Workplace Sanitary Standards Guide for Museum Institutions and Libraries – COVID-19

OHS is everyone's business!

The purpose of this document is to support museum institutions and libraries for management of occupational health and safety (OHS) in their work environment. It seeks to guarantee that operations can resume or continue under the safest and healthiest possible conditions in the context of COVID-19.

In a crisis period, it is important that workers, employers and other players in the workplace collaborate to have healthy and safe work environments for all! Dialogue and cooperation are essential to achieve this.

For the measures applicable to their clientele and the capacity limits in their establishment, workplaces should refer to the Direction générale de la santé publique.

Management of occupational health and safety

Management means implementing the necessary measures to honour the employer's legal obligations, namely identify, correct and control the risks and encourage the workers' participation in this preventive approach.

Good cooperation between the employer and the staff is essential to encourage management of OHS.

The employer must **proceed with identification of the risks of transmission of COVID-19 in the work environment**. If the risks of contamination cannot be eliminated, the employer must seek to reduce and control them. The employer must identify the tasks during which workers may be exposed to the virus. The suppliers, subcontractors, partners and visitors have been informed of the preventive measures implemented in the museum institution or library to reduce and control the risks associated with COVID-19 and make them aware of the importance of complying with these measures.

The preventive measures that may be applied are based on the principles of exclusion of symptomatic persons from the workplace, physical distancing, hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette and maintenance of hygiene measures for the material, equipment and frequently touched surfaces.

Commission des normes, de l'équité, de la santé et de la sécurité du travail

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The COVID-19 context can be a major stress factor, whether for the employer or for the workers, suppliers, subcontractors, partners and visitors, due to the upheaval it causes in the different spheres of society. Special attention must therefore be paid to the psychosocial health of the staff.

Exclusion of symptomatic workers from the workplace

Persons exhibiting symptoms are part of the COVID-19 transmission chain in the workplace. Procedures accounting for the following factors can avoid transmission of the disease:

- Identification of workers with COVID-19 symptoms before they enter the workplace, by means such as:
  - the INSPQ's questionnaire,
  - self-evaluation by the workers;

  The answers to these questions are confidential information. The employer must take the necessary measures to protect the confidentiality of this information;
- A worker exhibiting symptoms associated with the disease (fever, cough or difficulty breathing or other symptoms) must be isolated in a room in the workplace, wear a mask and call 1-877-644-4545 to obtain instructions from the Direction générale de la santé publique;
- A poster has been installed at the entrance of the museum institution or library with all the useful information for visitors (reminder of instructions, organization of service, organization of queues, terms of payment, possibility of obtaining services by phone or online).
- The suppliers, subcontractors, partners and visitors have been informed of the preventive measures implemented in the facility to reduce and control the risks associated with COVID-19 and make them aware of the importance of complying with these measures.
- The visitors who exhibit symptoms are informed of their obligation to postpone their visit to the museum institution or library.

Physical distancing

- Whenever possible, a minimum of 2 metres of distancing between people must be maintained at work, from arrival to departure;
- This distance must also be maintained during breaks and lunch hour;
- Handshakes and hugs must be avoided

Adjustments that must be made to limit the risk of transmission when the principles of physical distancing cannot be respected:

- The use of technological means (telework) is preferred;
- Physical barriers (transparent full partitions) have been installed between the different workstations that are too close to each other or that cannot be spaced;
- Physical barriers (transparent full partitions) have been installed at the checkouts or the service counters;

- Organization of work methods. For example:
  - prefer teams that are as small and stable as possible,
  - reduce the number of workers and job rotations,
  - If applicable, do not hold meetings that require a physical gathering,
  - avoid sharing objects,
  - limit outings and trips to those strictly necessary;
- The number of visitors in the museum institution or library is limited. As needed, a person outside or at the reception of the museum institution or library is responsible for managing the queue;
- The delivery persons are informed they must deposit the packages on the floor in the presence of museum institution or library staff, without handing them over and respecting 2 metres of physical distancing whenever possible;
- Whenever possible, one-way traffic has been established to prevent people from encountering each other;
- Signage (e.g. floor marking) has been deployed to establish 2 metres of physical distancing near the checkouts and service counters.

Special measures for museum institutions

- Museum institutions operate their events or their group activities according to the instructions of the Direction générale de la santé publique regarding the number of people authorized for indoor gatherings and the minimum physical distancing parameters;
- Material for collective use (computers, tablets, audio guides, etc.) is disinfected between users;
- It is preferable to allow a limited number of visitors to circulate at the same time in the museum institution;
- Workers who must handle artworks, specimens, exhibition furniture, documents or other objects received in anticipation of an exhibition must wash their hands frequently. If possible, a good practice is to put these objects in quarantine for 24 hours before handling them;
- Personal protective equipment adapted to the risk is supplied [procedure mask and protective eyewear (protective glasses or visor covering the face down to the chin)] for personnel who perform a task requiring them to be within 2 metres of another person and in the absence of physical barriers;
- A sufficient quantity of necessary personal protective equipment, including a procedure mask, protective eyewear (protective glasses or visor covering the face down to the chin), must be provided and made available to the personnel.

