



PLAN PREPARE PREVENT

How to Support ICOF Employers
through COVID-19

Innovative **LIFE** Options 

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Plan Prepare Prevent

How to Support Employers through COVID-19

COVID-19

COVID-19 is a new (Novel) strain of the Coronavirus. It can look like a mild cold to severe flu like symptoms. If you are sick or believe you may have COVID-19 **DO NOT** come to work.

Symptoms of COVID-19 are dry cough, sore throat, runny nose, fever and shortness of breath. Currently there is a protocol in place for diagnosing the virus. You can find this protocol in Appendix A.

You can access this protocol and information about COVID-19 on the Health Links website, here: <https://misericordia.mb.ca/programs/phcc/health-links-info-sante/>

You can screen for the virus on the Health Links website above or the Shared Health Manitoba website here: <https://sharedhealthmb.ca/covid19/screening-tool/>

Vaccination and medication

There is no vaccination available for COVID-19. Although one is in the development process, it will not be ready for mass use for over a year. Practicing good respiratory health is encouraged to help protect against COVID-19.

There is no medication available to cure COVID-19. Antibiotics do not work on viruses. If you know of someone being treated for COVID-19 and has been given antibiotics, this is to protect them from other complications from the virus, it will not cure COVID-19.

Control and Stress

It is important that we remember that the COVID-19 pandemic is not only stressful on us, but on employers as well. What can appear as defiant or reckless behaviour can be a sign of anxiety, stress and fear. During this pandemic many people feel a sense of being under attack by an invisible enemy. This harbours strong feelings of loss of control and helplessness for many. Even in ICOF, vulnerable people can feel restricted in what they do and the choices they make. Although we want to do our best to keep employers safe, working in ways that make employers feel even more loss of control will not bring them onside, but make them feel even more loss of control. This can push some into crisis. This can be hard when you too may be feeling a sense of helplessness and lack of control. When supporting employers in decision making try to keep this in mind. They may be struggling with the fear of this pandemic as much as anyone else, even if it appears they are feeling the opposite.

We recommend you check out your orientation package, if you have one, to see the best ways to support this unique individual.

We also recommend reviewing existing materials and connecting with the Support Network and/or Team Leader when you have questions or concerns.

If you do not currently have the orientation package, you can ask if one exists and if you can have a copy.

We are all doing the best we can to support people through COVID-19. You are all doing an excellent job. We hope this resource helps you feel supported as well during these challenging times.

Plan and Prepare

Get up to date information about Manitoba COVID-19 activity from public officials and departments. Here are some you can access:

<https://www.gov.mb.ca/covid19/index.html>

<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada.html>

Your employer's medical information should be reviewed and updated in case they do get sick and need medical attention. An ERIK kit is a helpful tool to keep track of this information. If you don't have one, most fire stations have them to give out. The ERIK kit should be updated and kept on the fridge.

If there is more than one person living in a home, choose and prepare a designated room that can be used to separate anyone who is sick or under monitoring.

Make sure the following items are on hand and in good supply. Notify the support network or Team Leader if supplies are getting low:

- Pain and fever medication, Tylenol or Advil-the World Health Organization has now stated they do not advise against the use of Advil/Ibuprofen
- Thermometer to check for fever
- Cleaning supplies and disinfectants (sanitizer soaps, wipes, bathroom spray, soap to clean hands, latex gloves, masks, paper towels)
- Medications

Have an up-to-date list of staff, support network members and their contact numbers.

Make sure you know where the emergency kit is.

Make sure to have read this guide through and understand or ask for clarification if you do not understand certain procedures.

Make sure to have a doctor contact list to issue new prescriptions if necessary.

Prevention

Some employers may experience pre-existing health conditions or a weakened immune system. This makes them more vulnerable to both getting the virus and experiencing the most severe symptoms. Insist upon diligent self-monitoring and monitoring of your employer's health. Be attuned to changes in their emotions and behaviours. This maybe a sign of getting sick or struggling with stress and the emotional impact of the pandemic.

- If you are sick, stay at home, don't come to work.
- Cover your mouth when you cough or sneeze with a tissue and then discard in the garbage or cough or sneeze into your elbow. Wash hands after sneezing into your hands or a tissue.
- The point of entry for germs is through the nose and mouth and eyes. Avoid touching your face with your hands as much as possible.
- Wash your hands or use sanitizer as soon as you enter their home.
- Wash your hands often using warm water and soap. Be sure to wash between fingers and in hollow in palm of the hand.
- Remind your employer to wash their hands before eating and after eating and upon returning from anywhere outside of their home.
- Disinfect twice a day commonly touched surfaces such as light switches, taps, counters, keyboards, remote controls door handles, telephones, tables and medical equipment etc.
- Keep bathrooms clean and use disinfectant spray to wipe down the bathroom at least twice a day.
- Ensure your employer receives necessary assistance to complete regular and thorough hand washing.
- Use latex gloves when coming into contact with bodily fluids.
- Carry hand sanitizer at all times when out in public and unable to access hand washing.
- Employers should regularly be reminded to practice social distancing and stay at home except for essential needs. Resources have been shared to help employers understand social distancing. Drives in the car are encouraged as well to help deal with cabin fever and feelings of loss of control in their life.

