

# COVID-19 Guidance for Emergency Food Providers/Food Banks

This document is designed to assist you with minimizing and preventing the spread of COVID-19 transmissions among you, your colleagues/staff, volunteers and clients. It is not intended to take the place of advice from a public health inspector. If you have any questions with this document or how your group can safely operate their centre/space, please contact Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health (WDG Public Health).

COVID-19 is caused by a novel coronavirus and is an illness that affects the lungs and respiratory system. In general, these viruses are spread when a sick person coughs or sneezes. COVID-19 is spread person-to-person through large respiratory droplets (e.g. coughing, sneezing) that can travel up to two metres (six feet). It may also be possible for a person to get COVID-19 by touching contaminated surfaces and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes. Symptoms of COVID-19 may include fever, cough, shortness of breath or in severe cases difficulty breathing. Older adults, and individuals with other medical conditions (such as asthma, diabetes, or heart disease), may be more vulnerable to becoming severely ill. For more general information about COVID-19, visit [wdgpublichealth.ca](http://wdgpublichealth.ca).

## General Advice

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You play an important role in the community and in the lives of your clients. It is important that centre staff stay healthy in order to continue to support clients. It is also very important that you take the appropriate measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 at your centre. There are several basic steps that you can take to protect staff, volunteers and clients:

- Obtain information from credible sources. Stay up to date with information about COVID-19 on our website at [wdgpublichealth.ca](http://wdgpublichealth.ca).
- Screen to ensure staff, volunteers and clients are not ill
- Practice proper hand hygiene
- Practice physical distancing between staff, volunteers and clients
- Regularly clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces
- Alter your delivery model – pre-package food and/or provide gift cards to clients
- Plan your space or centre to prevent the spread of COVID-19 (e.g. how will the considerations above be incorporated in your flow or layout?)

## Advice for Emergency Food/Food Bank Operators

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- **Reduce the risk of transmission during activities:**

- Conduct [screening](#) to ensure staff, volunteers and clients are not ill:
  - Ask staff, volunteers and clients to call or email prior to their shift/visit and screen them or have a recorded message/form email.
- Ask clients, staff, volunteers and other partners to not visit the centre and stay home if they are sick.
- Staff/volunteers who have travelled outside of Canada, including the United States, **must** stay home and self-isolate for 14 days after returning to Canada.
  - Refer to Public Health Ontario's guide on [how to self-isolate](#).
- Practice [physical distancing](#) to ensure a two metre (six feet) separation between staff and clients.
- To avoid crowding and to support physical distancing, schedule appointments with individuals wishing to pick up/drop-off items.
- Avoid scheduling large volunteer groups from attending the donation centre at the same time.
- Ensure spacing between workspaces is provided and allows for appropriate distancing (two metres or six feet) between volunteers/staff and to prevent crowding or individuals from grouping together.
- Enhance cleaning and disinfecting measures of high traffic and frequently touched surfaces.
- Post [signage](#) throughout the food bank/donation centre reminding individuals about ways to [protect themselves](#) (e.g. hand hygiene, social distancing, and respiratory etiquette).

- **Infection Prevention and Control Practices for Staff at Emergency Food/Food Banks**

**Practice proper hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette:**

- Hand hygiene includes [washing hands](#) with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or the use of an alcohol-based [hand sanitizer](#).
- Increase hand hygiene practices (e.g. before and after receiving items and prior to assembling donation packages for delivery).
- Cover your cough or sneeze into a tissue. Immediately throw the tissue in the garbage and wash your hands.
- If you don't have a tissue, sneeze or cough into your sleeve or arm.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid shaking hands; use non-physical forms of greeting.

## Enhance environmental cleaning and disinfecting:

- Increase cleaning and disinfection of high traffic areas, and frequently touched surfaces and objects (e.g. door knobs, light switches, pens, counters, toilet, sinks, handrails, keypads, touch screens, etc.). High touch surfaces and items in common areas must be cleaned and disinfected at least twice daily.
- Disinfectants should have a Drug Identification Number (DIN). A DIN is an 8-digit number given by Health Canada that confirms it is approved for use in Canada.
- Refer to [Health Canada's Drug Product Database online query](#) to search by product name, active ingredient, company etc.
- Alternatively, chlorine bleach solutions may be used for disinfection.
- Staff should follow the manufacturer's instructions on how to use the cleaning agents and disinfectants including:
  - Disinfectant contact times.
  - Safety precautions and required personal protective equipment (e.g. eye protection, masks gloves).
  - Securely storing cleaning and disinfectant supplies.
- Review Public Health Ontario's [Cleaning and Disinfection for Public Settings](#).

