

# Interim Recommendations for the Meat Slaughter Industry

April 1, 2020

## COVID-19 Preventive Measures in the Workplace

These measures will be adapted according to the epidemiological situation in each region.

These recommendations take into account the importance of maintaining the essential food production chain while aiming at optimal protection of workers.

To protect the health of employees and others in the workplace, employers and workers are asked to:

1. Respect the directives applicable to employees who are in mandatory isolation.
2. Advise workers **not to come to work** if they present symptoms suggestive of COVID-19 (fever or newly developed or worsening cough or difficulty breathing or other symptoms that may eventually be added to the list at the following website: <https://www.quebec.ca/en/health/health-issues/a-z/2019-coronavirus/answers-questions-coronavirus-covid19/>). Triage workers prior to entry into the plant (including outside workers and workers from employment agencies) to exclude symptomatic workers from the workplace, while avoiding a bottleneck.
  - a. If a worker starts experiencing symptoms in the workplace, have a procedure in place for isolating them in a room or have them wear a procedural (or surgical) mask. Call **1 877 644-4545**.
3. Limit travel between cities and regions as much as possible. If such travel is essential to the company's operations, adjustments must be made:
  - a. For outside workers travelling in a group, apply the recommendations in the information sheet [Recommandations intérimaires concernant le mode d'organisation du travail «Fly in Fly out» ou «Drive in Drive out»](#) (in French only).
  - b. For workers from employment agencies
    - i. Ensure that such workers are always assigned to the same company,
    - ii. Ensure that the agency triages symptomatic workers and excludes them from transport.
4. Promote proper hand hygiene by providing workers with all necessary supplies (running water, soap, hydro-alcoholic solutions, touchless trash cans, disposable tissues, hand towels or paper towels, etc.).
  - a. Wash hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
  - b. Use an alcohol-based gel (60% or more) for at least 20 seconds if soap and water are not accessible;
  - c. Avoid touching the eyes, nose or mouth with hands or gloves.
5. Promote **respiratory etiquette** (coughing into the folded elbow, or into a tissue that is discarded immediately after use, then washing hands as soon as possible):

6. Respect **social distancing** measures (e.g. teleworking, physical barriers), avoid direct physical contacts (e.g. handshakes, hugs) and, where possible, ensure that a two-metre distance is respected between people in the company's common and production areas. Passing by someone for a few minutes without contact is not a risk (e.g. on a staircase or in a corridor).

**Pay particular attention to the following situations:**

- a. Areas acting as **bottlenecks** (e.g. entrance to production areas, cafeteria entrance, areas where time stamps are located, etc.):
- Avoid line-ups of people standing close together in these areas;
  - If necessary, slightly stagger work shifts and break times.
- b. **Mealtimes:**
- Ensure rigorous handwashing before and after meals;
  - Have workers eat in rooms large enough to ensure a distance of more than two metres between each of them, or plan to add more rooms;
  - If no other room is available, modify meal time schedules so as to have a limited number of workers in the dining room at all times;
  - Do not exchange cups, glasses, plates, or utensils; wash dishes in hot water with soap.
- c. **Breaks:**
- Ensure that social distancing measures are applied during breaks (e.g. avoid gatherings);
  - Avoid the sharing of items (e.g. cigarettes, pencils, coins or bills);
  - Remove non-essential items (e.g. magazines, newspapers, knick-knacks) from common areas.
7. For tasks where it is impossible to maintain a distance of two metres at all times, **adjustments** must be made:
- a. Strictly enforce the exclusion of individuals from the workplace if they present a cough, fever, breathing difficulties, or other symptoms that may eventually be added to the list at the following website:  
<https://www.quebec.ca/en/health/health-issues/a-z/2019-coronavirus/answers-questions-coronavirus-covid19/>;
- b. Have the smallest and most consistent teams possible working on the same production line (reduce the number of workers and task rotations) to avoid the multiplication of interactions;
- c. As far as possible, have workers keep the same position on the production line for the entire work shift, unless there are risks related to physical, chemical or ergonomic constraints;
- d. Avoid sharing materials and equipment (knives, e-tablets, pencils, cell phones, etc.).

**In addition, for production lines**

- Make the necessary adjustments to ensure a two-metre distance between workers:
  - Reduce production;
  - Reorganize the workspace;
  - Modify work methods.<sup>1</sup>
- Install physical barriers between workers when the two-metre distance cannot be respected (e.g. Plexiglas);

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<sup>1</sup> The modifications must not introduce any new physical, chemical or ergonomic constraints.

