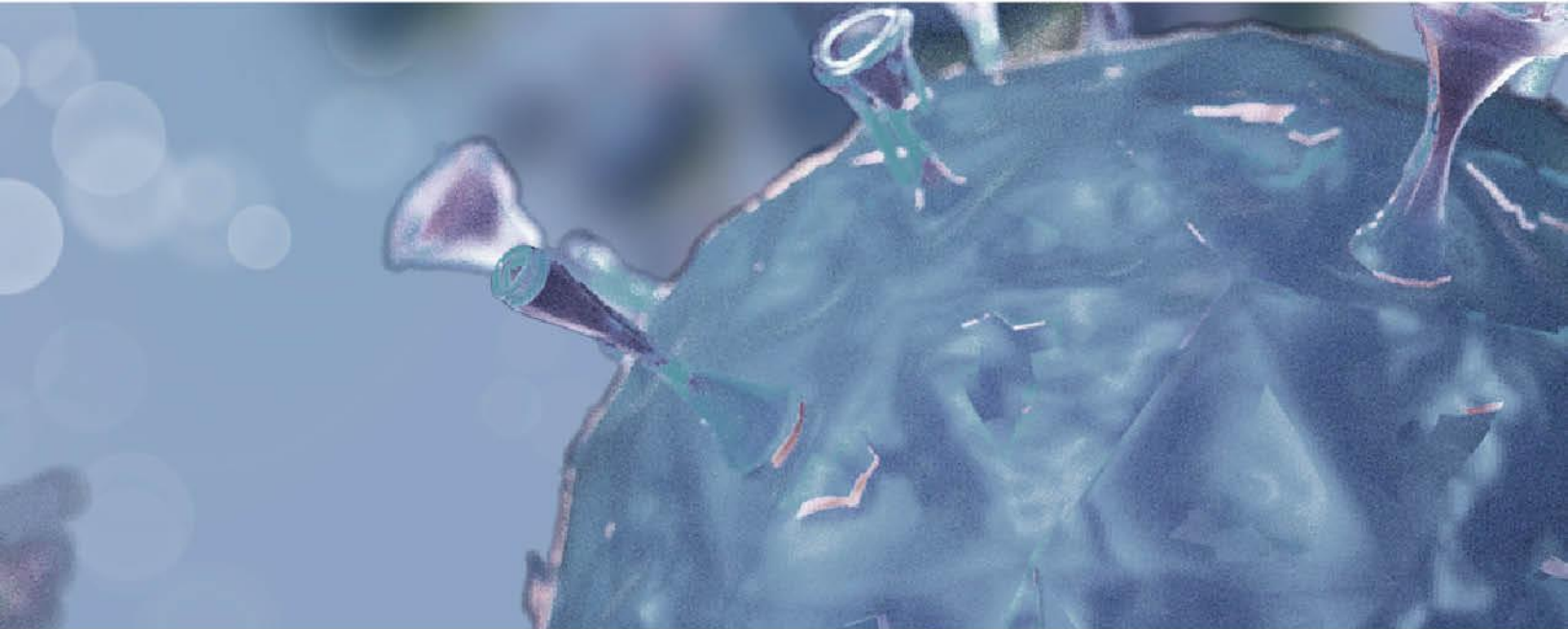




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COVID-19 Safety and Prevention Measures

Revised April 9, 2020



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Version 2 – 2020-04-09

Version 1 – 2020-04-07

Introduction

During the course of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the following special measures are in place to protect workers, their families and the community from possible infection and illness. This document is prepared to help Nova Scotia's contractors and workers keep their worksites as safe as possible. The document is a joint initiative of:

- Nova Scotia Construction Labour Relations Association (NSCLRA)
- Mainland Nova Scotia Building Trades Council (MNSBTC)
- Cape Breton Island Building and Construction Trades Council (CBIB & CTC)

Effective Dates

These special procedures are in effect as of April 7, 2020 and will remain in effect until further notice. This document should be posted at all job sites and explained fully to workers at each job site.

