



On March 16<sup>th</sup> the Ministry of Labour, Training & Skills Development released a [statement to employers in which they are required to report all occupational illnesses, including COVID-19, to the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development in writing within four days. Employers are also required to notify their joint health and safety committee or a health and safety representative and a trade union, if they exist.](#) The intent of this is to stop the spread and isolate cases of COVID-19.

On March 18<sup>th</sup>, Ontario Premier Ford, reiterated that construction sites would remain open in the province, relying on advice of the Chief Medical Officer of Health, Dr. David Williams. In response to our network of local home building associations across the province and individual member companies asking for resources and guidance, OHBA has compiled the following document.

### **COVID-19 Resources & Guide**

During this critical time individual companies are making the decision that's best for their home buyers, employees, trades and contractors. Members are doing their utmost to protect the health and safety of those working onsite while at the same time providing the homes that families across the city are counting on to live in – some of whom don't have alternative accommodations if that home is not ready for them in time.

Health authorities and provincial leaders have said that construction sites may remain open with the proper protocols in place. Members are limiting trade access to work areas, changing work schedules and minimizing the number of people on site at any given time. At the same time, members are dedicated to the safety of municipal staff and inspectors and will follow all city-directed protocols during site visits. In order to assist members with protecting everyone on site, OHBA encourages the use of best practices laid out in the following resources:

- [Public Health Ontario](#)
- [Ontario COVID-19 Website](#)
- [Health Canada](#)

### **On the Jobsite**

**Currently in Ontario, job sites remain open.** However, COVID-19 is a dynamic and consistently changing situation which can impact future government decisions. Every business should be actively communicating with their employees and trades to ensure they are well informed on COVID-19 and the measures that are in place to protect workers.

The following measures act as a **guide for enhanced precautions** on top of all existing OHS regulations. These measures are meant to enhance public health on jobsites. It is important to note that **employers have the duty to keep workers and work sites safe and free of hazards and workers have the right to refuse unsafe work.**

### **Enhanced Health and Safety Protocols**

**All jobsite personnel** guidelines;

- All personnel should wash hands frequently, sneeze or cough into elbows, frequently clean and disinfect shared and frequently touched objects and surfaces.



- Avoid touching your face, eyes, nose or mouth.
- Avoid sharing food/drinks/cups/utensils.
- Stay home if you are feeling unwell.
- Suspend all work-related travel outside of normal travel within local operations.
- Employ social distancing (2 metres between individuals) and implement a “handshake-free” zones at all meetings and gatherings.
- To ensure personnel do not assemble in groups consider staggering,
  - Start times
  - Lunches
  - Breaks
- Where you can, avoid commonly touched areas including handrails, public transit poles and ensure you clean your hands afterwards.
- Open doors and touch elevator buttons with gloves.
- Wash your clothes as soon as you get home from the jobsite.

#### **Employers guidelines;**

- Direct employees to self isolate for 14 days if they have recently returned from travel abroad.
- Ensure onsite sanitation is accessible. This includes washroom facilities, soap and water, hand sanitizer.
- Ensure that washrooms and commonly touch surfaces (doorknobs etc.) are disinfected regularly.
- Adjust site schedules to limit the number of trades/individuals in any given unit.
- Monitor the health and wellbeing of personnel on site. Notify [Public Health Ontario](#) of suspected cases.
- Ensure that information related to COVID-19 enhanced precautions is posted and available to all personnel on a jobsite. This can include,
  - [Signage](#) to alert workers of any signs & symptoms of acute respiratory illness
  - [Posters](#) promoting hand-washing and respiratory hygiene

#### **Employee Illness Reporting**

Those who are exhibiting symptoms should be sent home. **Employees** should notify their supervisor immediately if they are ill and **employers** should take needed steps to notify Public Health Ontario of suspected COVID-19 cases.

#### **Additional Resources**

- [IHSA COVID-19 Safety talk](#)
- [Bill 186 Employment Standards Amendment Act \(Infectious Disease Emergencies\), 2020](#)