedure addressing selection, use, decontamination (if applicable), storage, handling, limitations, inspection requirements, change-out

Due to the volatility of the COVID-19 situation and constantly evolving evidence, the responses provided will be updated as new information becomes available. Last updated on May 1, 2020.

requirements, employee training, etc., must be developed using the [information provided by Health Canada](#). Employees must be trained in the procedure.

- All workplace risk assessment practices as required by the Occupational Health and Safety Act must continue and any identified risks are to be mitigated as required by the Act.
- “Workplace” means any building, structure, premises, water or land where work is carried on by one or more employees, and includes a project site, a mine, a ferry, a train and any vehicle used or likely to be used by an employee.

Learn more: [Tools on how to establish a safe and health workplace during COVID-19](#), WorkSafeNB; [Risk informed decision making for workplaces](#), Government of Canada. This information will be modified as the Covid-19 outbreak evolves in NB.

[Example of an active COVID-19 Screening Checklist](#)

(information as of May 1, 2020)

5. Are there precautions tradespersons can take when they need to step into a home to make essential repairs, such as lack of water, electricity, heat?

The government of New Brunswick has stated that workers such as contractors, plumbers, appliance repair, etc. must only enter homes or businesses in order to provide essential or urgent services. Before agreeing to proceed with the work, inquire if anyone in the home is experiencing [symptoms of COVID-19](#) or if they have been advised to self-isolate. This verification should take place when the homeowner requests a service call. If the client is ill or has been advised to self-isolate, reassess if the work is urgent or essential. If it is urgent or essential, request that anyone who is ill, or must self-isolate remain in another room during your visit and that they sanitize high touch surfaces before you arrive.

If the client advises you that everyone on site is healthy and when you arrive, someone is coughing or appears ill, leave the premises immediately and inform them you will do the work later.

When in a house or outdoors stay two-metre away from others, wash your hands often, avoid touching surfaces and clean and sanitize tools between clients. Depending on your work, you may be required to wear personal protective equipment such as gloves, masks and eye protection.

Please note that workers must actively screen themselves before agreeing to provide service to a client. If the worker is experiencing symptoms consistent with COVID-19 or has been advised to self-isolate, they must not carry out the work.

Learn more: [How to safely provide in home non personal care services](#).

Due to the volatility of the COVID-19 situation and constantly evolving evidence, the responses provided will be updated as new information becomes available. Last updated on May 1, 2020.

(information as of May 1, 2020)

6. What guidelines are available that will help ensure employees are safe when traveling together for work purposes?

- Every effort must be made to avoid having employees travel in the same vehicle during work activities. The employer should consider implementing alternate transportation options (for example, the use of personal vehicles).
- If more than one person must travel in the same vehicle, consider installing physical barriers (such as plexiglass) inside the vehicle.
- If installing a physical barrier is not possible and employees must travel together, they must be [actively screened](#) before entering the vehicle and during the day.
- Limit the number of persons traveling together to:
 - 2 people for small - medium size vehicles and trucks (normally seat 4 to 5 people)
 - 4 people for large vehicles such as trucks and SUVs (normally seat 6 or more people)
 - 8 people for 15 passengers vans
- Employees must keep as much space between each other as possible (they must not sit directly beside each other). Employees must keep their same seats throughout the day.
- The NB Chief Medical Officer recommends that employees further protect each other by wearing non-medical or fabric face coverings or full-face shields. Note that [special precautions](#) must be taken if the employer decides to implement the use of such coverings.
- At a minimum, the vehicle must be cleaned and disinfected at the start and end of the shift. It will need to be cleaned and disinfected more often if it is used to transport other employees and/or used for other activities (such as lunch breaks). Controls must be in place to ensure that vehicle sanitization is maintained
- When employees are speaking inside the vehicle, they should look straight ahead in order to limit direct face-to-face interaction.
- Remember that proper hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette is key to reducing the transmission of the virus. Ensure hand washing or sanitizing supplies are available at all times.

Due to the volatility of the COVID-19 situation and constantly evolving evidence, the responses provided will be updated as new information becomes available. Last updated on May 1, 2020.

- Note: These requirements apply to travel in work vehicles which is different from workers travelling together to get to and from work. The guidelines of Public Health must be followed for travelling together in a personal vehicle (carpooling) as of April 24, 2020:
 - An individual may drive passengers from one other household.
 - Household members may share the same vehicle space.
 - Drivers should screen potential passengers for signs of illness. Drivers and passengers who are ill or who have been told to self-isolate from Public Health should stay home.
 - When carpooling, maintain physical distancing by only transporting one passenger in the backseat.
 - Clean and disinfect all surfaces that may have been touched by the passenger.

This information may be modified as the Covid-19 outbreak evolves in NB.

(Information as of May 1, 2020)

Cleaning

1. How should our cleaning staff be protecting themselves against COVID-19 and how can they ensure they are properly disinfecting workstations?