Section 1: Attending Work

If you are feeling ill and have cold or flu like symptoms such as fever, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, headaches, coughing or congestion:

- do not come to work;
- call your site superintendent, foreman and your Human Resources department to let them know that you are exhibiting the symptoms;
- call your doctor or go to <https://811.novascotia.ca/> to access the online COVID-19 assessment tool and other health advice; and
- do not return to work until you are medically cleared to return.

All supervisors are recommended to complete appropriate site access forms with each employee accessing the job site (see Site Access Questionnaire and Site Access – Daily Check-In Questionnaire in [Additional Resources](#) section of the Build Right Nova Scotia Website)

Section 2: Personal Hygiene

- avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth;
- cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash;
- do not share personal items or supplies such as phones, pens, notebooks, PPE, etc.;
- refrain from shaking hands with others; and

- wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing.

Handwashing

The following handwashing best practices should be used:

- wet your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold) turn off the tap and apply soap;
- lather your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Be sure to lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers and under your nails;
- scrub your hands for at least 20 seconds. To keep time, you can count steamboats to 20;
- rinse hands well under clean, running water; and
- dry hands using a clean towel or air drying them.

See [Resources](#) section for signage related to handwashing.

Section 3: Safe Workplaces

Keeping worksites safe will require significant measures to provide facilities and amenities that facilitate good personal hygiene and prevent transmission of contagions. Proper washroom facilities must be maintained. There must be adequate supplies of soap, water, toilet paper and paper towels at all times. Washroom facilities must be properly cleaned and disinfected throughout the workday. Each worksite should provide the following as a minimum:

- hand sanitizer should be available at or near entry points to the project and at various high-traffic locations throughout the project such as doorways, field plan tables, tool cribs, hoists, water containers, etc.;
- prominent signage should indicate location of sanitizer stations;
- running water (both hot and cold where possible) and hand soap should be available at bathroom facilities, lunchrooms and kitchen areas;
- where portable toilets are in use, they should be cleaned and or replaced with greater frequency to maintain sanitary and safe condition;
- if running water is not available, hand sanitizer will be made available (*use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol*);
- hand-washing stations must have instructions posted at each location; and
- paper towel dispensers and barrier-free garbage cans should be available at every handwashing location.

Section 4: Meetings at Work

Work should be organized so that, to the maximum extent possible, social and physical distancing can be maintained. Meetings of employees on site, including health and safety meetings, should ensure appropriate social distancing. Similarly, work breaks and lunch periods should be scheduled to avoid close contact.

Necessary work site meetings such as toolbox talks and safety briefings should observe physical distance recommendations and guidelines issued by Nova Scotia's Chief Medical Officer of Health. These include:

Maintaining at least 2 metres (6 feet) separation between each person.

- avoiding prolonged close contact or proximity between people working or gathering in the same space.

Additional recommended measures include:

- e-mail, video or teleconference meetings are the preferred methods of communication;
- make all reasonable efforts to avoid in-person meetings and events wherever possible;
- meetings and events of more than five (5) people should not be held in person and if absolutely necessary, physical separation should be maintained as recommended by Nova Scotia's Chief Medical Officer of Health;
- necessary meetings should be held in smaller groups and where possible, hold more smaller group discussions rather than gathering larger groups of people in a single space;
- meetings should be held in the area where an individual works, instead of in a large gathering point such as a conference or break room; and
- meeting spaces should be cleaned and sanitized after meetings.

Section 5: Worksite Protocols

Construction worksites often require one or more persons to work in close proximity and maintaining recommended physical distance may not be possible. To minimize risks, the following practices should be maintained:

- unless the nature of the work requires, workers should avoid being within 2 metres (6 feet) of others for prolonged periods of time;
- where working closer than recommended is essential, please follow protocols in Section 6 below;
- in person meetings and toolbox talks etc. should be limited to five (5) or fewer persons unless larger groups can be assembled while maintaining the recommended physical separation of 2 meters (6 feet);
- if needed, conduct multiple meetings with smaller groups to avoid gathering everyone at the same place at the same time;
- where possible and safe, use technology and electronic communication such as email, text and teleconferencing to minimize direct contact with others;
- stagger breaks and lunch times to reduce the number of people gathering at the same time; and
- while using lunchroom amenities such as fridges and microwaves or while waiting to use toilets and washrooms, please line up and keep 2 metres (6 feet) of distance from the person in front of you.

