

May 6, 2020

## **NOTICE: Employers of Temporary Foreign Workers**

*Note that the information that follows applies to all employers of temporary foreign workers (TFW), even if the workers arrived last year or stay year-round.*

COVID-19 is highly infectious and easily spreads within households or communal housing. Consequently, the Federal and Provincial government have outlined requirements for employers of temporary foreign workers to reduce the risks to workers and help employers maintain a healthy workforce.

Employers of temporary foreign workers are responsible for thoroughly reviewing government directives in the documents below and monitor for updates:

- **A list of Federal requirements:** [Guidance for employers of Temporary Foreign Workers regarding COVID-19](#)
- **Information on Federal Inspections and Penalties for Non-Compliance:** [Compliance inspections for Employers of the Temporary Foreign Worker Program during the COVID-19 pandemic](#)
- **Ontario Ministry of Health Guidance:** [COVID-19 Guidance for Temporary Foreign Workers](#).

**Please note that you may be contacted by Service Canada (under the Federal Government) about [compliance inspections](#) to ensure you are in compliance with requirements above.**

Requirements **direct employers to contact local public health officials** when:

- a. A worker shows symptoms of COVID-19
- b. New worker arrives

Outlined in this letter are instructions for employers on how to notify your local health unit, Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health, under these two scenarios. The letter also contains additional information to support employers with COVID-19 requirements.

## **Notifying your local public health unit when a worker is ill**

### **Call 911 for emergencies and/or visit the nearest emergency department.**

Employers are required to notify Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health when a worker shows sign of COVID-19.

\*For a list of COVID-19 symptoms, visit: [COVID-19 Reference Document for Symptoms](#).

### **If a worker shows signs of illness, immediately:**

1. Isolate any symptomatic worker(s) from others as per Federal requirements (outlined [here](#)).
2. Identify all close contacts of the individual with symptoms. Close contacts include household members and anyone with close contact (less than 2m) with a person while they had symptoms or in the 48 hours before symptoms started. All close contacts must self-isolate in their accommodations as per Provincial guidance ([click here](#)) until testing results for the person with symptoms are available.

When developing isolation plans to prepare for the above, note that it is critical that workers with symptoms must be kept separate from workers who do not have symptoms.

3. **Call Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health 1-800-265-7293 or 519-822-2715 ext. 7006.**

You will speak with a nurse to review the worker's symptoms. You must tell the nurse you are an employer of temporary foreign workers housed in shared accommodations.

4. **Send an email to our public health inspection team at [PHI.Intake@wdgpublichealth.ca](mailto:PHI.Intake@wdgpublichealth.ca).**

Write "*Symptomatic TFW*" in the subject line. In the email, provide the following information:

1. Symptomatic worker's full name
2. Business/Farm name
3. Contact information for employer (full name and phone number)
4. Provide a brief description of your isolation plans

A public health inspector will follow up with you.

\***After hours** you can use the online [Ontario self-assessment tool](#) as an interim tool to assess worker symptoms while you wait to speak to a nurse (step #3 above), but employers are still required to complete all steps above even if the online tool is used.

You may be directed to bring the worker to an assessment centre to have the worker tested. For assessment centre hours and locations, visit our [Assessment Centres webpage](#).

- Employers should have a plan for safely transporting a symptomatic worker. (See next page for further information.)
- Public Health may be able to arrange to test a worker on site if they cannot safely be transported to an assessment centre. This will be assessed on a case by case basis.

### **Notifying Public Health when a new worker arrives**

[Ontario Ministry of Health Guidance](#) directs employers of temporary foreign workers to notify the local public health unit of new arrivals.

To notify Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health about new arrivals, email [PHI.Intake@wdgpublichealth.ca](mailto:PHI.Intake@wdgpublichealth.ca) and write “*New TFW arrival*” in the subject line. In your email, provide:

1. Worker’s full name and arrival date
2. Business/Farm name
3. Contact information for employer (full name and phone number)
4. Provide a brief description of the isolation plan for the new arrival

Employers should be aware of and review an [updated order](#) under the *Quarantine Act* that was issued for anyone arriving in Canada and continue to monitor for updates.

### **Employers with workers housed in multiple accommodations**

To reduce the risks of asymptomatic workers spreading COVID-19 between different accommodation locations - employers are required, to the best of their ability, to **keep groups housed in different accommodations separated in work settings** and/or minimize how many different groups work together as much as possible. Where this is not possible, protective measures (e.g. masks, PPE, frequent hand hygiene) should be used to minimize exposure risks between workers from different accommodations in the workplace.

These precautions extend to the transportation of workers, as workers from different accommodations should not travel together in shared vehicles.

