

THE TOWN OF FORT FRANCES

Section: Health and Safety

Policy: Infection Control

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Policy Number:	5.42

1. Purpose

To prevent the spread of infection in the workplace.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all employees, management, elected officials, and members of boards and committees, referred to as “staff” and/or “employees”.

The workplace is not confined to the offices and buildings of the Corporation. It also includes worksites, vehicles and equipment, and any other location where the business of the Corporation is conducted.

3. Specific Responsibilities

Managers and supervisors must:

- Ensure programs and protective measures are in place to reduce the risk of exposure to infectious diseases.
- Develop safe work procedures that address the level of risk encountered.
- Inform workers of the risks associated with the transmission of viruses, the health effects and the procedures to follow to reduce or eliminate the risk.
- Ensure personal protective measures are available to workers to reduce the risk of and/or spread of infection.
- Ensure workers are familiar with the procedures and safe use of disinfectants and other chemicals used in the workplace to prevent and/or control infections.

- Ensure workers take the necessary measures to reduce the risk of infectious diseases including the wearing of appropriate personal protective equipment and using the appropriate chemicals.
- Investigate and file an incident report of any potential exposures reported by a worker.
- Take corrective action to reduce the risk of exposure to infectious diseases, as required or as new information becomes available.
- Ensure workers attend information and education sessions, as required.

Workers must:

- Follow safe work procedures to reduce the level of risk.
- Wear the appropriate personal protective equipment including gloves, respiratory protection, clothing, among others, as required for protection.
- Report all potential exposures to their manager/supervisor immediately.
- Apply the knowledge gained in training in the fulfillment of their duties.

Joint Health and Safety Committee must:

- Review the selected personal protective measures for workers, as required.
- Make recommendations in the development of safe work procedures.
- Review this policy and related guidelines as required, or at least annually.

Safety Measures and Procedures specific to COVID-19 (Coronavirus)

COVID-19 is a virus that is spread from person-to-person through means such as:

- Between people who are in close contact with one another (within approximately 2 meters or 6 feet).
- Through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes.

The virus may be transmitted when it comes into contact with mucous membranes of a person's nose, mouth or eyes. Direct contact may occur from droplet spray expelled by people who are nearby. Indirect contact may occur by touching a surface or object that may be contaminated and then touching one's own mouth, nose or eyes.

COVID-19 is highly contagious and, although symptoms are frequently mild in a number of cases, some individuals develop severe illness leading to lasting health effects, hospitalization, and in some cases, death.

All workplace parties have roles and responsibilities to protect workers from hazards in the workplace as set out in the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA) and its regulations, and the applicable directives coming from the Chief Medical Officer of Health.

This procedure outlines the duty of both the employer and the workers in taking every precaution reasonable to protect workers from COVID-19. **It applies to all company work locations.**

COVID 19 – Roles and Responsibilities

The Employer has a duty to take every precaution reasonable in the circumstances to protect the health and safety of workers from infectious disease.

The Employer shall:

- Make every effort reasonable to ensure workers have been provided with appropriate information and instruction regarding COVID-19.
- Assess if workers are at risk from exposure to infectious disease, such as COVID-19.
- Put in place the measures needed to protect workers from infectious disease, such as COVID-19.
- Provide screening and monitoring measures for COVID-19 symptoms for personnel at all work sites.
- Ensure that surfaces are cleaned and disinfected to prevent the spread of infectious agents through surface contact.
- Increase on-site sanitation at all work places.
- Consider staggering start times, breaks and lunches, the total number of people on-site and where they are assigned to work to increase physical distancing.
- Where feasible, offer opportunities for workers to work from home to maintain physical distancing.

- Provide personal protective equipment appropriate for the task and/or risk of exposure to infectious agents.
- Ensure that individuals who are required to wear a tight fitting N95 respirator must be fit tested to ensure a proper fit.

Workers have a duty to take every precaution reasonable to protect themselves and their co-workers from infectious disease.

Workers shall:

- Follow personal hygiene guidelines.
- Follow physical distancing guidelines.
- Not report to work if exhibiting any of the symptoms of COVID-19 or are under self-isolation or quarantine.
- Wear a non-medical mask in situations where they are not able to maintain physical distancing.
- Wear any personal protective equipment as directed by the employer.
- Complete a daily health review—following screening and monitoring measures.
- Self-monitor and self-report if they are experiencing any signs of illness.
- Follow social distancing and self-isolation guidelines during off-duty hours.
- Report any hazards regarding COVID-19 in workplaces.

Physical distancing is a key component to avoiding infection. The following steps must be put in place by each **manager or supervisor** on the work sites they are responsible for.

Physical distancing generally means maintaining a distance of at least 2 meters (6 feet) or more between persons at all times. By maintaining physical distancing, people are less likely to be exposed to a respiratory virus as the virus can be spread before symptoms appear (pre-symptomatic) and when the person may have contracted the virus but are exhibiting minimal or no symptoms (asymptomatic).

The employer and workers shall follow the guidelines identified below:

- Whenever possible, use telecommunications to give and receive work task instructions and to communicate site status concerns.
- Maintain physical distancing in areas where you may come into contact with outside service providers e.g. site delivery personnel or members of the Public.
- Avoid contact and communications with members of the public. Refer them to the Employer's contact phone numbers for answers to questions they may have
- Limit the amount of time spent on-site.
- If possible, use the same work vehicle on a day to day basis rather than sharing the vehicle with multiple Workers. Vehicles are to be disinfected at the start and end of each shift.
- Supervisors shall make every effort reasonable to limit the total number of people at the workplace and where they are assigned to work.
- Implement a system for virtual and/or telephone consultations when and where possible.

