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Re: Workplace COVID-19 Outbreak Resource Package

Region of Waterloo Public Health (ROWPH) has become aware of at least 2 cases of COVID-19 in your workplace and has declared an outbreak in your workplace. Under the legislative authority of the [Health Protection and Promotion Act](#) (HPPA), Region of Waterloo Public Health is responsible for protecting the people of our region from the risks of infectious disease, including COVID-19. As workplaces fall under the jurisdiction of Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development (MLTSD), Public Health will be working with MLTSD to manage the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace during this pandemic. As such, Public Health will work with you to ensure measures are put in place to limit the spread of COVID-19 in your workplace and to protect the health of your employees and the general public. These include:

- Investigating reports of cases and contacts of COVID-19 in accordance with the Public Health Management of Cases and Contacts of COVID-19 in Ontario and HPPA
- Consult with your management team to understand what precautions you have already put in place to protect your employees, and determine if there are any gaps that may be allowing the virus to continue to spread among your workers
- If necessary, conduct an on-site visit as part of the outbreak investigation in coordination with other relevant agencies, (e.g., MLTSD, Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA), Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA)
- Work with your workplace to collect relevant information to identify symptomatic employees and close contacts¹ in order to minimize the spread among your workers and the community
- Analyze the case management data to determine, if possible, the time and place of transmission and exposure in the workplace
- Make recommendations on and facilitate testing for COVID-19 for this outbreak, and provide an investigation or outbreak number to coordinate testing at an assessment centre.
- Provide guidance and recommendations to your workplace on outbreak management measures, and determine when the outbreak is over
- If necessary, issue orders under the Health Protection and Promotion Act to ensure outbreak management measures are put in place for the protection of employees and the public

¹ Close Contact: Someone who has spent more than 15 minutes together (including shorter, repeated interactions) where a distance of 2 metres was not maintained and case or contact was not wearing a mask consistently and appropriately and not separated by a physical barrier

- Provide you with information regarding the duty to report occupational illness to the MLTSD, if you have not done so already
- Share recommendations/orders issued to your workplace with MLTSD for their awareness and provide a referral to MLTSD, as required under the HPPA to address requirements under the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA), if necessary.
- Notify the public that an outbreak has been declared through the [Waterloo Region COVID-19 summary webpage](#) (your workplace itself will not be identified, it will be grouped with other workplaces by sector)
- A public notification of a workplace may be deemed necessary if there is a risk to the public.

As the employer, you are responsible for the following:

- General duty under the OHSA to take all precautions reasonable in the circumstances for the protection of your employees and members of the public who may contact your workers
- Implement prevention measures found in guidance issued by the [Ontario government](#) and any specific prevention measures recommended by public health agencies
- Comply with OHSA and other applicable legislation and regulations
- Provide notices of an occupational illness to the MLTSD under sec.52(2) of the OHSA.
- Inform public health of symptomatic workers at work who are suspected cases of COVID-19
- Cooperate with public health investigations and MLTSD OHSA inspectors.
- Comply with recommendations and/or orders issued by Region of Waterloo Public Health and MLTSD inspectors.
- Maintain accurate shift records and up-to-date contact information for employees.
- Communicate with employees and other stakeholders, as needed, when there is an outbreak.

To assist with your internal and external communications, included in this package is an information sheet for your employees. Please feel free to copy and distribute these as needed.

Region of Waterloo Public Health will not be providing or reviewing customized communication materials pertaining to COVID-19 outbreaks.

We strongly urge you to review the following additional guidance on COVID-19 for workplaces:

- Consult the Ministry of Health COVID-19 website regularly for the most recent workplace guidance which provides additional Information on outbreak preparation and management: http://health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/2019_guidance.aspx
- The most recent resources to prevent COVID-19 in the workplace can be found on the Ministry of Labour website: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/resources-prevent-covid-19-workplace>
- Health Canada has also provided a risk mitigation tool for workplaces/businesses operating during the COVID-19 pandemic <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/guidance-documents/risk-informed-decision-making-workplaces-businesses-covid-19-pandemic.html>

Document Number: 3329067

- Guidance on COVID-19 Screening:
<https://www.ihsa.ca/pdfs/alerts/COVID19/guidance-on-covid-19-screening.pdf>
- Below is additional information for local updates:
 - Region of Waterloo Public Health's COVID-19 website is updated each weekday at 10:30 am. <https://www.regionofwaterloo.ca/en/health-and-wellness/positive-cases-in-waterloo-region.aspx>
 - The Medical Officer of Health holds COVID-19 [media briefings](#) on Tuesdays and Fridays.
 - Additional COVID-19 workplace resources are available through Region of Waterloo Public Health's workplace webpage at <https://www.regionofwaterloo.ca/en/health-and-wellness/2019-novel-coronavirus.aspx>
 - General information about COVID-19 can be found on Region of Waterloo Public Health's COVID-19 webpage at <http://www.regionofwaterloo.ca/COVID19>.
 - [Region of Waterloo Assessment and Testing](#)