- Avoid large gatherings. The only public places that should be visited currently are for essentials only.
- Your employer should not invite any visitors into their home.
- In exceptional circumstances, visitors should be asked to wash their hands upon arrival.
- Wear a mask and gloves if you develop symptoms while at work until a replacement can arrive.

REMEMBER ~ IF YOU ARE NOT SURE IF THE STAFF BEFORE YOU DID ALL THE NECESSARY PREVENTATIVE CLEANING FEEL FREE TO DO IT AGAIN . . . IT CAN'T HURT . . . BUT IT CAN HURT IF IT WASN'T DONE!

Contracting COVID-19

- Stay at home if you have any signs of a cold or flu. There is a protocol in place to test for COVID-19. Instructions are listed in Appendix B
- If you do have COVID-19 or are sick and can't come into work, follow regular replacement staff procedures. Contact the support network or Team Leader to have your shift filled. It is of utmost importance that we do not bring the virus into your employer's life/home.
- Follow medical direction of when you are safe to come back to work.

If you Become Sick on the Job

- At the first sign of illness wear a mask.
- Use latex gloves when working with your employer.
- Call immediately to find a replacement and advise support network or Team Leader.
- Wipe surfaces: countertops, door handles, telephones, tables and medical equipment with sanitizer wipes or disinfectant spray and paper towel.
- DO NOT ALLOW any visitors into the home for everyone's safety.

If your Employer Becomes Sick on your Shift

- At the first sign of illness wear a mask and try to get your employer to wear one and anyone else in the house.
- Use clean latex gloves when working with your employer.
- Call support network or Team Leader to advise of illness.
- Advise anyone else in the home immediately.
- Wipe down all areas your employer may have touched with sanitizer wipes.
- Your employer will also have to follow the protocol on screening for COVID-19. Instructions are listed in Appendix B
- Wash your employers clothes, towels and bedding daily. Handle with latex gloves and wear a mask to avoid picking up the germs.
- If their symptoms worsen notify the support network or Team Leader immediately and if not available seek medical attention for your employer.
- DO NOT ALLOW any visitors into their home for everyone's safety.
- Your employer will be in self-quarantine until they receive medical advice saying they are okay to leave their home.
- After they have recovered from COVID-19 sanitize their room and bedroom furniture well, including their pillows and bedding.

If a Roommate Becomes Sick on your Shift

- Should a roommate display any signs of COVID-19 encourage them to wear a mask and use latex gloves.
- Ensure you are wearing a mask and try to get your employer to wear one to avoid picking up the virus.
- Call the support network or Team Leader to report the illness.
- If their symptoms worsen encourage them to seek medical attention immediately.
- Avoid as much contact as possible with an infected person.
- Clean common areas of use as often as possible
- Make sure you are using preventative procedures to avoid spreading.
- Should they be diagnosed encourage them to self-quarantine in the room designated for self-quarantine.

- They may be removed from the home or your employer's family may choose to move your employer out. If/when this occurs, you will need to wait for further direction.

Handling Staff Shortages

The support network or Team Leader is in charge of all scheduling. If your employer experiences a DSP shortage due to COVID-19 the support network or Team Leader will stay on top of scheduling and staffing options. There is now a Staff Deployment Service online that matches up DSP's who have been laid off from day programs that have been shut down with employers/agencies who are short staffed. This will be an extremely beneficial tool if shortages occur and can be accessed here <https://abilitiesmanitoba.org/sds/>.

There are also alternative for profit companies that can be accessed in an emergency.

- Services Beyond Support
- Compassionate Care

Should the Team Leader fall ill the support network will take on these responsibilities.

COVID-19 and Financial options-EI

The Government of Canada has put new guidelines and policies in place to help people get through COVID-19. If you are unable to come to work because you have COVID-19 or you are forced to stay at home with your children you can apply for immediate financial support through EI. You can access information on how to apply here <https://www.canada.ca/en/services/benefits/ei.html>. You must do this online if possible.

If you are not sick from COVID-19, but feel you need to take leave from your position, you will need to contact EI to see if you are covered for benefits. Each scenario will be unique.

Your employer is not entitled by Employment Standards to pay you if you go on COVID-19 sick leave or are in self-quarantine. They are only required to pay you if they are asking you to self-quarantine. This does not mean you will not receive financial support during self-quarantine, financial support will occur through EI.

