

Occupational health and safety standards guide  
for the leisure, sports and outdoor recreation  
sector – COVID-19

## OHS: it's everyone's business!



The purpose of this guide is to support companies or organizations in the leisure, sports and outdoor recreation sector in managing occupational health and safety (OHS) in their workplace. The aim is to ensure that activities can be resumed or continue in the safest and healthiest conditions possible in the context of COVID-19.\*

During a crisis, it is important that workers, employers and other stakeholders from the sector work together to ensure a safe and healthy workplace for everyone! Dialogue and cooperation are essential to achieve this.

\* Note that associations or federations in the leisure and sports sector have published [safe and responsible practice standards that can be applied in the context of COVID-19 that you may consult](#). A list of leisure and sports activities that have been authorized to reopen by the Government of Quebec is also provided.



### Managing occupational health and safety

Managing occupational health and safety means putting in place the measures needed to comply with one's legal obligations, that is, identify, correct and control risks and encourage workers to participate in this preventive approach.

Good cooperation between employer and staff is crucial to promoting OHS management.



The employer must **identify the risk of transmission of COVID-19 in their workplace**. If the risk of contamination cannot be eliminated, they must try to reduce and control it. They must identify tasks where workers may be exposed to the virus. Suppliers, subcontractors, partners and participants must be informed of the measures taken in the company to reduce and control the risks associated with COVID-19 and must be made aware of the importance of following them.

The preventive measures that may be taken are based on the principles of excluding people who have symptoms from the workplace, physical distancing, handwashing, cough and sneeze etiquette and the maintenance of hygiene measures with tools, equipment and high-touch surfaces.

The COVID-19 situation can be a major stress factor for the employer as well as for workers, suppliers, subcontractors, partners and participants due to the upheaval it causes in various spheres of society. This means that special attention must be paid to the psychosocial health of staff.



### **Exclusion of people who have symptoms from the workplace**

People who have symptoms are part of the chain of transmission of COVID-19 in the workplace. Protocols that include the following measures can prevent the disease from spreading

- Identifying workers who have symptoms of COVID-19 before they enter the workplace, for example by:
  - a questionnaire,
  - a self-assessment by workers;
- Isolating a worker or participant who starts to develop symptoms at the workplace in a room or another place away from other people, having them wear a procedure mask and reporting the case by calling 1 877 644-4545;
- Displaying posters to remind people of the importance of hand hygiene, cough and sneeze etiquette and physical distancing in key locations where contamination is more likely to occur (e.g., entrance, rooms, washrooms, changing rooms, showers, exterior doors);
- Informing suppliers, subcontractors, partners and participants about the preventive measures taken in the company to reduce and control the risks associated with COVID-19 and making them aware of the importance of following them;
- Telling participants who have symptoms that they must postpone their leisure, sports and outdoor recreation activities;
- Ensuring that participants or staff members who receive a positive COVID-19 test result shortly after going to a leisure, sports or outdoor recreation facility inform the people in charge;
- Once the participant or staff member who has symptoms has left, restricting access until the room and any surfaces and items they touched have been disinfected.



### **Physical distancing**

- Whenever possible, people must maintain a distance of at least 2 metres from others at work, from start to finish;
- This distance must also be maintained during breaks and at lunchtime;

- The organization of work and the various activities must be revised to maintain a physical distance of 2 metres between workers and participants whenever possible, especially in various closed, confined areas where several people may be gathered;
- Movement and interaction between workers and participants must be limited;
- Handshakes, hugs and any other physical contact must be avoided.

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

- Use technology (e.g., telework for administrative tasks, meetings or virtual activities);
- Install physical barriers (solid clear partition) between work stations when they are too close or cannot be spaced apart (e.g., participant reception, offices);
- Organize work methods and supervision. For example:
  - keep teams as small and as stable as possible,
  - reduce the number of participants supervised by staff and task rotation (e.g., limit the number of participants in the area where the activity is held),
  - do not share items. If this is not possible, put strict hygiene measures in place,
  - limit site changes and movement around the same site to what is strictly necessary;
  - activity areas can be specifically reserved for different groups in order to prevent contact between participants in these groups,
  - change activity schedules and intervals between activities to minimize contact between participants,
  - pay particular attention to areas that might become pinch points (e.g, entrance to changing rooms, washroom, exit to fields, trails, stairs, bicycle rack) to prevent lines of people standing close to one another.
- Whenever possible, create a one-way circulation system so that people do not cross paths;
- Use signage (e.g., markers on the floor) to ensure physical distancing of 2 metres in meeting points or confined areas (e.g., reception, washroom and the entrance to changing rooms), where applicable;
- Provide personal protective equipment that is appropriate for the level of risk (procedure mask and eye protection, such as safety goggles or a visor that covers the face down to the chin) to staff who must perform a task within 2 metres of another person and there are no physical barriers.