WorkSafeNB recommends following specific guidelines developed by Health Canada for [Hard-surface disinfectants for use against coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#), including:

- use the right disinfectant product
- follow the directions on the label and consult with the supplier data sheet (SDS) if available
- ensure employees have been instructed and trained on the safe use of the product

Due to the volatility of the COVID-19 situation and constantly evolving evidence, the responses provided will be updated as new information becomes available. Last updated on May 1, 2020.

- If the supplier requires personal protective equipment (PPE) such as gloves and goggles, the employee should be trained in how to use and the proper removal to prevent cross-contamination.

For high-touch surfaces such as door handles and phones, Health Canada recommends cleaning these often with either:

- regular household cleaners or
- diluted household bleach () - sodium hydrochlorite (5.25%) (diluted bleach prepared in a ratio of 1 teaspoon (5 mL) per cup (250 mL) OR 4 teaspoons (20 mL) per litre (1000mL)).

Health Canada has approved several [hard-surface disinfectants for use against COVID-19](#).

(information as of April 17, 2020)

First aid

1. My first aid certificate has expired and because of COVID-19 social distancing measures, I can't take a first aid course to re-certify. What should I do, and can I continue to provide first aid in my workplace?

As a result of New Brunswick's *Declaration of a State of Emergency and Mandatory Order* issued on March 19, 2020, First Aid Training Providers approved by WorkSafeNB cannot provide classroom and practical training nor the in-class portion of blended first aid training. Therefore, until the mandatory order is lifted, you will not be able to re-certify.

As long as you and your employer are confident regarding your ability to provide first aid, you can continue to be a designated first aid provider for your workplace. During the COVID-19 pandemic, WorkSafeNB will not be enforcing first aid training requirements found in Regulation 2004-130 – *First Aid Regulation* for approximately

Due to the volatility of the COVID-19 situation and constantly evolving evidence, the responses provided will be updated as new information becomes available. Last updated on May 1, 2020.

six months from the onset of the *Declaration of a State of Emergency and Mandatory Order*.

To refresh your knowledge, you should review your first aid manual, watch first aid videos, take the online portion of a blended course or follow a refresher course through virtual learning. Once the *Declaration of a State of Emergency and Mandatory Order* is lifted, you can complete your training and re-certify.

(information as of April 17, 2020)

2. Can I complete the entire first aid course virtually with a First Aid Training Provider approved by WorkSafeNB?

No. Some of the content in the required first aid course modules must be delivered in a classroom setting. For example, the module on Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation and choking requires the participant be able to **perform** correct artificial respiration and chest compression methods on adult casualties with different injuries or illnesses such as cardiac arrest and choking emergencies. Furthermore, adult learning principles indicate that instruction is most effective when the participant gets hands-on experience, repetition and practice. Coaching (observation and correction) by the instructor ensures that the participant can correctly apply the lifesaving techniques.

WorkSafeNB has [approved first aid training providers](#) who offer blended learning (combination of computer based and practical training) to **re-certify** designated first aid providers. The in-class portion must continue to be performed in-class.

(information as of April 17, 2020)

3. My first aid certificate has not expired, but my First Aid Training Provider is not delivering in-class yearly refreshers at this time. What should I do?

Subsection 8(7) of Regulation 2004-130 - *First Aid Regulation* requires that a designated first aid provider receive six hours of practice on first aid skills each year during the period they hold a valid certificate. The intent of this provision is to ensure that first aid providers maintain their skills during the three-year certification period.

Due to the volatility of the COVID-19 situation and constantly evolving evidence, the responses provided will be updated as new information becomes available. Last updated on May 1, 2020.

Please review the [legislative interpretation](#) that explains how to accomplish this. Suggestions for six hours of practice include any combination of the following options, provided there is sufficient documentation:

- Providing first aid treatment to injured employees totalling at least six hours.
- Reviewing the first aid manual and simulating treatments on volunteers for at least six hours (please note, simulating treatments is not possible at this time as it requires being in close contact).
- Completing a virtual six-hour refresher course provided by [an approved first aid training provider](#).

(information as of April 17, 2020)

Well-being

1. Should I go to work if I feel sick?

Do not go to work if you are experiencing flu-like symptoms such as a fever, coughing, and a general feeling of being unwell. Please note that COVID-19 symptoms vary between individuals and for some, symptoms are mild whereas they may be more severe for others. If your symptoms are consistent with [COVID-19 symptoms](#) (please refer to the [Government of New Brunswick's assessment tool](#) to assess their status and determine next steps.

(information as of May 1, 2020)

2. How do I help employees cope with stress during the COVID-19 outbreak?

Employees in the workplace may be affected by the anxiety and uncertainty created by the COVID-19 situation. It's important to remember that mental health is just as important as physical health, and to take measures to support mental well-being.

Everyone reacts differently in stressful situations. It is normal to feel sad, anxious, confused, scared or even angry during a crisis and these feelings will change over time.

Due to the volatility of the COVID-19 situation and constantly evolving evidence, the responses provided will be updated as new information becomes available. Last updated on May 1, 2020.

