

CUPE OUWCC

Ontario University Workers Coordinating Committee

An important message to all CUPE university workers in Ontario:

In a few short weeks, university campuses across Ontario will begin reopening and resuming varying degrees of physical operations for the Fall academic semester. Reopening plans vary from university to university, but there will no doubt be some degree of any number of on-campus operations taking place throughout the Province.

As universities across Ontario resume operations, it is vitally important for university administrations to have workplace health and safety as a paramount consideration when crafting their reopening plans. Sadly, this does not appear to be the case at many universities. No one should be forced to work in an unsafe environment, even during a global pandemic. Everyone—including university administrations—**must**—ensure that every worker has a safe workplace, and is able to return home safely at the end of their work day.

As university workers, you can be assured that OUWCC and your assigned CUPE representatives will fiercely defend your right to a safe working environment.

In order to provide you with clear, concise information on safe working conditions, OUWCC has developed a series of information sheets with checklists which identify key workplace safety practices—particularly as they relate to COVID-19—for university workers.

Each checklist provides information for a particular classification of university worker, such as academic workers, service/maintenance, food service, etc., and will help to provide you with the information you need to make an informed choice about whether or not you feel your workplace is safe.

Remember—you have the right to refuse unsafe work! While others have a moral and legal responsibility to ensure a safe working environment, it is up to each and every one of us as university workers to ensure that our rights are respected and that employers and governments live up their responsibilities.

We hope you find these materials useful as we prepare for the beginning of the fall academic term.

In solidarity,



David Simao
OUWCC Chair

Suspected or Confirmed COVID-19 – what to do?

Prior to opening, the employer should designate a separate room and/or area away from all other workers and students in the event of a student or staff member becoming unwell.

The room and workers should be prepared and trained in advance. In the event it needs to be used, at least the following items should be on hand:

- ✓ Hand Sanitizers/Hand-washing station.
- ✓ Signage.
- ✓ Disposal Area.
- ✓ Designated Washroom.
- ✓ Supplies for Students – (that may be cleaned, sanitized, disinfected, or disposed of, as appropriate).
- ✓ Tissues.
- ✓ Cleaning and Disinfection Supplies.
- ✓ Personal Protective Equipment – Gloves, Gown, Goggles or Face Shield and Mask*.
- ✓ Equipment/facilities to deal with a person who is unwell (place to sit/lie down)

*If there is a respiratory hazard present in the workplace, the employer *must* take reasonable precautions against that hazard, including the use of PPE suitable for respiratory protection.

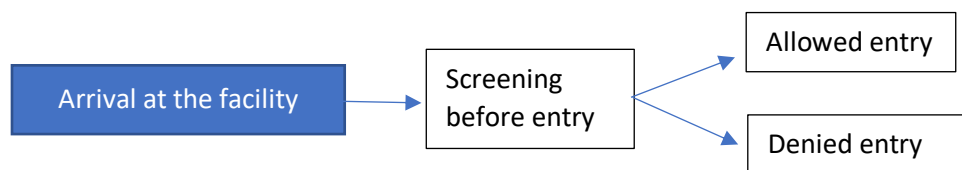
Screening

Screening should be done before workers and staff enter the facility. Refer to [COVID-19 Patient Screening Guidance Document](#) Workers must be trained on how to do this safely, including what PPE they are to wear and what procedures and questionnaires they are to use and follow.

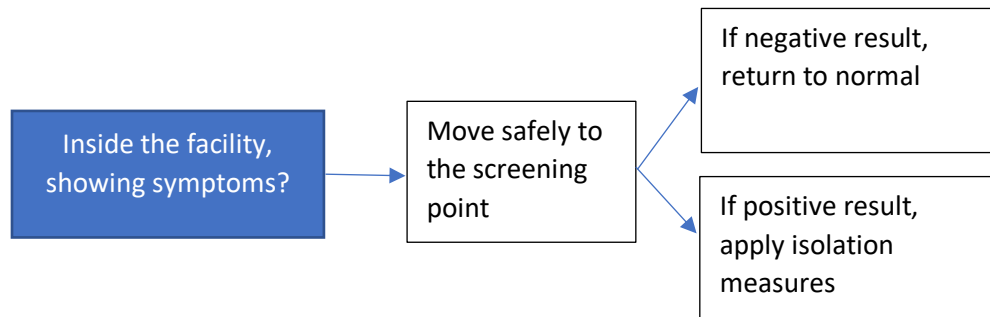
Positive Screening: Next Steps

If screening indicates the need for further action, consider the following:

- If screening prior to entry, the individuals involved should be refused entry to the facility and given the appropriate guidance.