- Non-essential face-to-face appointments should be postponed or converted to virtual appointments.
- Have staff work from home whenever possible.
- Utilize staggered start times, breaks and lunches.
- Restrict visitors and limit workplace entry to only essential personnel.
- Suspend all group activities and gatherings.
- Where feasible, alter the workplace layout of the floor by moving furniture or using visual cues such as tape on the floor to enhance physical distancing.
- Lunchrooms and break rooms must be arranged to follow physical distancing practices.
- Ensure that physical distancing is respected during breaks, lunches and shift changes. Workers who fail to comply with this, and supervisors who fail to enforce this may be subject to disciplinary action.
- Follow specific guidance for health and safety and infection prevention and control practices and measures and procedures established by the employer.
- Refer to the Ministry of Health, Public Health Ontario and the Government of Canada for COVID-19 Guidance.
- In addition to routine cleaning, clean frequently touched surfaces (i.e. steering wheels, door handles, handrails, customer service counters, touch screens, elevator buttons, etc. at a minimum of twice per day. If the surfaces are visibly dirty, they should be cleaned prior to disinfection application.
- Proper donning and doffing of PPE and hand hygiene should be performed.
- Stay home if you are feeling ill. Actively monitor yourself for any symptoms and if you detect symptoms, you should immediately distance yourself from others and go home. If possible, avoiding using public transit to get home. Notify your supervisor so that they are aware of the situation and can also notify others who may have been exposed.

Follow the following precautionary measures while working:

- Limit the amount of face-to-face contact during work activities and practice physical distancing whenever possible.
- Use technology for communication (text messaging and mobile phones rather than in-person conversations).
- Avoid sharing equipment/supplies (i.e. vehicles, tools, equipment, radio, tablets, and electronic devices) where possible. Disinfect regularly if sharing cannot be avoided.
- Limit any casual interactions that normally occur at work.
- Change out of work clothing at the end of each shift and wash them. Do not store your street clothes and work clothing in the same space unless both are clean. Change outdoor work shoes / boots outside of home, and do not allow them inside of the house.
- Consider discussing any underlying medical conditions that might place you at a higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19 with your supervisor or Human Resources.
- Ensure you are taking care of both your mental and physical health during this time.

Practice stringent hand hygiene practices. Health Canada recommends following basic hygiene practices:

- Wash hands frequently
- Thoroughly wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds

- If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least 70% alcohol
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth
- Practice respiratory etiquette and sneeze or cough into your sleeve or a tissue and discard it
- Use a clean tissue or your knuckle/elbow to touch light switches, doors, buttons, etc.

Work Process Adjustments

Supervisors should consider the following to reduce risk for the employees under their direction:

- Assigning fewer tasks requiring employees to work closely beside each other will also enable effective physical distancing.
- Where workers can work from home, make every effort to facilitate them doing so.
- Where feasible, rearranging the worksite to ensure proper ventilation in workspaces.
- Where feasible, imposing limits as to the total number of workers allowed on site.
- Limit of one person per vehicle or equipment cab. When not feasible, workers shall wear non-medical masks when not able to physically distance.
- Plan work sites to eliminate “pinch points” such as narrow entry and exit areas, narrow pathways etc.
- Eliminate unnecessary gathering areas.
- Whenever possible, suspend or re-design tasks which require employees to work in close proximity to each other. If it is not possible to suspend work, supervisors must make every effort reasonable to consider the following:
 - Review alternative ways of completing the task.
 - Review ways of completing the task with fewer people.
 - Review ways of completing the task in a shorter time frame.
 - Additional sanitation measures which may be implemented while completing the task.
 - Determine what additional PPE may be required to help protect workers.

Screening Measures:

Active Screening Measures:

Supervisors are responsible to ensure that all employees, excluding those working from home, complete the following screening measures on a daily basis:

- Employees shall complete the screening form developed by the Province of Ontario and submit a copy to their supervisor.
- If an employee answers yes to any of the screening questions, or it is indicated that they aren't cleared to attend work, they shall not report to work, and shall notify their supervisor immediately, preferably using virtual means or telecommunications, and at no time shall they come within six feet (two metres) of another staff member when providing notification.

- Employees shall follow the protocol identified by the employer regarding out of province, out of country, and out of region travel.
- If any employee develops any of the symptoms of COVID-19 while working, they shall inform their supervisor, ensuring that they maintain physical distancing, and leave work immediately.
- Members of the public shall be screened as required by the Province of Ontario. Anyone who screens positive shall not enter the facility. Staff shall document positive screening results including the time, and location. Staff undertaking screening shall maintain physical distancing, wear a mask, and any personal protective equipment as assigned to them by the employer for this purpose

Passive Screening Measures:

- A poster shall be posted in a prominent location near to the entrances of all Town of Fort Frances owned buildings where the public attends, or act as a workplace for our employees. The poster shall comply with the requirements identified by the Province of Ontario.
- The poster shall contain a notification outlining that anyone who answers yes to any of the screening questions will not be allowed to enter. Visitors will be advised to use telecommunications to arrange to conduct business with the Town of Fort Frances. The poster will also provide the number and website for the local health unit to contact if they have further questions.
- The poster shall identify the following:
 - Limitations on number of visitors.
 - Physical distancing requirements.
 - PPE requirements, if any.