

Workplace Sanitary Standards Guide for the Québec Intercity Bus Transportation Sector – COVID-19

OHS is everyone's business!



The purpose of this guide is to support intercity bus transportation companies for the 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 must be 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 hygiene, respiratory etiquette and maintenance of hygiene measures for the tools, equipment and frequently touched surfaces.

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:

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

The information collected in this way is confidential. The employer must take the necessary measures to protect the confidentiality of this information;

- The workers are informed that in case of symptoms associated with the disease (according to the [Government website](#)), they must not report to work;
- When a person exhibits symptoms associated with COVID-19, he or she must be isolated immediately. Since this person must be removed from the workplace, a call to 1-877-644-4545 will provide him/her with instructions;
- Once the person exhibiting symptoms has left, prohibit access to this location while waiting to clean it and disinfect the surfaces and objects touched by the person;
- Posters have been installed in the vehicles and at the appropriate access points for intercity bus transportation with all the information useful to the passengers;
- Customers who exhibit symptoms are invited to abstain from using intercity bus transportation and postponing their trips;
- The suppliers, subcontractors, partners and customers have been informed of the measures put in place 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, hugs and any physical contact must be avoided.

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

- Install placards or posters reminding passengers of the obligation to wear face coverings and to respect the hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette rules;
- Make the passengers aware of the need to discard their garbage in a trash container outside the vehicles;
- 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 (e.g. flexible schedules, telework);
- If applicable, do not hold meetings that require a physical gathering;
- Avoid complete air recirculation and air currents in the vehicle, and favour outdoor air capture or natural ventilation (for example, opening windows) for non-air conditioned vehicles, when this is possible;
- Install physical barriers (full partitions) between different workstations that are too close to each other or that cannot be spaced;
- Install physical barriers (full partitions compliant with the SAAQ guide and the IRSST recommendations) between the driver and the passengers;
- Maintain 2-metre distancing between the passengers and the driver's cab after installation of the physical barrier (prohibit access to the first bench);
- Supply a procedure mask and protective eyewear (protective glasses or visor covering the face down to the chin) to workers who perform a task requiring them to be within 2 metres of another person and in the absence of physical barriers;
- Have the driver load and unload luggage in the luggage compartment;
- Board and unboard passengers while the driver is outside the vehicle;
- Post the hygiene, physical distancing and respiratory etiquette rules in the common areas;
- Complete the tracking tools to ensure traceability for epidemiological investigations.



Hand hygiene

Frequent hand washing with soap and water 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, specially:

- before touching the face (eyes, nose, mouth);
- after coughing, sneezing or wiping the nose;
- upon arrival in the morning and before departure each day;
- before and after eating;
- before putting on and removing protective equipment;
- after handling something that is frequently touched.

Disposable paper towels and a contactless trash can must also be provided during hand washing with soap and water.

All staff members must have been made aware of the importance of hand hygiene.

Purchasing a pass online or contactless payment (e.g. bank card on contactless terminals) are preferred to prevent passengers from touching the terminals or prevent ticket takers from handling cash needlessly.

If customers pay with cash, the ticket takers must disinfect their hands immediately after handling with a no-rinse cleanser (hydroalcoholic solution with an alcohol concentration of at least 60%) before touching their face or other surfaces.



Hygiene and respiratory etiquette

Following the hygiene and respiratory etiquette rules 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, both in the workplaces and aboard intercity bus transportation vehicles.

- 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 or more often, depending on the passenger traffic;
- Clean the meal areas before each meal period and disinfect them daily. For example:
 - refrigerator door handle,
 - the backs and armrests of the seats,
 - microwaves,
 - tables,
 - counters,
 - faucets;
- Clean the frequently touched surfaces when they are visibly soiled and disinfect them, at least every shift. For example:
 - workstations,
 - the interior and exterior door handles,
 - 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. For example:
 - 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. doors, seats, sanitary facilities);

- Clean and disinfect the protective eyewear used (protective glasses or visor);
- Avoid sharing material and 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 appropriate personal protection to protect the hands when the cleaning product specifications recommend it;
- Remove non-essential objects (magazines, newspapers and knickknacks) from the common areas;
- Develop a handling procedure for objects found on the buses.

Resources are available online to obtain 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.

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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 ordered by the public health authorities.

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COVID-19 Hotline: 1 877 644-4545

To reach a CNESST inspector: 1 844 838-0808