- If a student or worker develops symptoms while they are in the facility, they should be isolated immediately, and appropriate isolation measures applied.



Isolation measures should include, but not limited to:

- ✚ Contacting their parents/guardian/partner immediately for pick up.
- ✚ Isolate the student or worker in a separate room or space away from all other workers and students.
- ✚ Bring all of the individual's belongings to the isolation room safely. For example, a plastic bag can be used to prevent contamination of other items or the worker's clothing.
- ✚ Do not include the individual in any group setting.
- ✚ Restrict activity and care of the individual to room and/or separate area.
- ✚ Having workers and equipment dedicated to the screening and/or isolation room (as appropriate)

They should report their symptoms to their supervisor/manager and contact their local public health unit for advice.

Testing should be arranged by calling the local public health unit by the parents/guardian or with consent, the child care worker.

While waiting for the student/worker to be picked-up:

- ✓ Choose a room in the facility with a door that can be closed and closest to an exit point to separate the staff member who is unwell.
- ✓ Only one and the same worker should be in the designated room and attempt physical distancing from the ill child by maintaining a distance of 2 meters. If physical distancing cannot be avoided, staff should wear appropriate PPE, as determined by their risk assessment. The ill student/worker should also wear a surgical mask (if tolerated).
- ✓ Staff should perform hand hygiene frequently and attempt to not touch their face with unwashed hands.
- ✓ Increase ventilation in the designated exclusion room if possible (e.g., open windows).
- ✓ If a private room is not possible, make sure the room has good airflow (open windows as security protocols and weather permits), that the worker and student can be kept 2 metres or 6 feet away from other people and wear a surgical/procedure mask, if possible.
- ✓ If the room must be shared by more than one person who is unwell, these people are not required to wear masks, but the worker must still wear required PPE.
- ✓ Identify a separate bathroom for individuals to use, if possible.
- ✓ If a private bathroom is not available, consider developing a schedule for use with the unwell student/worker going last, followed by a thorough cleaning of the bathroom.

- ✓ If worker is advised to transport the individual to an Assessment Centre, arrange private transportation (no public transit is allowed) and have the individual wear a surgical/procedure mask. If possible, the individual should sit alone in the backseat and open the car windows if possible. The driver of the vehicle should wear a mask.
- ✓ Individuals must remain in the designated isolation room until their departure, including for receiving meals and activities.
- ✓ If the unwell person gets worse and needs to go to the hospital because of severe symptoms (e.g., severe difficulty breathing, severe chest pain, very hard time waking up, confusion, loss of consciousness), call 911 and inform them that the person is suspected of having COVID-19 so that the hospital can be notified and the paramedics can take the necessary precautions.

After Isolation

- ✓ After the individual is removed from isolated room or separate space, a thorough cleaning and disinfection of the room must be conducted immediately.
- ✓ Workers and students who were in the same room with the individual will be kept together and not mix with other groups for 14 days where possible.
- ✓ Worker should self-monitor for symptoms for the next 14 days. During this period, they should avoid contact with vulnerable persons or settings where there are vulnerable persons (i.e., long-term care homes).
- ✓ The employer will inform staff, parents/guardians/partner of students/worker who were in the same room of the possible exposure, and what instructions or next steps they should take in the circumstance.
- ✓ Student or worker who have been exposed to a confirmed case of COVID-19 or symptomatic person(s) should be excluded from the child care centres for 14 days. Staff should not be penalized for following the isolation protocol.

Cleaning and Disinfection

To prevent illness from a biological hazard, we need to prevent workers from being exposed in the first place. This includes proper cleaning and sanitizing. For more information please refer to **CUPE National Cleaning and Disinfection Factsheet**.

Employers should develop policies for worker protection and provide training to all cleaning staff on site prior to providing cleaning tasks. Training should include when to use PPE, what PPE is necessary, how to properly don (put on), use, and doff (take off) PPE, and how to properly dispose of PPE. Employers must ensure workers are trained on the hazards of the cleaning chemicals used in the workplace in accordance with OHSA.