### **Preparing plans for using masks**

As per Federal and Provincial guidance, isolating a worker may require using masks. Employers should acquire masks in preparation for this need and ensure that staff and all workers understand how to use a mask safely. Listed here are three resources from Public Health Ontario to help you develop plans and understand how to use masks (click each to open):

- [Mask Use for Non-Healthcare Workers](#)
- [When and How to Wear a Mask](#)
- [Video showing how to put on a mask](#)

### **Transporting a symptomatic worker**

Employers must have plans in place to safely transport a symptomatic worker in the event transportation is required (e.g. to have the worker tested, to access healthcare or emergency services, or if the isolation plan requires housing the worker off-site).

Individuals under isolation are only to be transported in private vehicles (not by public transit, taxi, rideshares, etc.). Measures must be taken to protect other non-symptomatic individuals during transportation. Some considerations are listed here:

- Limit the number of non-isolating individuals in the vehicle to as few as possible (ideally no more than one (1) non-symptomatic individual)
- At minimum, the symptomatic worker should wear a mask during transportation. **It is critical that employers and workers understand how to use a mask safely (see previous section in this letter).**
- Have symptomatic person sit as far away from non-symptomatic individual as possible
- Ensure all individuals perform hand hygiene frequently (bring alcohol-based hand sanitizer for each person and wash hands with soap and water as soon as possible)
- Minimize the surfaces the symptomatic person touches and disinfect any surfaces that may have been touched after transportation using a disinfectant approved by Health Canada (see [list here](#))
  - Follow manufacturer's instructions for safe use of cleaning and disinfecting products (e.g. wear gloves, use in well-ventilated area, allow enough contact time, etc.)
- Open windows if possible

**Appended in the following pages** is supplemental information outlined by Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health to assist employers in developing plans to meet Federal and Provincial requirements.

If you have questions, we encourage you to contact [PHI.Intake@wdgpublichealth.ca](mailto:PHI.Intake@wdgpublichealth.ca).

Sincerely,



Shawn Zentner, MPH, BAsC, CPHI(C)  
Manager, Health Protection

## Supplemental Information for Employers of Temporary Foreign Workers

---

**The information in the pages that follow is intended to provide supplementary information to assist employers to meet mandatory requirements in the Federal and Provincial government documents referenced in the letter above.**

Note there are weblinks embedded throughout this document - click on **purple text** to open the websites for additional information, resources and posters that can be printed.

### Key Plans and Protocols

Employers are strongly advised to prepare plans and protocols for (at minimum) the following:

- Isolation plans for new arrivals and for workers who come down with symptoms
- Daily screening of workers for symptoms
- How to respond when a worker comes down with symptoms (including how to immediately isolate the worker and prevent exposure to others)
- Cleaning and disinfection (instructions, schedule, log for record keeping)

### Ensuring Workers are Informed

Employers are advised to provide information to workers, where possible, before arrival, or as soon as possible if workers are already on site. Information to provide includes, but is not limited to, information on:

- [COVID-19 information](#)
- [physical distancing](#)
- [hand hygiene](#)
- [cleaning and disinfecting](#)
- Information explaining the employers plans to minimize risks to workers

Summary sheets with some COVID-19 information are available **in other languages** at the bottom of [this webpage](#) (including in [English](#), [Spanish](#), and [Tagalog \(spoken in the Philippines\)](#))

It is suggested that, as much as possible, information be provided in a language the worker understands, and that information is provided as an information package as well as verbally (the above list includes **embedded weblinks in purple text that can be printed** to create a basic information package).

The **Public Health Agency of Canada** has some **COVID-19 materials available in several languages for use and language interpretation services**, which can be accessed by calling / emailing:

- 1-833-784-4397 / [phac.covid19.aspc@canada.ca](mailto:phac.covid19.aspc@canada.ca)  
(Note there may be wait times due to high call volumes)

### **Employers are Advised to Post Important Contact Information in Accommodations**

1. Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health
  - 1-800-265-7293 or 1-519-822-2715 ext. 7006 / [www.wdgpublichealth.ca/coronavirus](http://www.wdgpublichealth.ca/coronavirus)
2. Health care provider contact information (if available)
3. Employer contact information
4. Emergency contact information

## **Screening Protocols**

Employers are to screen all workers for symptoms daily and maintain records as per requirements in the [Government of Canada's Guidance](#) and the [Ontario Ministry of Health Guidance](#). To facilitate your active screening process:

- Instruct workers to [self-monitor](#) for signs of illness and provide tools needed (e.g. instructions and easy to use personal thermometer - ensure worker understands manufacturer's instructions for thermometers).

## **Isolation of workers (new arrivals or symptomatic workers)**

Carefully review the requirements for worker isolation outlined in the [Government of Canada's Guidance](#) and [Ontario Ministry of Health Guidance](#).