Section 6: Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

The direction, under the Health Protection Act order, indicates all work is to be performed practicing safe physical distancing (2 metres/6 feet) whenever possible. For tasks that normally require close proximity, employers/employees are advised to review the task to see if there are alternative ways to get the work completed. In situations where physical distancing is not possible, the following measures are suggested.

Employers and workers must observe all regulatory requirements for personal protective equipment as outlined in [Part 3 – Personal Protective Equipment of the Nova Scotia Occupational Safety General Regulations](#). In addition to the normally required PPE, the following measures are suggested to protect against respiratory risks:

- workers who are in close proximity of others (less than 2 metres (6 feet) apart) are required to use (at a minimum) a full-face shield (*must conform to standards required for the task at hand) and surgical mask. Other acceptable respiratory PPE includes:
 - N95 or other approved masks that adequately protect against COVID-19 infection; or
 - half-face or full-face respirator equipped with P95, P100 or equivalent filter(s).
- prior to using respiratory equipment and related PPE, workers must receive appropriated training and instruction on the proper use, donning and doffing, care, cleaning and disposal of this equipment;
- use of task appropriate eye protection is mandatory (for example, safety glasses, spoggles, goggles, face shield etc.);
- glove use is mandatory on all jobsites;
- storage of personal gear such as jackets, vests and rain gear are not permitted on-site unless stored in a location where contact with individuals is not possible (an infected individual may have left respiratory droplets on their clothing, which could expose others if they touch the clothing); and
- additional face washing and hand sanitizing stations should be located closer to work areas for cleansing if there is contact between workers such that perspiration or respiratory droplets come into contact with exposed skin.

Section 7: Hand Tools, Powered Mobile Equipment and Other Equipment on Jobsites

- hand tools such as hammers, snips, pliers, etc. must not be shared person-to-person without a thorough cleaning with a disinfectant containing more than 70% alcohol;
- mobile and desktop phones must not be shared with others;
- two-way radios should be cleaned at the end of each shift, or between users; and
- door and ladder handles, hand holds and rails, steering wheels, switches, buttons, knobs and fueling caps on powered mobile equipment should be cleaned regularly, between users/operators, and at the end of each shift.

Section 8: Additional Cleaning Protocols

All offices and jobsites should implement additional cleaning measures as outlined below:

- before commencing work each day or shift, high traffic surfaces (in terms of hand contact) within offices, meeting rooms, orientation rooms, coffee and kitchen areas, work stations, portable and permanent washrooms, and common work spaces should be cleaned; and
- before commencing work, individuals working in an office setting are responsible for cleaning their workstation area. The focus is on reducing the risk of transmission through an individual touching an infected surface. Therefore, priority should be given to the high traffic surfaces (in terms of hand contact).

See [Resources](#) section for additional information on cleaning and maintain workspaces.

Cleaning Protocols After Each Use:

- hard surfaces and buttons your hands may meet on frequently touched items such as refrigerators, microwaves, water cooler handles, taps and faucets, light switches and other high traffic objects should be cleaned after each use; and
- first-aid treatment rooms, reusable treatment equipment and instruments.

Cleaning Solutions and Supplies:

- if available, household or commercial disinfectant solutions and wipes containing more than 60% alcohol should be used to clean surfaces. However, some of these products are currently in short supply or are simply unavailable; if these household or commercial disinfectant cleaning products are not readily available, hard surfaces can be disinfected using a mixture of one-part bleach and nine parts

water. The solution must contact the surface for one minute to disinfect (WHMIS workplace label must be affixed to any mixed solution listing all the ingredients);

- items that cannot withstand liquid disinfectants such as tablets, smartboards and cellphones may be disinfected with 70% alcohol wipes ensuring the solution contacts the surface for one minute to disinfect; and
- use paper towels or single-use rags.