Intensify cleaning and disinfection efforts:

- ✓ Facilities should develop a schedule for cleaning and disinfecting; this should include frequency, time, checklist etc.
- ✓ Routinely clean, sanitize, and disinfect surfaces and objects that are frequently touched, especially desks, lab, and computer stations. This may also include cleaning objects/surfaces not ordinarily cleaned daily such as doorknobs, light switches, classroom sink handles, countertops, ATM machines, elevators, handrails, tables, countertops, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets and sinks etc.
- ✓ Computer keyboards are difficult to clean. Shared computers should have signs posted instructing proper hand hygiene before and after using them to minimize disease transmission. To facilitate cleaning, consider using covers that protect, but enable use of the keys.
- ✓ Use all cleaning products according to the directions on the label and per manufacturing guidelines (Safety Data Sheet).
- ✓ Make sure there is enough supply of gloves and appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) based on the label, the amount of product you will need to apply, and the size of the surface you are treating.
- ✓ If surfaces are dirty, they should be cleaned using a detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for concentration, application method, and contact time for all cleaning and disinfection products.
- ✓ All cleaning materials should be kept secure.
- ✓ Ensure that there is adequate ventilation when using these products to prevent students from inhaling toxic fumes.
- ✓ Alcohol Based Hand Rub is to be used by all staff and students prior to moving to another area of the university e.g. Moving from cafeteria to classroom, computer lab to classroom or whenever transition is made, when possible.

Consideration when Cleaning and Disinfecting Classrooms, Labs and Cafeterias

- ✓ Close off the area to other people and wait as long as possible (at least 30 minutes, but if cleaning after a person who has been identified as suspected, presumed or confirmed as infected with COVID-19, then wait at least 24 hours) before commencing cleaning and disinfection.
- ✓ Open outside doors and windows to increase air circulation and ventilation
- ✓ For electronics, such as tablets, touch screens, keyboards, remote controls, and ATM machines. Consider putting a wipeable cover on electronics. Follow manufacturer's instruction for cleaning and disinfecting.
- ✓ Do not touch your face or hair at any time after you start cleaning and before removing gloves.
- ✓ Do not use compressed air or water sprays to clean potentially contaminated surfaces as these techniques may suspend the virus into the air.
- ✓ Properly remove gloves and dispose of them immediately in a plastic-lined, non-touch (or open) waste bin (do not use disposable gloves for more than one room) or properly clean and decontaminate reusable gloves, after cleaning a room or area.
- ✓ Properly wash hands immediately after gloves are removed.
- ✓ If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60 per cent alcohol.
- ✓ Create a Cleaning Checklist that should include, but not limited to:
 - Door knobs and handles
 - Stair rails
 - Classroom desks and chairs
 - Cafeteria tables and chairs
 - Food Dispensers
 - Vending Machines
 - Countertops
 - Handrails
 - Light switches
 - Handles on equipment (e.g., athletic equipment)
 - Pushbuttons on vending machines and elevators
 - Shared equipment i.e. lab equipment
 - Shared remote controls
 - Shared telephones
 - Shared desktops
 - Shared computer keyboards and mice
 - Bathroom

Food Preparation

Hand Hygiene, Cleaning and Physical Distancing

This virus spreads from human-to-human and contaminated surface-to-human contact. As such, hygiene signage such as but not limited to; avoid touching your face, sneeze/ cough etiquette and proper hand washing, must be posted at entrances, washrooms, hand washing stations, meal rooms, cafeterias and public areas, should be posted. Workers should have access to the following;

- ✓ Handwashing facilities with soap and hand towels and enforced schedule and time for frequent and thorough hand washing and cleaning.
- ✓ Disinfecting wipes and hand sanitizers — with a concentration of 60 per cent alcohol — more specifically for food couriers who may not have ready access to handwashing facilities while on the road (Food couriers should sanitize hands and wipe down commonly touched vehicle surfaces (i.e., steering wheel, door handles, dashboard) after every food delivery.)
- ✓ Hand moisturizers to help prevent dermatitis, tissues to catch coughs and sneezes.
- ✓ Non-touch waste disposal receptacles.
- ✓ Clean towels, sponges, and aprons (Use a separate cloth when sanitizing front of house/customer-accessed areas for food pickup).
- ✓ Clean work surfaces, especially commonly touched non-food surfaces and equipment; clean at minimum twice a day.
- ✓ Gloves, tongs, and other utensils to prevent direct contact with food.
- ✓ Establish individual workstations/spaces and equipment for each worker. If not possible, shared resources must be cleaned between use.
- ✓ Separate food prep and pickup areas.
- ✓ Assign different workers for each area. Keep a two-metre distance, including for student pickups – floor signage marked appropriately
- ✓ Place marks on the floors to maintain physical distancing when entering cafeteria area.
- ✓ Limit the number of students allowed to enter Cafeteria area to maintain physical distancing
- ✓ Ensure there is one entrance and exit point
- ✓ Dishwashing and laundry equipment - the proper functioning of the dishwashing and laundry equipment should be checked, particularly the operating temperatures, as well as the correct dosage of cleaning and disinfecting chemicals