We encourage you to share tools to help employees cope with their feelings. The [Canadian Mental Health Association](#) and many Employee Assistance Programs offer toolkits and resources that can help.

Here are some resources that can help with maintaining mental health in the workplace during this time.

- [WorkSafeNB - Managing anxiety and worry during COVID-19](#)
- [Mental Health Commission of Canada](#)- Has a "resource hub" dedicated to COVID-19.
- [Mental Health and Psychosocial Considerations During COVID-19 Outbreak](#) (World Health Organization) – These mental health considerations were developed by the WHO's Department of Mental Health and Substance Use as messages targeting different groups to support for mental and psychosocial well-being during COVID-19 outbreak.
- [COVID-19 and Mental Health](#) (Canadian Mental Health Association) – Tips and information on how to reduce and manage anxiety in the workplace due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

(information as of April 17, 2020)

Working from home

1. My employer has directed me to work from home. Do you have any suggestions?

As workplaces try to prevent the spread of COVID-19, employees may find themselves working from home. While working from home has clear advantages, it's important to remember that new workspaces can pose concerns. Where you work and how your work is important to your health and safety. That's why WorkSafeNB developed a tool to help. Visit [Working safely from home as we navigate COVID-19](#) for more information.

It is also important that if you feel discomfort in your home setup, address it as soon as possible. Check out our education material on the topic, [Office Ergonomics](#)–

Due to the volatility of the COVID-19 situation and constantly evolving evidence, the responses provided will be updated as new information becomes available. Last updated on May 1, 2020.

[Guidelines for Preventing Musculoskeletal Injuries](#). For more information, please call 1-800-999-9775 and ask to speak to a WorkSafeNB ergonomist.

(information as of April 17, 2020)

Personal Protective Equipment

1. We are having trouble getting N95 respirators to do our work. Is it possible to use alternative respirators that are not NIOSH approved?

With a potential shortage of NIOSH approved N95 particulate respirators, a review of the General Regulations, 91-191 and the cited standard for respiratory protection CSA Z94.4-93 was completed. The CSA standard is not restrictive to NIOSH performance standard and therefore other product classification may be adopted. Based on Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and 3M's evaluation of alternative respirators, WorkSafeNB deems the following as equivalent respirators:

- KN95 from China;
- P2, P3 from Australia;
- PFF2, PFF3 from Brazil and Europe;
- DS/DL2, DS/DL3 from Japan;
- Special, 1st class from Korea; and
- N95 from Mexico.

It is important to note that a fit-test is still required for each of these respirators and they should not be used unless the employee has passed the fit-test. For more information on regulatory requirements for respirators visit the [respirator topic page](#) on the [OHS App Guide](#).

For Healthcare:

Health Canada, the regulator for medical devices in Canada, accepts the NIOSH certification as an appropriate quality standard for N95 masks used by health care providers. Health Canada states that equivalent alternate standards are also acceptable.

Due to the volatility of the COVID-19 situation and constantly evolving evidence, the responses provided will be updated as new information becomes available. Last updated on May 1, 2020.

It is recommended that you consult with Health Canada for their opinion on the list of equivalent respirators provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Learn more: [Center for Disease Control](#); [3M Science Applied to Life™](#)

(information as of April 17, 2020)

2. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) needs for cleaning staff of medical clinics. Do the cleaners need to don further PPE beyond gloves in this setting?

Following discharge of patients with suspect or confirmed COVID- 19 the room must be cleaned using PPE which includes:

- N95 respirator (fit tested, seal-checked)
- Isolation gown
- Gloves
- Eye protection (goggles or face shield)

(information as of April 17, 2020)

3. Do we need to get employees fit tested to use an N95 respirator? If so, how can we get them fit tested as quickly as possible? Can we do the fit testing internally?

It is necessary to have the employees fit tested before they are required to use a respirator, including a disposable N95 respirator. Fit testing helps ensure a proper seal so that air breathed in is adequately filtered. It is essential to explore different brands and sizes to achieve the proper fit. Any facial hair that is in contact with the respirator will prevent a proper seal from being achieved. Therefore, it is necessary to be clean shaven where the respirator seal is to stick to the skin.

Fit testing can be conducted internally if there is a competent person trained in your workplace to do so and you have the equipment required to conduct the tests. There are two types of fit testing: qualitative and quantitative. The qualitative test relies on the user's sense of taste or smell, or reaction to an irritant to detect a leakage.

Quantitative test measures the actual amount of leakage into the facepiece.

Due to the volatility of the COVID-19 situation and constantly evolving evidence, the responses provided will be updated as new information becomes available. Last updated on May 1, 2020.

Learn more about [fit testing and other requirements of a code of practice for respiratory protection](#).

(information as of April 17, 2020)

Due to the volatility of the COVID-19 situation and constantly evolving evidence, the responses provided will be updated as new information becomes available. Last updated on May 1, 2020.