

COVID-19 GUIDE



Ontario
Home Builders'
Association

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Operating in Occupied Spaces

As a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic, the Ontario Home Builders' Association has developed this guide to help members adapt their protocols and procedures to work safely and effectively within occupied spaces.

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GUIDE TO OPERATING IN OCCUPIED SPACES

STANDARD PROTOCOLS FOR CONSTRUCTION SITES

This document has been developed by OHBA to assist members in conducting work in occupied spaces, such as builder repairs or inspections. It is advised to adhere to any best practices set out by [federal](#), [provincial](#) and municipal public health authorities where applicable. Posting of policies is encouraged to promote communication and education for all employees, contractors, trades and clients.

When reviewing your policies and procedures, we have found that aside from provincial and federal health regulations, the [Tarion](#) website has valuable resources to support your enhanced COVID-19 health and safety policies. This includes information on the reinstatement of timelines and additional information on performing PDI inspections, delayed closings and second notices. Additionally, working with your municipality and Chief Building Official (CBO) can help you to educate your colleagues, partners, employees and clients to adapt to performing work within occupied spaces.

It should be noted that this is not a legal document, and it is advised to seek legal advice where appropriate.

Health and Safety Policies

The following list items are suggested policies to be posted and shared electronically with anyone accessing the site, including homeowners, trades and building officials:

- [COVID-19 awareness notice](#)
- Best practice policies as per [Public Health Agency of Canada](#) including hand washing, physical distancing and personal protective equipment (PPE) expectations while working
- Site protocol for scheduling of work, including project lead contact info
- [Screening tool](#) for workers on a daily or weekly basis to ensure safety, including a homeowner declaration, or attestation of good health from homeowners
- [On-site sanitation protocol](#) for all shared touch points, including washrooms, communal areas or [shared tools](#)
- [Illness notification policy](#)

Scheduling and tracking

Communication of policy and procedures is key to ensuring everyone's safety. Site access should be scheduled by appointment only, arranged with project lead. Consider the following steps when scheduling to enhance your current protocol:

- Schedule in advance with all parties, including homeowner if unit is occupied utilizing electronic communication (email, text) where possible
- Ensure health and safety policies, procedures and expectations are clearly conveyed to all participants
- For occupied units, have all parties agree to complete a COVID-19 screening tool before the scheduled visit as health and safety precaution
- Utilize a digital tracking tool for signing in and out
 - This tool could also incorporate the COVID-19 screening document
 - This can assist with contact tracing should the need occur, and is easier to manage than paper documentation

WORKING WITHIN OCCUPIED SPACES

Consult your local municipality to confirm if inspections are being completed in occupied or partially occupied buildings. Inquire about their requirements to perform the work and schedule accordingly to accommodate. Builders may be provided with the following options:

1. Inspection will not be carried out and the request will be logged and scheduled in order when inspections can safely resume
2. A detailed inspection report by a certified professional (engineer/architect) may be accepted. The report should be specific to the current inspection stage, be accompanied with evidence such as photographs and confirm that the construction stage was completed in accordance with the approved permit drawings and carried out in accordance with the Reports by Professionals Section
3. The scheduling of a remote/virtual inspection in accordance with the details in the remote/virtual inspection may be permitted
4. The inspection may be carried out by the building official

Inspections

OHBA has worked with OBOA in the following advice regarding inspections. Should a building inspection be scheduled in an occupied or partially occupied space, the following procedural steps may be required by the builder by the inspector to complete the work:

- All occupants of the building, the contractor and trades shall answer a set of screening questions and be advised as to those results prior to commencing the work
- Utilize electronic system for signing in and out (to provide ability to perform contact tracing)
- Furnace/mechanical system is to be off 1 (one) hour prior to arrival of the inspector
- Windows shall be open to allow fresh-air circulation for 1 (one) hour prior to arrival of the inspector
- All doors to rooms, lights on, cupboards or access panels shall be in the open position prior to the arrival of the inspector
- The inspector may request to carry out the inspection unaccompanied for the full duration of the inspection

The inspector shall ensure the following:

- Confirm the answers to the screening questions in Appendix B have resulted in a “NO”
 - If a person answers “NO” to 1, 2, 3 and 4, inform them that they (inspector) have conducted a similar screening on themselves and will attend the appointment
- Adhere to basic PPE, hygiene and physical distancing practices recommended to prevent the spread of COVID-19
- Use disinfectant wipes to wipe down any inspection equipment that was used during the inspection at the premises (may be done by site staff)
- The inspector may choose to complete the inspection process report from within their vehicle and issue a report (email)

Tarion Builder Warranty Services and Repair Periods

Beginning on July 13, 2020, Tarion has posted a 45-day remobilize for builders to organize and schedule trades, supplies and staff before the **reinstatement of the repair periods are on August 27, 2020.**

During the July 13 to August 27 remobilization period builder repairs are not required, however if granted access by the homeowner may occur under the emergency order.

The following suggestions outline expectations of both the builder and homeowner to complete the work safely during the remobilization period and will help builders get organized as before the reinstatement of the repair periods are on August 27, 2020:

Builder expectations:

- Provide very-clear schedules of who will be in home at what times
- Utilize an electronic system for signing in and out
- Staggering schedules of trades on site can help to limit the number of people working at once
- Health screening
- Communicate in advance if there will be any work required off schedule
- Coordinate via phone or email
- Create a policy for deliveries of materials that occur when no one from company is present
- Sanitize the entrance touch points prior to entering the space to begin the scheduled work, during the scheduled work, and at the end of the scheduled work period to secure the entrance and exit
- Keep clear and concise notes, including photos, video and relevant dates

Expectation that homeowners will comply with all company policies:

- Coordinate via phone or email
- Sign-In/Out
- Notify of any illness
- Submit declaration of health as requested by Contractor
- Access to work areas will be by appointment only in advance, requiring a sign-in sheet and cleaning of shared touch points
- Wear a face-covering when in areas of work

Tarion has provided addition guidance regarding on repairs protocols during COVID-19 and the reinstatement of repairs periods on August 27 at <https://www.tarion.com/builders/covid-19/>

RESPONSE MEASURES

The inclusion of clear detection and response measures should be demonstrated to protect against COVID-19 and reduce the risk of infection and site shut down. This risk extends to subcontractors, suppliers and deliveries, inspectors and homeowners, and should be considered in the development of a response plan. Additional guidance can be found on the [Government of Ontario's Resources to Prevent COVID-19 in the Workplace](#) web page.

Response Plan

Builders should consider a response plan for individuals and clients who have been potentially exposed to the virus. This would include those who may be exhibiting symptoms identified by public health authorities. The expectations for the builder are:

- Utilizing electronic tracking system, notify those who may have been in contact with the person who has been exposed to COVID-19
- Areas of the site potentially infected by a confirmed or probable case may require a barricade to keep individuals two meters away until the area is properly cleaned and disinfected
- Convey the status of the site to maintain transparency and due diligence

The expectations expressed to anyone on site that may have been exposed or has contracted COVID-19 should include the following:

- Contact health authorities for direction
- Self-isolate
- Quarantine as required
- Return to work only when approved

Individuals who begin to display flu-like symptoms on site are instructed to avoid touching anything, take extra care to contain coughs and sneezes, and return home immediately to undergo self-isolation as directed by the local health authority.

REFERENCE SUMMARY

1. Federal COVID-19 Website
<https://www.canada.ca/en/government/publicservice/covid-19.html>
2. Provincial Construction Site Health and Safety During COVID-19 Website
<https://www.ontario.ca/page/construction-site-health-and-safety-during-covid-19>
3. Tarion COVID-19 page
<https://www.tarion.com/builders/covid-19>
4. Ontario Home Builder's Association COVID-19 Health and Safety Package:
 - Awareness Notice
 - Screening Protocol
 - Intake Template
 - Illness Notification<https://www.ohba.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/covid-19-hs-package-v3-final.pdf>
5. Public Health Agency of Canada: Prevention and Risks
<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/prevention-risks.html>
6. IHSA Guidance on Construction Facility Hygiene During COVID-19
 - Practicing Proper Hygiene
 - On-site Sanitation Protocol<https://www.ihsa.ca/pdfs/alerts/COVID19/guidance-on-construction-facility-hygiene-during-covid-19.pdf>
7. Resources to Prevent COVID-19 in the Workplace – Guidance on Response Measures
<https://www.ontario.ca/page/resources-prevent-covid-19-workplace>