Food Preparation and Meal Service

- ✓ Install plexiglass barriers at, and between, cash registers if available.
- ✓ Follow all food safety precautions related to temperature and storage of hot and cold foods.
- ✓ If self-service is still available, discontinue open salad bars, olive bars, buffets, and areas that require using the same utensils.
- ✓ If possible, have pre-packaged items/food such as utensils, napkins, condiments, treats etc.
- ✓ Mark the floor with 2 metre (6 feet) distances to promote physical distancing in aisles, line ups, and cash registers.
- ✓ Encourage the use of prepaid food orders and contactless payment (i.e. online, debit, or credit) to facilitate pick up and delivery (Couriers can then leave prepaid food at customer's doors).
- ✓ Submit documents and forms electronically such as food temperature checks, or wash hands after handling papers.
- ✓ Mark certain tables and chairs unavailable for use to maintain appropriate distances between students.
- ✓ Sinks used for food preparation should not be used for any other purposes.
- ✓ Remove all shared condiments off tables or in cafeteria areas i.e. salt, pepper, sugar etc.
- ✓ Set shorter operating hours or implement closure days to allow for deep cleaning

Research Labs

All laboratories should perform a site-specific and activity-specific hazard assessment to identify and mitigate risks of COVID-19. Employer should be considering the following when conducting this assessment, but not limited to;

- The procedures performed
- Identification of the hazards involved in the process and/or procedures
- The competency level of the personnel who perform the procedures
- The laboratory equipment and facility
- The resources available

General Safety

- ✓ Schedule designated times for usage of lab to limit the amount of persons per room to ensure physical distancing can be maintained.
- ✓ Lab equipment are spaced to ensure appropriate physical distancing of 2m. Before and after use, all equipment should be sanitized appropriately.
- ✓ Training on donning and doffing PPE with signage should be placed around the room
- ✓ Ensuring there is adequate supply of PPE within the room.
- ✓ Lab coats are assigned to workers and not for sharing. New coats should be labeled and marked by Laundry Services prior to use.
- ✓ Designate each student their own lab stations and equipment, if possible. Otherwise, conduct proper cleaning and disinfection protocol after each use.

Laboratory Biosafety

- ✓ When handling and processing specimens, including blood for serological testing, laboratory practices and procedures that are basic to good microbiological practices and procedures (GMPP) should be followed;
 - The handling and processing of specimens from cases with suspected or confirmed 2019-nCoV infection intended for additional laboratory tests such as haematology or blood gas analysis should follow local guidelines for processing potentially infectious material.
- ✓ Non-propagative diagnostic laboratory work including, sequencing, nucleic acid amplification test (NAAT) on clinical specimens from patients who are suspected or confirmed to be infected with nCoV, should be conducted adopting practices and procedures of “core requirements” for controls.

- ✓ Handling of material with high concentrations of live virus (such as when performing virus propagation, virus isolation or neutralization assays) or large volumes of infectious materials should be performed only by properly trained and competent personnel in laboratories capable of meeting additional essential containment requirements and practices. Initial processing (before inactivation) of all specimens including those for sequencing and NAAT should take place in an appropriately maintained and validated biological safety cabinet (BSC) or primary containment device.
- ✓ Appropriate disinfectants with proven activity against enveloped viruses used for the recommended contact time, dilution and within the expiry date after the working solution is prepared.
- ✓ All technical procedures should be performed in a way that minimizes the generation of aerosols and droplets.
- ✓ Appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) as determined by a detailed risk assessment, should be worn by all laboratory personnel handling these specimens.

Routine Viral Testing

Routine viral testing of specimens, such as the following activities, can be handled in a BSL-2 laboratory using Standard Precautions:

- ✓ Using automated instruments and analyzers.
- ✓ Processing initial samples.
- ✓ Staining and microscopic analysis of fixed smears.
- ✓ Examination of bacterial cultures.
- ✓ Pathologic examination and processing of formalin-fixed or otherwise inactivated tissues.
- ✓ Molecular analysis of extracted nucleic acid preparations.
- ✓ Final packaging of specimens for transport to diagnostic laboratories for additional testing (specimens should already be in a sealed, decontaminated primary container).
- ✓ Using inactivated specimens, such as specimens in nucleic acid extraction buffer.
- ✓ Performing electron microscopic studies with glutaraldehyde-fixed grids.

Procedures with a High Likelihood to Generate Droplets or Aerosols

For procedures with a high likelihood to generate aerosols or droplets, use either a certified Class II Biological Safety Cabinet (BSC) or additional precautions to provide a barrier between the specimen and personnel. Examples of these additional precautions include personal protective equipment (PPE), such as a surgical mask, N95 or face shield, or other physical barriers, like a splash shield; centrifuge safety cups; and sealed centrifuge rotors to reduce the risk of exposure to laboratory personnel.

