

What precautionary measures are required to mitigate the risk of transmission of COVID-19 when a workplace can NOT maintain a two-metre separation between people?

Any guidance issued by Public Health with respect to your individual industry or occupation must be implemented as a first step.

If an employer can not consistently maintain a two-metre separation between people due to essential work activities that require brief, sporadic interaction with others or if there will be unavoidable periods of close interaction, the following steps must be taken:

- Consider the installation of a physical barrier, such as a clear plastic guard, that may be used to protect workers from potential exposure.
- All employees entering a workplace must be **actively** screened for symptoms of COVID-19.
- Active screening must include temperature checks of all persons, provided a non-contact thermometer (i.e. infrared) is available. Where deemed appropriate following a workplace risk assessment, active screening should be conducted on all other persons entering the workplace as well as temperature checks provided a non-contact thermometer (i.e. infrared) is available.
- Given that the work environment and activities may require brief, sporadic interaction as well as infrequent, unavoidable periods of close interaction with other persons, the active screening activity, including temperature checks, shall be conducted at the start of each shift and repeated not more than every five hours thereafter.
- For personnel working 24-hour shifts, active screening active screening, including temperature checks, shall be conducted a minimum of four times during normal waking or active working hours, spaced in intervals of not more than five active working hours.
- Any person exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 must not enter the workplace or, if already midshift, be immediately removed from the workplace. 811 must be immediately contacted for instructions.
- For short periods of time when physical distancing is not possible in public settings (e.g., grocery shopping, in close settings such as public transit), wearing a non-medical mask is one way to protect those around you. Wearing a non-medical mask when in public or other settings is not a replacement for following proven measures such as hand washing and physical distancing.
- Proper hand-washing and enhanced sanitation/cleaning practices must be practiced in areas where multiple people handle tools, goods, supplies, equipment or other shared items.
- Some work activities may require travelling and employees may be seated in close quarters for periods of time with other actively screened co-workers. The employer may recommend that these employees further protect each other by wearing non-medical fabric face coverings as suggested by the NB Chief Medical Officer.
- The NB Chief Medical Officer does not recommend the use of surgical masks by people who have no symptoms of respiratory infection (unless under isolation precautions as directed by public health). It is **NOT** necessary to wear an N95 respirator or a surgical mask if you are well and not exhibiting any symptoms. Improperly worn, they may actually increase your risk of infections. These surgical masks are urgently needed for our health care workers, so they can be safe in their workplace.
- All workplace risk assessment practices as required by the Occupational Health and Safety Act must continue and any identified risks are to be mitigated as required by the Act.
- “Workplace” means any building, structure, premises, water or land where work is carried on by one or more employees, and includes a project site, a mine, a ferry, a train and any vehicle used or likely to be used by an employee.

For more information and tools on how to establish a safe and healthy workplace during COVID-19, please visit: <https://www.worksafenb.ca/safety-topics/covid-19/covid-19-what-workers-and-employers-need-to-know/>

More detailed information on risk informed decision making for workplaces may be found at <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/guidancedocuments/risk-informed-decision-making-workplaces-businesses-covid-19-pandemic.html>