Thank you!

We thank you for all of your support and dedication to your employer and their team. We could not get through this without you. We welcome any suggestions, ideas, comments you have! We encourage you to report any unsafe practices to the Team Leader or the Support Network. If we all work together to ensure the best possible preventative measures are taken hopefully we will all avoid COVID-19.

Appendix A –Screening for COVID-19

You can access the Health Links website, here:

<https://misericordia.mb.ca/programs/phcc/health-links-info-sante/>

You can screen for the virus on the Health Links website above or the Shared Health Manitoba website here: <https://sharedhealthmb.ca/covid19/screening-tool/>

International travellers who have developed cold- or flu-like symptoms that are associated with COVID-19 (such as cough, runny nose, fever, sore throat or headache) within 14 days of returning to Canada should contact Health Links -Info Santé at 204-788-8200 or toll-free at 1-888-315-9257 to be referred for testing.

If you have cold- or flu-like symptoms but have NOT travelled internationally within the last 14 days and have NOT had contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 you will not need to be screened. Please remain at home and self-isolate until your symptoms have been gone for 24 hours.

Public health officials are strongly advising all Manitobans, including health-care providers, to cancel or postpone any non-essential international travel. In addition, public health officials are recommending all international travellers self-isolate and self-monitor for symptoms for 14 days after returning to Canada.

Please Note

Public health officials also strongly urge anyone who has cold or flu-like symptoms, such as a cough, fever, runny nose, sore throat, weakness or headache, to self-isolate for 14 days.

Social distancing is used to intentionally reduce close contact between people to try to stop the progression of community transmission of any virus. Social distancing strategies for all Manitobans include:

Cancelling or postponing any large-scale events with more than 50 attendees;

Minimizing prolonged (more than 10 minutes), close (less than two metres) contact between other individuals in public;

Avoiding greetings that involve touching such as handshakes;

Disinfecting frequently used surfaces;

Following public health advice related to self-monitoring and self-isolation if you have travelled or have been exposed to someone ill with the virus; and

Considering avoiding travel, crowded places and events, especially if you are at higher risk.

We remind you to protect yourself while out in public. Please wash your hands frequently, and maintain a distance of about 2 metres from others.

Appendix B-Social Distancing

<https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/phac-aspc/documents/services/publications/diseases-conditions/social-distancing-infograph/social-distancing-infograph-eng.pdf>

PDF included in paper copy

SOCIAL DISTANCING

Together, we can slow the spread of COVID-19 by making a conscious effort to keep a physical distance between each other. Social distancing is proven to be one of the most effective ways to reduce the spread of illness during an outbreak. With patience and cooperation, we can all do our part.

What does Social Distancing mean?

This means making changes in your everyday routines in order to minimize close contact with others, including:

- avoiding crowded places and non-essential gatherings.
- avoiding common greetings, such as handshakes
- limiting contact with people at higher risk (e.g. older adults and those in poor health)
- keeping a distance of at least 2 arms lengths (approximately 2 metres) from others, as much as possible

Here's how you can practice social distancing:

- greet with a wave instead of a handshake, a kiss or a hug
- stay home as much as possible, including for meals and entertainment
- shop or take public transportation during off-peak hours
- conduct virtual meetings
- host virtual playdates for your kids
- use technology to keep in touch with friends and family if possible.
- use food delivery services or online shopping
- exercise at home or outside
- work from home

Remember to:

- wash your hands often for at least 20 seconds and avoid touching your face
- cough or sneeze into the bend of your arm
- avoid touching surfaces people touch often

If you're concerned you may have COVID-19:

- separate yourself from others as soon as you have symptoms
- if you are outside the home when a symptom develops, go home immediately and avoid taking public transit
- stay home and follow the advice of your Public Health Authority, who may recommend self-isolation
- call ahead to a health care provider if you are ill and seeking medical attention

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
🌐 canada.ca/coronavirus 📞 1-833-784-4397

Public Health Agency of Canada / Agence de la santé publique du Canada

Canada

Helpful Links

Government of Canada Travel Health Notices

<https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/health-safety/travel-health-notice>

Public Health Agency of Canada - Coronavirus disease (COVID-19)

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection.html>

The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention - 2019 Novel Coronavirus

<https://www.cdc.gov/>

The World Health Organization - Coronavirus

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>

Public Health - Health, Seniors and Active Living

<https://www.gov.mb.ca/health/publichealth/index.html>

City of Winnipeg (COVID-19)

<https://www.winnipeg.ca/emergweb/covid-19/default.stm>

Government of Manitoba (COVID-19)

<https://www.gov.mb.ca/covid19/>