## Food Procurement:

- Regardless of how food is procured, the following must be considered:
  - Food must come from an approved source
  - After receiving the food it must be handled and stored in a hygienic manner
  - When food is received it must be at the required minimum temperature, in case of perishable food, it must be stored in the cooler or freezer as soon as possible ( do not leave perishable food at room temperature).

## Precautions for Staff to Reduce the Risk of Transmission during Pick up and Deliveries

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### • Reduce the risk of transmission during deliveries:

- Connect with clients in advance to schedule a delivery/pick up time, where possible.
- Pre-bag or box donations into smaller/lighter packages for easier delivery and carrying.
- Volunteers and staff who are making deliveries to apartments and homes should take the following precautions to protect themselves and their clients:
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- Avoid entering the client's home if possible. Deliver packages for clients at their front door without entering their home to limit contact.
  - Practice [physical distancing](#) and maintain a two metre (six feet) distance from other people.
  - [Wash hands](#) often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, and if soap and water is not available use an alcohol-based [hand sanitizer](#).
  - Practice hand hygiene after contacting frequently touched surfaces.
  - Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
  - Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
  - Avoid shaking hands; use non-physical forms of greeting.
  - Cover your cough or sneeze into a tissue. Immediately throw the tissue in the garbage and wash your hands.
  - If you don't have a tissue, sneeze or cough into your sleeve or arm.
  - Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces (e.g. pens, delivery containers, phones and surfaces in delivery vehicles).
- **Precautions for Staff Entering Homes of Clients who are unable to Carry Donation Packages from their Front door into their Home**

**Reduce the risk of transmission:**

- Practice [physical distancing](#) and maintain a two metre (six feet) distance from the client.
- Avoid shaking hands; use non-physical forms of greeting.
- Avoid touching surfaces in the client's home.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Practice hand hygiene. [Wash hands](#) with soap and water for at least 15 seconds, and if soap and water is not available use an alcohol-based [hand sanitizer](#) immediately after the delivery.

## Developing your Plan and Contact Information

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To ensure that your space or centre has been modified or designed to prevent the spread of COVID-19, please develop and submit a plan to WDG Public Health. The plan should clearly outline the workflow layout and measures that are being taken to prevent the spread of COVID-19. What does the space look like? How is it organized? How are you ensuring hand hygiene and physical distancing for staff, volunteers and clients?

Once your plan is complete, please connect with our Public Health Inspector, using the email address [PHI.Intake@wdgpublichealth.ca](mailto:PHI.Intake@wdgpublichealth.ca) or call **1-800-265-7293 ext – 4753** for feedback, support and to ensure that all precautionary measures have been considered in your plan.

For more information, visit our website at [wdgpublichealth.ca](http://wdgpublichealth.ca) or call the WDG Public Health COVID-19 call centre at 1-800-265-7293 x7006.

## References

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\*This document was adapted from the original created by Toronto Public Health.

Public Health Agency of Canada (2020). *Community-based measures to mitigate the spread of coronavirus diseases (COVID-19) in Canada*. Retrieved from <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/health-professionals/public-health-measures-mitigate-covid-19.html>

Public Health Ontario (2020). Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Cleaning and Disinfection for Public Settings. Retrieved from <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ncov/factsheet-covid-19-environmental-cleaning.pdf?la=en> .

Public Health Ontario (2020). *Technical Brief Update IPAC Recommendations for Use of Personal Protective Equipment for Care of Individuals with Suspect or Confirmed COVID-19*. Retrieved from <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ncov/updated-ipac-measures-covid-19.pdf?la=en>

# Embedded Tools and Resources (Double Click to Download):

## Help Prevent COVID-19

### COVID-19 Help prevent COVID-19 and other illnesses

You are welcome here if you:

- Have no symptoms (fever, cough, runny nose, sore throat or shortness of breath)
- Have not travelled outside of Canada in the past 14 days
- Have not been in close contact with a confirmed or probable case of COVID-19

Please remember to practice social distancing and keep a 2-meter (6 feet) space between you and others.