Information to help employers ensure they have developed a comprehensive isolation plan follows:

- As per [Federal requirements here](#), "*the employer must ensure that private accommodations, for example bedroom and bathroom, is provided to a worker who develops any signs of symptoms of COVID-19*". It is critical that employers review the full requirements to ensure they are in compliance.

If on-site accommodations do not meet Federal requirements, alternate options may include (but are not limited to):

- Employers finding alternative arrangements, for example, trailer equipped with a bathroom
  - Employers proactively reaching out to nearby hotel(s) to discuss willingness of hotel to accommodate and review suitability of hotel rooms. Hotels may find [this resource \(click here\)](#) helpful if providing accommodation to individuals who are isolating
- [Federal guidelines](#) recommend that date-stamped photos be taken of the isolation facilities to demonstrate compliance

- Plan must include arrangements for food, water, medicine, laundry services and personal supplies for workers under isolation. Provision of these supplies must consider measures to prevent exposure to those supplying the provisions.
- Plan must consider scenarios where multiple workers are simultaneously required to self-isolate (see [Federal guidelines](#) for rules outlining how to house multiple workers self-isolating together – keeping in mind that workers with symptoms must always be kept separate from workers without symptoms)
- Plan must consider the potential need to transport a symptomatic worker
- It is critical that employers and workers understand how to use a mask safely. Masks are recommended in situations where physical distancing is difficult and not intended to replace physical distancing. (See letter above for resources on safe mask use).
- Plan must ensure worker is able to communicate with employer while in isolation and has access to a phone for emergencies
- During any isolation periods, employers must have a plan to:
  - Communicate with and continue to screen worker(s) at least daily, while maintaining physical distancing (e.g. call, text, email)
  - Instruct workers to self-monitor
  - Provide emergency contact information (including 911 for emergencies)

Note that employers may be eligible for [financial support](#) from the Government of Canada for the mandatory 14-day isolation period when workers first arrive in Canada.

## Providing Workers with Tools for Proper Hand Hygiene

Employers are required to ensure that all workers have the supplies and instructions needed to practice good hand hygiene:

- Provide soap, paper towels and garbage bins at all sinks and post [visual instructions for proper handwashing](#).
  - Note the provisions of paper towels is recommended for both hand drying and to turn off taps
- Place alcohol-based hand sanitizer, tissues and garbage bins in accommodations and work place setting, including at entrances/exits.
- In the absence of running water, visibly dirty hands must be thoroughly wiped cleaned and then alcohol-based hand sanitizer must be used (do not use disinfecting wipes on hands)
  - Hand sanitizer does not work if hands are visibly dirty

## Cleaning and Sanitizing

Refer to [Government of Canada's Guidance](#) and [Provincial Guidance](#) for requirements for cleaning frequency, appropriate cleaners and other requirements.

- Consult [Health Canada's website](#) for a list of approved hard-surface disinfectants that may be used against COVID-19
- Follow manufacturer's instructions for safe use of cleaning and disinfecting products (e.g. wear gloves, use in well-ventilated area, allow enough contact time, etc.)
- Federal guidance requires that a cleaning and sanitizing log is maintained

## General hygiene guidelines

Promote hand hygiene and respiratory (cough, sneezing, etc.) etiquette, including:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Sneeze and cough into your sleeve
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth
- Avoid contact with people who are sick

## Occupational Health and Safety

Review the Occupational Health and Safety section of the [Ministry Guidance](#) and contact the Ministry of Labour with questions.

- Employment Standards Information Centre: Toll-free: 1-800-531-5551
- Health and Safety Contact Centre: Toll-free: 1-877-202-000

## Additional Resources

Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health COVID-19: [www.wdgppublichealth.ca/coronavirus](http://www.wdgppublichealth.ca/coronavirus)

Government of Canada Frequently asked questions: Changes to the Temporary Foreign Worker program regarding COVID-19: [www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/services/foreign-workers/employer-compliance/covid-faq.html](http://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/services/foreign-workers/employer-compliance/covid-faq.html)

Public Health Ontario COVID-19 resources [www.publichealthontario.ca/en/diseases-and-conditions/infectious-diseases/respiratory-diseases/novel-coronavirus/public-resources?tab=0](http://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/diseases-and-conditions/infectious-diseases/respiratory-diseases/novel-coronavirus/public-resources?tab=0)

Public Health Agency of Canada "Wash your hands" poster: [www.canada.ca/content/dam/phac-aspc/documents/services/diseases-maladies/reduce-spread-covid-19-wash-your-hands/eng-handwashing.pdf](http://www.canada.ca/content/dam/phac-aspc/documents/services/diseases-maladies/reduce-spread-covid-19-wash-your-hands/eng-handwashing.pdf)

Cleaning and Disinfection for Public Settings: [www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ncov/factsheet-covid-19-environmental-cleaning.pdf?la=en](http://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ncov/factsheet-covid-19-environmental-cleaning.pdf?la=en)