Section 9: Personal Laptops and Electronics

At the end of each workday. Please take your laptop, other personal electronics and related power supplies home each night. This will prevent others from using them and if required, be available for you if working from home is implemented.

Section 10: After Work Protocols

The measures taken at work are designed to keep you safe at work. But safety protocols continue after you finish work. The additional measures detailed below will help keep you and your family safe. After you finish work, make the following steps a daily habit:

- remove your washable PPE items and place them in a bag. These should be washed as soon as you get home;
- non-washable PPE equipment such as boots, hardhats and safety glasses should be sanitized and placed in a bag or away from other items that may be contaminated;
- any single use PPE items such as masks must be discarded safely and not reused or left where others may handle them or have to discard them;
- a separate waste container should be made available for hazardous material such as disposable PPE, cleaning wipes, cleaning supplies, etc.;
- once you have removed and packed your PPE, sanitize your hands one last time before leaving work;
- upon arriving home, leave your safety boots outside the home or in your vehicle;
- any items you packed for washing along with your clothing worn during the day should go straight in to the washing machine;
- finish your day with a shower before settling in to spend time with other occupants of your home;
- wear clean clothes each day and repeat the same procedure after work; and
- if you drive your personal vehicle to work, take a moment to wipe down commonly touched surfaces at least once a day.

Section 11: Unsafe Workplaces

Worksites that do not provide these amenities where required or do not follow applicable protocols are deemed unsafe and workers may exercise their right to refuse work in accordance in accordance with Part 43 of the Nova Scotia [Occupational Health and Safety Act](#). (see <http://www.worksafeforlife.ca/Home/About-Us/Occupational-Health-Safety> for additional information).

Acknowledgement

Build Right Nova Scotia gratefully acknowledges the use of materials prepared by PCL Manitoba, IBEW Construction Council of Ontario, Manitoba Building Trades and Construction Labour Relations Association of Manitoba in the preparation of this document.

For more information on these guidelines, please contact:

**Nova Scotia Construction
Labour Relations
Association**
260 Brownlow Ave., Unit 1
Dartmouth, NS B3B 1V9
T: 902-468-2283

**Mainland Nova Scotia
Building Trades Council**
24 Lakeside Park Drive,
Lakeside, NS B3T 1L1
T: 902-450-1012

**Cape Breton Island
Building & Construction
Trades Council**
238 Vulcan Ave.
Sydney, NS B1P 5X2
T: 902-539-2661

For information on safety training and other safety resources, please see:

Construction Safety Nova Scotia

35 MacDonald Ave.
Dartmouth, NS B3B 1C6
T: 902-468-6696 or toll-free 1-800-971-3888

[Construction Safety Nova Scotia](#)

Resources

Governmental Coronavirus Updates

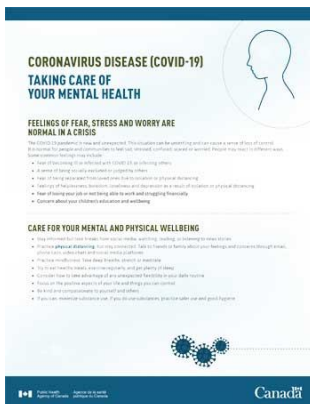
For the latest news releases, announcements and resources visit:

Government of Canada <https://canada.ca/coronavirus>

Province of Nova Scotia <https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/>

Mental Health

Feelings of fear, stress and worry are normal in a crisis situation. The COVID-19 pandemic is new and unexpected and will generate a range of feelings for individuals. For information on taking care of the mental health of yourself and others please see the following resources:



<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/diseases-conditions/taking-care-mental-health.html>



Province of Nova Scotia Mental Health Guidance Website

<https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/mental-health/>

Mental Health Mobile Crisis Line

If you are experiencing a mental health or addictions crisis, or are concerned about someone who is, the Mental Health Mobile Crisis Line is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Call: 902-429-8167

Call toll-free: 1-888-429-8167 or 911