1-800-265-7293  
info@wdgpublichealth.ca  
wdgpublichealth.ca

## Disinfecting Public Spaces

### CORONAVIRUS DISEASE (COVID-19) CLEANING AND DISINFECTING PUBLIC SPACES

This document provides guidance on cleaning and disinfecting of public settings, including schools, universities, public libraries, museums, public transit, commercial residences and workplaces.



#### WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

- Surfaces frequently touched with hands are most likely to be contaminated. These include door knobs, handrails, elevator buttons, light switches, cabinet handles, faucet handles, tables, countertops and electronics.
- It is not yet known how long the virus causing COVID-19 lives on surfaces, however, early evidence suggests it can live on objects and surfaces from a few hours to days.

#### CHOOSE A PRODUCT THAT CLEANS AND DISINFECTS

- When cleaning public spaces, choose products that clean and disinfect all at once (e.g. pre-mixed store-bought disinfectant cleaning solutions and/or wipes when available).
- Cleaning products remove germs, dirt and residues from surfaces by using soap (or detergent) and water. Cleaning does not necessarily kill germs, but by removing them it lowers their numbers and the risk of spreading infection.

- Disinfecting products kill germs on surfaces using chemicals.
- Use only approved hard-surface disinfectants that have a Drug Identification Number (DIN). A DIN is an 8-digit number given by Health Canada that confirms the disinfectant product is approved and safe for use in Canada.

#### CREATE A CLEANING PROCEDURE

- Operators of community settings should develop or review protocols and procedures for cleaning public spaces. This will help determine where improvements or additional cleaning may be needed.
- Read and follow manufacturer's instructions for safe use of cleaning and disinfection products (e.g. wear gloves, use in well-ventilated areas, allow enough contact time for disinfectant to kill germs based on the product being used).
- Wash hands with soap and water or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer after removing gloves.



## How to self isolate

### Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) How to Self-Isolate

You must isolate yourself from others if you have COVID-19 symptoms or may have been exposed to COVID-19. If you start to feel worse, contact your health care provider or Telehealth (1-866-797-0000).

#### Stay home

- Do not use public transportation, taxis or rideshares.
- Do not go to work, school or other public places.



#### Avoid contact with others

- No visitors unless essential (e.g. care providers)
- Stay away from seniors and people with chronic medical conditions (e.g. diabetes, lung problems, immune deficiency).
- As much as possible, stay in a separate room away from other people in your home and use a separate bathroom if you have one.
- Make sure that shared rooms have good airflow (e.g. open windows).
- If these steps are not possible, keep a distance of at least two metres from others at all times.



#### Keep your distance

- If you are in a room with other people, keep a distance of at least two metres and wear a mask that covers your nose and mouth.
- If you cannot wear a mask, people should wear a mask when they are in the same room as you.



#### Wash your hands

- Wash your hands often with soap and water.
- Dry your hands with a paper towel or with cloth towel that no one else will share.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.

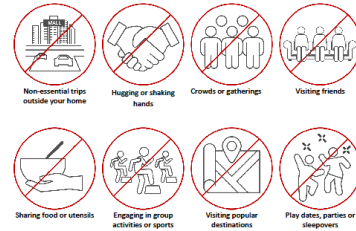


COVID-19: How to self-isolate

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## Physical Distancing

#### Things to avoid



#### Physical distancing and your mental health

Physical distancing disrupts our normal social routines. During times of uncertainty and change, it is normal for people to worry. If you begin to notice signs of depression or hopelessness in yourself or a loved one, please seek help. Get support if you need to talk.

For more information see:

- [Take Care of Yourself and Each Other](#)
- [Resources for Ontarians Experiencing Mental Health and Addiction Issues during the Pandemic](#)

Physical distancing, when combined with proper hand hygiene and cough etiquette, has been shown to limit the spread of COVID-19. If you are self-isolating because you have symptoms of COVID-19 or you may have been exposed to COVID-19, see [How to Self-Isolate](#).

#### Learn about the virus

COVID-19 is a new virus. It spreads by respiratory droplets of an infected person to others with whom they have close contact such as people who live in the same household or provide care. You can also access up to date information on COVID-19 on the Ontario Ministry of Health's website: [ontario.ca/coronavirus](#).

The information in this document is current as of April 2, 2020  
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