Site- and activity-specific biosafety risk assessments should be performed to determine if additional biosafety precautions are warranted based on situational needs, such as high testing volumes, and the likelihood to generate infectious droplets and aerosols.

Environmental Specimen Testing

Procedures that concentrate viruses, such as precipitation or membrane filtration, can be performed in a BSL-2 laboratory with unidirectional airflow and BSL-3 precautions, including respiratory protection and a designated area for donning and doffing PPE. The donning and doffing space should not be in the workspace. Work should be performed in a certified Class II BSC.

This guidance is intended for only those laboratories that perform virus concentration procedures, such as wastewater/sewage surveillance testing, not public health or clinical diagnostic laboratories that handle COVID-19 clinical specimens or laboratories that perform culture and isolation of SARS-CoV-2. Site- and activity-specific biosafety risk assessments should be performed to determine if additional biosafety precautions are warranted based on situational needs, such as high testing volumes or large volumes, and the likelihood to generate infectious droplets and aerosols.

Infection Control.

- ✓ A controlled ventilation system maintains inward directional airflow into the laboratory room.
- ✓ A dedicated hand-wash sink should be available in the laboratory.
- ✓ Decontaminate the instrument after each run by using an EPA-approved disinfectant for SARS-CoV-2. Following the manufacturer's recommendations for use, such as dilution, contact time, and safe handling.

Packing and Shipment

All materials transported within and between laboratories should be placed in a secondary container to minimize the potential for breakage or a spill. An example includes transfer of materials from the biological safety cabinet to an incubator and vice versa. Specimens leaving the BSC should be surface decontaminated. Detailed guidance is provided in the WHO biosafety video series, in particular "Good Microbiological Practices and Procedures (GMPP) 7: transport":

<https://www.who.int/ihr/publications/biosafety-videoseries/en/>

Student Management

Creating an effective plan on how to manage daily activity for student management is important to controlling the hazards of COVID-19. Implementing engineering and administrative controls are measures that will support a health and safe return to campus for workers and students.

We need to look at the workers duties, tasks and requirements to help in establishing what modifications will be necessary in ensuring the employer is taking every reasonable precaution to ensure the health and safety of all workers. Below are some considerations of daily activities and how to achieve health and safety.

COVID-19 Point of Contact for Students/Workers

- ✓ Designate an administrator or office to be responsible for responding to COVID-19 concerns. All students, faculty and staff should know who this person is and how to contact them.

Classroom Settings

- ✓ Faculty and students engage in virtual-only learning options, activities, and events.
- ✓ Small in-person classes, activities, and events. Individuals remain spaced at least 6 feet apart and do not share objects (e.g., hybrid virtual and in-person class structures or staggered/rotated scheduling to accommodate smaller class sizes).
- ✓ Prior to entering and exiting room, dispensable hand sanitizer should be used by all entering/exiting the space.
- ✓ No shared equipment, books or paper being passed around.
- ✓ Computer stations/seating should be at least 6 feet apart to maintain physical distancing.
- ✓ No food allowed in classrooms
- ✓ Students should remain at their desk/chairs once seated for the duration of the class
- ✓ Encourage students, faculty, and staff to cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or use the inside of their elbow. Used tissues should be thrown in the trash and hands washed immediately with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
 - If soap and water are not readily available, use hand sanitizer.
- ✓ Support healthy hygiene behaviors by providing adequate supplies, including soap, hand sanitizer, paper towels, tissues, disinfectant wipes, and no-touch/foot pedal trash cans.

Gatherings

- ✓ Pursue virtual group events, gatherings, or meetings, if possible, and promote social distancing of at least 6 feet between people if events are held. Limit group size to the extent possible.
- ✓ Pursue options to postpone/cancel sporting events and participate in sports activities in ways that reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19 to players, families, coaches, and communities.
- ✓ Limit any nonessential visitors, volunteers, and activities involving external groups or organizations as much as possible – especially with individuals who are not from the local geographic area to visit the campus/student residential area (e.g., community, town, city, or county).

Telework and Virtual Meetings

- ✓ Encourage telework for as many faculty and staff as possible, especially employees at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19.
- ✓ Replace in-person meetings with video- or tele-conference calls whenever possible.
- ✓ Provide student support services virtually, as feasible.
- ✓ When possible, use flexible work or learning sites (e.g., telework, virtual learning) and flexible work or learning hours (e.g., staggered shifts or classes) to help establish policies and practices for social distancing (maintaining distance of approximately 6 feet) between people, especially if social distancing is recommended by provincial and local health authorities.