Special measures for libraries

- Libraries operate their activities, including group animation activities, according to the instructions of the Direction générale de la santé publique regarding the number of people authorized for indoor gatherings and the minimum physical distancing parameters;
- Material for collective use (computers, tablets, audio guides, etc.) is disinfected between users;
- Visitors personally deposit the documents they return to the library in the book chute or in a place determined for this purpose;
- Workers who must handle carts, artworks, documents or other objects received must wash their hands frequently. If possible, for documents returned to the library, a good practice is to put these items in quarantine for 24 hours before handling them.

Hand hygiene

Washing hands frequently with lukewarm water and soap or with a hydroalcoholic solution with an alcohol concentration of at least 60% for at least 20 seconds limits the risks of transmission in the work environment, in particular:

- before touching the face (eyes, nose, mouth);
- after coughing, sneezing or wiping the nose;
- before and after eating;
- after handling something that is frequently touched.

Contactless payment (e.g. bank card or contactless terminals) is preferred to prevent visitors from touching the terminals. If visitors pay with cash, the cashiers disinfect their hands immediately afterwards with a no-rinse cleanser (hydroalcholic solution with an alcohol concentration of at least 60%);

Respiratory etiquette

Respecting respiratory etiquette consists of:

- covering your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze, and using tissues or the crook of your elbow;
- using single-use tissues;
- immediately discarding used tissues in the trash can;
- frequent hand washing;
- not touching your mouth or eyes with your gloved or bare hands.

Maintenance of hygiene measures for tools, equipment and frequently touched surfaces

Given that the virus responsible for COVID-19 can survive on surfaces, application of hygiene measures is essential.

- Ensure efficient operation and maintenance of the ventilation systems, according to the regulatory requirements for the type of facility and the tasks performed;
- Clean the sanitary facilities at least every shift and disinfect them daily;
- Clean the meal areas before each meal and disinfect them daily. For example:
  - refrigerator door handle,
  - chair backs,
  - microwaves;
- Clean the frequently touched surfaces at least every shift and when they are visibly soiled. For example:
  - tables,
  - counters,
  - doorknobs,
  - faucets,
  - toilets,
  - telephones,
  - computer accessories;
- Clean the material and equipment used after every shift or when it must be shared;
- Use the appropriate cleaning products or disinfectants (see the manufacturer's recommendations and do not mix cleansers);
- Remove non-essential objects (magazines, newspapers and knickknacks) from the common areas;

Resources are available online for more information concerning cleaning of surfaces or the recommended disinfectants.

Legal obligations

Legal obligations with respect to occupational health and safety, for both the employer and for workers, must be applied in the context of COVID-19. They are summarized below.

Employer

The employer has an obligation to protect the health, safety and physical well-being of their workers. *The Act respecting occupational health and safety* (AOHS) stipulates that the employer must take all the necessary measures to do so (section 51). This includes using methods to identify, correct and control risks.

In the context of COVID-19, the employer must ensure that the usual preventive measures are still appropriate. If not, they must modify them to protect workers against the risk of contamination.

The employer must also inform them about the risks associated with their work, including those associated with COVID-19. They must also provide workers with appropriate training, assistance and supervision so that everyone has the skill and knowledge required to safely perform the work assigned to them.

Worker

Every worker has an obligation to take the necessary measures to protect their health, safety or physical well-being and to ensure that they do not endanger the health, safety or physical well-being of other people in the workplace (section 49 of the AOHS). To do this, they must follow the rules and measures put in place in the context of COVID-19, just as they follow the other rules applied in the workplace. Workers must also participate in identifying and eliminating risks. If they see risks or have suggestions in this regard, they must inform the health and safety committee (if there is one), their superior or a representative of the employer.

We thank:

- Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec
- Musée des beaux-arts de Montréal / Montreal Museum of Fine Arts
- Musée de la civilisation
- Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal
- Société des musées québécois
- Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec (BAnQ)
- Association des bibliothèques publiques du Québec (ABPQ) – municipalities with over 5K inhabitants
- Réseau Biblio (Centre régionaux de services aux bibliothèques publiques (CRSBP) – municipalities with fewer than 5k inhabitants
- Ministère des Affaires municipales et de l'Habitation
- Fédération québécoise des municipalités
- Union des municipalités du Québec
- Confédération des syndicats nationaux
- Syndicat de professionnelles et professionnels du gouvernement du Québec
- Syndicat de la fonction publique et parapublique du Québec
- Canadian Union of Public Employees
- Fédération des travailleurs et travailleuses du Québec
- Association paritaire pour la santé et la sécurité du travail, secteur « affaires municipales »
- Santé publique
- Institut national de santé publique du Québec
- Ministère de la Culture et des Communications

The guide and the kit result from a reflective process intended to support the work environments in management of occupational health and safety in the context of COVID-19. The project is scalable and will harmonize with the preventive measures order by the Direction de la santé publique (public health authorities).

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