General Workplace Resources:

- [COVID-19 Workplace Safety Plan](#)
- [Sector-specific guidelines and posters](#)
- [COVID-19 Guidance: Essential Workplaces](#)
- [Preventing COVID-19 in the workplace: Employers, employees and essential service workers](#)
- [Risk mitigation tool for workplaces/businesses operating during the COVID-19 pandemic](#)

Physical Distancing:

- [Physical Distancing](#)

Personal Protective Equipment:

- [Non-medical masks and face coverings](#)
- [Video: How to wear a non-medical mask or face covering properly](#)
- [Non-medical Masks and Face Coverings](#)
- [Mask Use for Non-Healthcare Workers](#)
- [Workplace PPE Supplier Directory](#)

Proper Hygiene and Cleaning:



- [How to wash your hands/How to use hand sanitizer](#)
- [Cleaning and Disinfection for Public Settings](#)
- [Cleaning and disinfecting public spaces during COVID-19](#)
- [COVID-19 Disinfectants, sanitizers, cleaners and soaps](#)
- [Hard-surface disinfectants and hand sanitizers \(COVID-19\): List of disinfectants with evidence for use against COVID-19](#)

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For more information, please contact Region of Waterloo Public Health at 519-575-4400, or visit us online at <http://www.regionofwaterloo.ca/COVID19>

Workplace COVID-19 Outbreak Information for Employees

What is COVID-19?

- COVID-19 is a new strain of coronavirus that has not previously been identified in humans
- COVID-19 symptoms can range from mild to severe and may include fever (37.8°C or greater), cough, trouble breathing, sore throat, difficulty swallowing, new olfactory or taste disorders, nausea/vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain, runny nose or nasal congestion.
- A list of symptoms, including atypical signs and symptoms, can be also be found in the 'COVID-19 Reference Document for Symptoms' on the Ministry of Health's COVID-19 website http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/2019_reference_doc_symptoms.pdf
- People may be able to pass COVID-19 to others from 48 hours before symptoms begin to 14 days after the start of symptoms
- It is possible for people to be infected with COVID-19, and be able to infect others, without showing any symptoms themselves (referred to as asymptomatic infection).

Communication with affected employees

- Public Health will work with your workplace to identify employees who have had close contact² with confirmed cases, and provide direction on who requires testing or to self-isolate or self-monitor
 - More information on getting tested for COVID-19 can be found on the Region of Waterloo website: <https://www.regionofwaterloo.ca/en/health-and-wellness/community-assessment-centres.aspx>
 - Instructions on how to self-monitor can be found here: <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ncov/factsheet-covid-19-self-monitor.pdf?la=en>
 - Instructions on how to self-isolate can be found here: <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ncov/factsheet-covid-19-how-to-self-isolate.pdf?la=en>

² Close Contact: Someone who has spent more than 15 minutes together (including shorter, repeated interactions) where a distance of 2 metres was not maintained and case or contact was not wearing a mask consistently and appropriately and not separated by a physical barrier

Outbreak control measures

- The workplace management, human resources, and/or occupational health staff from your workplace will be required to work closely with Region of Waterloo Public Health to ensure that infection prevention and control guidelines and protocols are implemented to protect the health and safety of employees. These measures may include:
 - Continued [active screening](#) of employees upon arrival with entry denied to anyone with symptoms
 - Continued implementation of infection prevention and control best practices as directed by Region of Waterloo Public Health
 - Closure (only if necessary) of the workplace, or modifications to the workplace to allow for safe operation until the outbreak is declared over

Employees with symptoms of COVID-19

- Any employees who develop symptoms must immediately stop working and notify their supervisor
- The supervisor will notify the person in their workplace who has been identified as the contact person(s) who will then notify public health of the suspected case
- Symptomatic employee(s) are to be immediately directed to self-isolate at home and go for testing
 - If your test result is positive for COVID-19, self-isolate and follow the instructions provided by Public health
 - If your test result is negative you should continue to self-isolate for 14 days if the employee is a close contact of the case(s)
- Employees with worsening symptoms should seek medical attention or emergency care as needed

Return to work

- All close contacts of confirmed cases are required to self-isolate for 14 days from the date of their last contact with the case.
- Public Health will provide guidance to employees about testing and the need to self-isolate or self-monitor while tests results are pending and once test results are received.
- All employees who have had symptoms or test positive for COVID-19 should work with their employer to determine when they are able to return to work in consultation with Public Health
- Public Health will notify employees who have been asked to self-isolate when their isolation is complete, at which time the employee may return to work
- Employees who have not been asked to self-isolate may continue to work

For more information, please contact Region of Waterloo Public Health at 519-575-4400, or visit us online at <http://www.regionofwaterloo.ca/COVID19>. Additional COVID-19 resources can be found on the Ontario Government's webpage: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/resources-prevent-covid-19-workplace>