- If it is impossible to implement the above measures or while waiting for this to be done;
  - It is recommended that a **procedural mask** (when humidity is low) and **protective eyewear** or a **visor that covers the entire face down to the chin be worn**, in addition to the gloves usually worn.
    - This measure is only recommended if wearing protective eyewear or a visor does not present a safety risk (e.g. problems with light diffraction; formation of fog or droplets on the visor).
    - Before leaving the production area:
      - Remove the gloves, protective eyewear and the procedural (surgical) mask safely<sup>2</sup> and place them in a trash can or in other designated containers or resealable bags, then dispose of them.
      - Disinfect reusable equipment (e.g. protective eyewear or visor, if reusable) using a product recommended for this equipment.
      - Ensure that hands are washed or that a hydro-alcoholic solution is used after the removal of equipment.
- For **production lines** where tasks already require **the use of respiratory protective devices** (RPDs) to protect against aerosols or dust, **workers are considered to be protected** even if they work within two metres of each other. However, the following measures must still be applied:
  - RPDs must be worn in accordance with a respiratory protection program and leak tests must have been carried out.
  - Add protective eyewear, if not already being worn.
  - When leaving the production area, safely remove gloves, protective eyewear and the RPD<sup>3</sup> and place non-reusable equipment in a trash can or in other designated containers or resealable bags, then dispose of them.
  - Disinfect reusable equipment (e.g. protective eyewear, reusable mask) using a product recommended for this equipment.
  - Ensure that hands are washed or that an alcohol-based solution is used after the removal of equipment.

#### **For merchandise handling (receiving and shipping):**

- Favour the consistency of teams that come into contact with persons from outside of the company (e.g. delivery persons, drivers);
- Ideally, organize tasks so that delivery persons and suppliers can drop off goods at the company entrance to avoid having workers from other companies circulate on the premises;
- Have goods placed on a clean surface, while maintaining the two-metre distance between individuals;
- Keep the merchandise-handling operations separate from the company's other work areas where possible.

#### **For the exchange or signing of documents:**

Where possible, minimize the exchange of hardcopy documents (e.g. sign contracts and delivery slips electronically).

Where hardcopy documents are required:

- Exchange documents (transmit and retrieve) by placing them on a clean surface, while maintaining the two-metre distance between individuals;
- Do not share pens with others; they must use their own pen;
- Set out designated pens that customers can keep if they did not bring their own pen to sign documents;
- Clean your pen with a damp cloth and mild soap as needed, when dirty;

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<sup>2</sup> Remove gloves, wash hands with a hydro-alcoholic solution, remove eye protection, wash hands with a hydro-alcoholic solution, remove the mask by handling it only by the elastics or straps, and finish by washing hands with soap and water or a hydro-alcoholic solution.

<sup>3</sup> *Idem.*

- During the retrieval of documents, place them in an envelope and transport them in a document carrier.
8. Disinfect **dining rooms** after each meal and **restrooms and locker rooms** on each work shift using the disinfecting product normally used.
  9. Clean **frequently touched surfaces** (tables, counters, door handles, telephones, computer accessories, pencils, etc.) on each shift, or when a new user takes over the workspace, with the cleaning product normally used.
    - a. **For production lines**, respect the usual hygiene and food safety recommendations of the MAPAQ and the CFIA. Pay particular attention to:
      - Manual controls on production lines (e.g. levers, control handles, buttons);
      - Tools and other devices handled in the course of production activities;
      - For more information: [https://www.mapaq.gouv.qc.ca/fr/Avis\\_Publicite/Pages/COVID-19\\_QuestionsReponses.aspx](https://www.mapaq.gouv.qc.ca/fr/Avis_Publicite/Pages/COVID-19_QuestionsReponses.aspx) (scroll to the bottom of the MAPAQ page for links to English versions)
    - b. **For handling activities** (reception and shipping of merchandise), pay close attention to forklift truck controls and pallet truck handles.
  10. Remove work clothes at the end of the work shift. Clean them following the usual procedure.
  11. Have a pandemics contingency plan adapted to the specific context of your workplace and see to its implementation: <https://publications.msss.gouv.qc.ca/msss/en/document-000969/>.

## Other references

- \* For recommendations regarding foreign agricultural workers, refer to the document: [Recommandations de santé publique qui doivent être appliquées pour l'accueil de travailleurs étrangers temporaires \(TET\) afin de soutenir les activités agroalimentaires au Québec en contexte de pandémie COVID-19](#) (in French only).

For recommendations concerning employment agency workers, an information sheet will be available shortly. Refer to the website:

<https://www.inspq.qc.ca/en/covid-19/occupational-health>

<https://www.inspq.qc.ca/publications/2925-recommandations-camionneurs-locaux-provinciaux-covid-19> (in French only)

<https://www.inspq.qc.ca/en/publications/2924-transborder-transportation-covid19>

**Note:** The preceding recommendations are based on the latest available information at the time of writing. Given that the situation and knowledge about the SARS-CoV-2 virus (COVID-19) are evolving rapidly, the recommendations in this document are subject to change.

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### TRANSLATION

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The French version is entitled *Recommandations intérimaires concernant l'industrie des abattoirs* is also available on the website of the Institut national de santé publique du Québec at: <https://www.inspq.qc.ca/publications/2959-industrie-abattoirs-covid19>

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