### **Handwashing**

Frequent hand washing with soap and warm water or with an alcohol-based hand rub that contains at least 60% alcohol for at least 20 seconds limits the risk of transmission in the workplace, especially:

- when renting or loaning out leisure, sports or outdoor recreation items and equipment (e.g., kayak, paddleboard, golf club, fishing rod, games);

- before touching your face (eyes, nose, mouth);
- after coughing, sneezing or blowing your nose;
- before and after eating;
- when entering or leaving rooms and, whenever possible, after using shared equipment;
- when entering or leaving the work site;
- after handling something that is touched frequently or after receiving a package.

If handwashing facilities are not available nearby, provide alcohol-based hand rub for staff.

Use contactless payment (e.g., bank card at contactless terminals) so that clients do not have to touch terminals. If clients pay cash, cashiers must disinfect their hands immediately afterwards with an alcohol-based hand rub that contains at least 60% alcohol.

Staff members must also wash their hands after physical contact with a participant (e.g., to help them blow their nose, eat).



### **Cough and sneeze etiquette**

Cough and sneeze etiquette means that you must:

- cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze and use tissues or your bent elbow;
- use disposable tissues;
- throw used tissues in the trash container immediately;
- wash your hands frequently;
- avoid touching your mouth or eyes with your hands, whether or not you are wearing gloves.



### **Maintenance of hygiene measures with tools, equipment and high-touch surfaces**

Since the virus that causes COVID-19 can survive on surfaces, hygiene measures must be applied.

- Make sure ventilation systems are operating and maintained properly in accordance with the regulatory requirements for the type of establishment and the tasks performed;
- Limit sharing of accessories, leisure and sports equipment (e.g., tennis racket, golf club, ball, bicycle, helmet) and office equipment (e.g., pens, telephone, tablets, computer mouse);
- Clean sanitary facilities (washrooms, changing rooms and showers) every shift or more frequently and disinfect them daily;
- Clean meal areas before each meal and disinfect them daily.

- For example:
  - the refrigerator door handle,
  - chair backs,
  - microwave oven;
- Clean and disinfect visibly dirty surfaces or items immediately;
- Increase the frequency of daily cleaning and disinfection of high-touch surfaces in areas used by participants with a disinfectant that is usually used based on how often the area is used and when surfaces are visibly dirty. For example:
  - tables,
  - counters,
  - chairs,
  - benches,
  - bleachers,
  - rails,
  - playgrounds,
  - games,
  - life jackets,
  - faucets,
  - toilets,
  - telephones,
  - computer accessories,
  - door handles,
  - any other relevant equipment or place.
- Clean tools and equipment that have been used after every shift or when they must be shared;
- Clean and disinfect any parts of training equipment that were touched and all other leisure, sports or outdoor recreation equipment before and after use or rental (e.g., kayak, canoe, pedal boat, fishing rod, helmet, games);
- Make disinfectant products readily available in all areas where activities are held whenever possible;
- Remove non-essential items (magazines, newspapers and knick-knacks) from common areas;

Ensure facilities are properly maintained (surfaces are cleaned and disinfected regularly, appropriate concentrations of disinfectant are used in pools, as prescribed in the [Regulation respecting water quality in swimming pools and other artificial pools](#);

- Wash towels, where applicable, with regular laundry detergent;
- At the end of the shift or the activity, take off work clothes, vests, etc., put them in a bag and wash them with regular laundry detergent;

- Use appropriate cleaning or disinfectant products (read the manufacturer's recommendations and do not mix cleaning products).

Resources are available online for more information about [cleaning surfaces](#) or [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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**COVID-19 information line: 1 877 644-4545**

**To contact a CNESST inspector: 1 844 838-0808**