

Guidance on shipping and receiving during COVID-19

Overview

This is not a legal document and employers are advised to seek legal advice.

Employers and constructors have obligations to protect workers from hazards in the workplace as set out in the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* (OHSA) and its regulations and the directives coming from the Chief Medical Officer of Health.

Workers should raise any concerns to their:

- Supervisor
- Joint health and safety committee
- Health and safety representative

This will help ensure the employer has taken all reasonable precautions.

Ontario is currently in the midst of a global pandemic. While the COVID-19 situation is changing rapidly, the legislation and regulations used to govern Ontario's workplaces are not.

Under Ontario law, employers have the duty to keep workers and work sites safe and free of hazards. Workers have the right to refuse unsafe work. If health and safety concerns are not resolved internally, a worker can seek enforcement by filing a complaint with the ministry's Health and Safety Contact Centre at 1-877-202-0008. Failure of the employer or constructor to comply with the OHSA and its regulations could result in a stop-work order upon inspection by the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development.

Recognize hazards and assess risks

As a shipper or receiver, you should be aware of the spread of viruses and the risk of exposure to them. You also need to be aware of the precautions for working with truck shipments, drivers and related personnel, as well as frequently shared material handling equipment, i.e., lift trucks, pallet pumps, etc.

Primary hazards and risk sources may originate from close contact with other co-workers and drivers, and the shipment contents, related paperwork, common use of pens and clipboards, and material handling equipment on which a virus may be deposited.

Controls

1. Maintain physical distancing

Physical distancing means maintaining a distance of at least 2 metres (6 feet) or more between persons. By practicing social distancing, you are less likely to be exposed to a respiratory virus:

- Do not report to work if you are exhibiting any of the COVID-19 symptoms.
- Practice social distancing inside the warehouse at all times.
- Limit the amount of face-to-face contact with drivers and always avoid physical contact with people who have flu like symptoms.
- If possible, ask drivers to remain in the truck cab while the trailer is being loaded or unloaded, or request that drivers wait in a designated area to limit contact.

- Use technology for communication (such as text messaging and mobile phones rather than in-person conversations) as much as possible.
- Where possible, keep all loads on pallets to reduce exposure to loose cargo.

- Limit any casual interactions that may normally occur with others.
- Do not share pens. Request that the driver use their own pen or stylus when signing.
- Wear gloves and ask drivers to wear gloves if handling of paperwork is required.
- Where possible use technology (such as scanning equipment) for proof of delivery.
- Provide drivers with disposable cups rather than allowing them to use refillable containers.
- Regularly disinfect any equipment used to receive or ship packages.
- Have sanitizer and soap present and visible for all staff to use and refill regularly.
- Wear work gloves when handling and/or moving freight.

2. Clean the facility and equipment frequently

Cleaning methods should be employed with special attention to key areas as specified below:

- Educate all staff about COVID-19 and share resources on how to keep the workplace clean.
- Encourage and remind staff to use good hygiene practices. This should include frequent handwashing.
- Reinforce education and hygiene with regular workplace communications and reminders.
- Regularly wipe down and disinfect common pieces of equipment such as lift trucks and pallet pumps using disinfectant wipes.
- Regularly clean door handles, breakrooms, meeting rooms and restrooms, and all high-traffic areas.
- Use appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) when cleaning potentially contaminated surfaces.
- Dispose of gloves and soiled materials as soon as possible.
- Remove garbage from the facility regularly.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Once any cleaning is complete, remove gloves and ensure you wash your hands.

Evaluate

Monitor supplies. As you increase cleaning and disinfecting, monitor your supply of disinfectant wipes, cleaning products, and PPE (gloves) to ensure you have sufficient supplies.

Monitor the frequency of cleaning. This will ensure that all areas, including often overlooked areas, get sanitized on a regular basis.

Stay home if you are feeling ill. If you detect symptoms, you should immediately distance yourself from others and go home. If possible, avoid using public transit. Ensure you notify your supervisor so that they are aware of the situation and can also notify others who may have been exposed.

For Ontario residents, anyone who suspects that they have contracted COVID-19 should call 811 (NOT 911) instead of going to the hospital or a family doctor. Direct toll-free phone numbers for Ontario residents are: 1-866-797-0000 or TTY: 1-866-797-0007. Visit the Ontario Ministry of Health's website and taking their [self-assessment](#).

Resources

Stay updated with daily government updates on COVID-19:

[Government of Ontario](#)

[Government of Canada](#)

[Public Health Ontario](#)

