



Employee Health and Hygiene

As a provincially or federally licensed meat plant you are required to have an Employee Illness Policy that requires any person who works in an area where you manufacture, prepare, store, package or label food or where you slaughter a food animal, and who has a disease or illness, symptoms of a disease or illness, reports them to you.

If an Employee Develops Symptoms of COVID-19

If an employee develops COVID-19 symptoms, meat plants are required to follow public health measures put in place to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

Public health authorities have communicated the following directives:

1. Employees who have COVID-19 symptoms must advise their manager immediately, contact their local public health authority or medical practitioner and follow their advice, immediately be isolated from others and sent home without using public transit, if possible.
2. Employees who are at home and who may have COVID-19 are to follow the advice of their local public health authority regarding self-isolation to reduce the spread of COVID-19.
3. Meat plants should enhance their cleaning and sanitation efforts to control any risks that might be associated with workers who are ill, regardless of the type of virus or bacteria. This is in addition to regular cleaning and sanitation activities. Additional guidance should be sought from local public health authorities.

According to the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA), “there is currently no evidence that food is a likely source or route of transmission of COVID-19.”

If an Employee is Confirmed to Have COVID-19:

1. Work with local public health authorities and your provincial or federal inspectors.
2. Investigate the employee’s recent shifts and direct contacts.
3. You may or may not choose to close your business, section of your business or continue to operate based in the outcomes of the investigation.
4. It is recommended to conduct intensive sanitation activities in any affected areas, including welfare areas.
5. Communicate to the public via social media, store signage, etc. regarding potential contact with affected employee.

Employees Returning from Travel

Anyone who has travelled outside of Canada must:

1. Self-isolate for 14 days when they return. People who are self-isolating should not go to work.
2. Monitor themselves for symptoms of the 2019 novel coronavirus for 14 days after returning to Canada.
3. Contact their primary care provider or Telehealth Ontario at 1-866-797-0000 if they experience symptoms of the 2019 novel coronavirus.



Proper Handwashing (the most critical part of reducing the risk of COVID-19)

Ensure that anyone entering the facility are washing hands thoroughly on both sides including the wrist with soap and water for at least 20 seconds prior to entering production areas, handling meat, after washroom breaks, as often as needed.

It is recommended an immediate drying of the hands with disposable paper towels to effectively reduce the transfer of pathogens from the surface of the hands to the surfaces subsequently touched.

Hand Sanitizer

Hand sanitizers are frequently used to help prevent the spread of communicable disease. It is important to realize that hand sanitizers are not a substitute for handwashing. Alcohol hand rub, gel or rinse sanitizers are disinfectants containing at least 60% alcohol. To use these products put an amount the size of a thumbnail in the palm of the hand and carefully rub all over the hands including under the nails.

Use of Masks

Masks should only be worn if a healthcare professional recommends it, by people who have COVID-19 and are showing symptoms. This is to protect others from the risk of getting infected. Disposable face mask can only be used only once. If an employee/inspector/contractor needs to wear a mask, then it is necessary to know how to properly use it and dispose of it.

Please follow the WHO recommendations on how to wear medical masks to protect against COVID-19.

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public/when-and-how-to-use-masks>

Social Distancing

To prevent spread of COVID-19, the Public Health Agency of Canada is recommending individuals employ social distancing or maintaining approximately 2 meters (6 feet) from others, when possible.

Social Distancing in Processing Facilities

In food production/processing facilities, efforts should be made to identify and implement operational changes that increase employee separation.

The risk of an employee transmitting COVID-19 to another in a facility is dependent on:

- The distance between employees.
- The duration of the exposure.
- The effectiveness of employee hygiene practices and sanitation.

Social distancing to the full 2 metres may not always be possible in some facilities. When it's impractical for employees in these settings to maintain social distancing, effective hygiene practices are to be maintained to reduce the chance of spreading the virus.



Food production/processing facilities and establishments should consider:

- Assessing the workplace for areas where people have frequent contact with each other, share spaces and objects and increase the frequency of cleaning in these areas.
- Finding ways that employees can practice social distancing, such as increasing distance between people in line-ups and workstations.

Consult the risk-informed decision-making guidelines for workplaces and businesses to learn how to protect employees and customers in the workplace.

Social distancing during lunch breaks, staggering breaks etc. is strongly recommended. Sanitizing tables and microwaves and common areas, dressing rooms, entry points for checking in and out. You may consider marking areas on the floor, chairs, tables to identify the distance, and where persons should stand or sit.

Visitors and Drivers

During this time restricting visitor access to your facility is the best course of action.

If visitors, such as contractors, are required to enter your facility it is recommended:

- All visitors follow the hand washing, sanitation and social distancing rules.
- Limit contact with delivery drivers including livestock operators, transport drivers, courier drivers, etc.
- Have postal deliveries left in an external mailbox for pickup.
- For incoming raw materials, packaging and ingredients, have the driver remain in the vehicle where possible.
- Have a designated trained employee retrieve required paperwork and return to driver when complete, maintaining social distance as much as can be practical. This employee must follow all handwashing and PPE policies.

Sanitation Procedures

Provincially and federally licensed meat plants already have in place robust daily sanitation procedures to protect food safety and these will also help prevent the spread of COVID-19. Continue with your current sanitation procedures for the equipment, utensils, food contact surfaces and premises however due to the detection of the coronavirus in asymptomatic people and studies showing survival of coronavirus on surfaces for short periods of time, as an extra precaution, you may want to consider a more frequent cleaning and sanitation schedule for high human contact surfaces.

Areas to consider enhancing your daily sanitation activities are the welfare and office areas. An enhanced focus must be given to all contact surfaces such as tabletops, chair arms, vending machines, refrigerator doors, doorknobs, paper dispensers, microwaves, lockers and handles, toilets, buttons, among other. For lunchrooms, it is recommended to sanitize contact surfaces before and after each break. Make sanitizer accessible for employees to use liberally where they deem necessary.

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