

Workplace Sanitary Standards Guide for
the Public Transportation Sector – COVID-19

OHS is everyone's business!



The purpose of this guide is to support public transportation sector companies 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. The information presented in this guide is valid until the public health authorities declare the end of the health crisis.

In a crisis period, it is important that workers, union associations, 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.



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, the union and the personnel 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 customers have been informed of the measures implemented in the company to control the risks associated with COVID-19 and made 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 washing, respiratory etiquette and maintenance of hygiene measures for the tools, equipment and frequently touched surfaces. The employer must make personal protective equipment and hydroalcoholic solution available to the workers when the situation requires it.

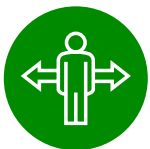
The COVID-19 context can be a major stress factor, whether for the employer or for the workers, suppliers, subcontractors, partners and customers, due to the upheaval it causes in the different spheres of society. Special attention must therefore be paid to the psychosocial health of personnel.



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:

- The workers are informed that in case of symptoms of cough or fever, difficulty breathing, sudden loss of smell or taste without nasal congestion with or without loss of taste, or any other symptom associated with COVID-19, they must not report to work;
- The employer ensures that the workers who have COVID-19 symptoms do not report to work;
- A worker who starts feeling symptoms in the workplace is isolated in a room, when necessary, wearing a procedure mask and reporting to 1-877-644-4545;
- Posters have been installed in the vehicles and at the appropriate access points for public transit with all the information useful to the passengers;
- Passengers who exhibit symptoms are informed of their obligation to refrain from taking public transit, postpone their purchases of passes, make them online or send someone in their circle to purchase them on their behalf;
- The suppliers, subcontractors, partners and customers have been informed of the measures implemented to control the risks associated with COVID-19 and made aware of the importance of complying with these measures.



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 are prohibited.

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

- Install placards or posters recommending that passengers wear face coverings, and reminding them of the hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette rules;
- Make the passengers aware of the need to discard their used tissues in a trash container at the vehicle entrance;
- Use work method and time arrangement measures to encourage compliance with the instructions given to the employees who are in mandatory isolation (telework) and those who have other types of constraints (flexible schedules, telework);
- If applicable, do not hold meetings that require a physical gathering;
- Avoid air recirculation and encourage opening of windows in the workplaces or vehicles, whenever possible, for example;
- Physical barriers (transparent full partitions) are installed between the different workstations that are too close to each other or that cannot be spaced;
- Physical barriers (transparent full partitions in compliance with the standards in force) are installed between the driver and the passengers, except in buses used for adapted transit/paratransit;
- Give priority to installation of physical barriers in the bus at one door;
- Maintain 2-metre distancing between the passengers and the driver's cab after installation of the physical barrier;
- Have the passengers board the bus by the front door and exit by the back door, whenever possible;
- On the buses, except for the buses used for adapted transit/paratransit, when the physical barrier is not installed at the driver's station, consider:
 - prohibiting access to the first benches to respect 2 metres of distancing from the driver,
 - indicating the separation line between the passengers and the driver with a line on the floor 2 metres from the driver's station,
 - having the passengers enter by the back door, whenever possible;
- If the tasks absolutely must be less than 2 metres from another person for a period longer than 15 minutes without a physical barrier, only once a day, wearing respiratory protection and protective eyewear is compulsory;
- The organization of work methods is reviewed. For example, limit the number of drivers in the cab to only one, if possible. Otherwise, prefer teams that are as small and stable as possible, maintain the same position, driver or copilot, for the entire shift, whenever possible, and avoid sharing objects;
- Complete the tracking tools to ensure traceability, when needed;

- Whenever possible, avoid exchanging papers (cash for fare collection, purchase orders, receipts, correspondence). Collection must not expose the bus driver to the risks related to COVID-19;
- Favour visual or contactless payment and validation of the transit pass. In case it is impossible to avoid exchanging papers, provide for a procedure to govern their handling;
- Personal protective equipment (respiratory protection, protective eyewear and skin protection [if necessary]) is supplied for drivers assigned to adapted transit/paratransit or for a task requiring them to be less than 2 metres from another person, without a physical barrier.



Hand washing

Frequent hand washing with lukewarm water and soap or with a 60% hydroalcoholic solution for at least 20 seconds limits the risks of transmission in the work environment, especially:

- 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.

Encourage transactions at the terminals, particularly charging transit passes.

Contactless payment (e.g. bank card or contactless terminals) is preferred to prevent customers from touching the terminals.

If passengers pay with cash, the ticket sellers and drivers must disinfect their hands before touching their face or other surfaces, using a no-rinse cleanser (60% hydroalcoholic solution).



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 live 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;
- Develop a COVID-19 hygiene and disinfection protocol, particularly including:
 - the cleaning and disinfection procedure,
 - the product storage and contaminated waste management procedure (newspapers, cleaning cloths),
 - employee training and information;
- 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:
 - the refrigerator door handle,
 - chair backs,
 - microwaves;
 - tables,
 - counters,
 - faucets;
- Clean the frequently touched surfaces when they are visibly soiled and disinfect them, at least every shift. For example:
 - bus-metro card recharging terminals,
 - workstations,
 - doorknobs,
 - toilets,
 - telephones,
 - computer accessories,
 - pencils;
- Clean and disinfect the driver's station every shift or during a change of driver. Pay special attention to surfaces frequently touched during driving, such as:
 - the steering wheel,
 - the interior and exterior door handles,
 - the interior rear-view mirror,
 - the seat belt,
 - the seat,
 - both sides of the physical barrier;

- Clean and disinfect the frequently touched surfaces in the vehicles every day (e.g. seat belts, straps, handrails, buzzers, doors, seats, sanitary facilities);
- Clean and disinfect the protective eyewear used (protective glasses or visor);
- Avoid sharing material or equipment (e.g. work tools, tablets, pencils, communications devices, etc.). When it is impossible to avoid sharing, the shared workstations and tools must be disinfected before their use by the person who takes possession;
- Use the appropriate cleaning products or disinfectants (see the manufacturer's recommendations and do not mix cleansers);
- During cleaning and disinfection, wear leakproof gloves to protect the hands when the cleaning product specifications recommend it;
- 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

The legal obligations in occupational health and safety, both for the employer and the workers, must be applied in the context of COVID-19. Here is a summary.

Employer

Every employer has the obligation to protect the health and ensure the safety and physical well-being of their workers. The [Act respecting occupational health and safety](#) (AOHS) requires every employer to take the necessary measures to achieve this ([section 51](#)). To do this, the employer, in particular, must implement methods for the identification, correction and control of risks.

In the context of COVID-19, the employer must ensure that the preventive measures usually implemented are always adapted. Otherwise, he must modify them to protect the workers against the risks of contamination.

The employer must also inform the workers about the risks related to their work, including those related to COVID-19. The employer must also assure the workers of the appropriate training, supervision and coaching so that everyone has the skills and knowledge required to perform the work assigned to them safely.

Worker

Every worker has the obligation 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 persons found in the workplace ([section 49](#) of the AOHS). To do this, they must comply with the rules and measures implemented in the context of COVID-19 on the same basis as the other rules applied in the work environment. The workers must also participate in the identification and elimination of 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.

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).

Other documents can support decision-making in occupational health and safety in the context of the resumption of operations, particularly [Aide à la planification de la reprise des activités dans les PME québécoises](#) (Assistance to planning of the resumption of operations in Québec SMEs).

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COVID-19 Hotline: 1-877-644-4545

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