

Social Distancing

What is Social Distancing?

Wikipedia defines Social Distancing as: a set of nonpharmaceutical infection control actions intended to stop or slow down the spread of a contagious disease.

You can help protect yourself by changing your daily routines in order to minimize close contact with others. Self-isolating in your home is the best control for avoiding exposure to a contagious disease. As this is not always possible, following the guidelines listed below can help to minimize your risks.

Practice social distancing by:

- Ensure you stay at least 2 metres (6 feet) away from one another
- Avoid personal contact such as touching or shaking hands
- Avoid large groups, keep gatherings at a minimal (50 people max). If needed, break it up into smaller groups for job planning, toolbox talks or safety meetings.

To help reduce your risk of infection:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Using soap and water is the single most effective way of reducing the spread of infection. If soap and water are not available, use hand sanitizer that contains at **least 60% alcohol**.
- Do not touch your face, eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Cover your mouth and nose with the crease of your elbow or a tissue when you sneeze or cough. Dispose of tissue immediately and wash or sanitize your hands
- Regularly clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces.
- Do not share food, drinks, utensils, etc.

Protect Yourself On Site by:

- Know the practices/procedures your employer has put in place to access the jobsite safely.
- Discuss strategies to ensure social distancing and proper hand hygiene at toolbox talks and in orientations
- Ensure that hand washing stations and alcohol base hand sanitizers are on site and available for all workers. Supply all company and personal vehicles with hand sanitizer.
- Put up posters of proper hand washing techniques.
- Ensure all offices and non-porous tools are sanitized and cleaned regularly.
- Perform environmental routine cleanings.
- Disinfect PPE daily after use by washing thoroughly with antibacterial soap.
- Post informative posters telling people what to do if they get sick.
- If you suspect you have contracted a virus, stay home and self-isolate until health has improved, if needed contact your family doctor or go to the nearest hospital for severe/life threatening symptoms. For Pandemic Viruses contact 811 for further instructions on testing and treatment.

The Occupational Health and Safety Act in your jurisdiction entitles all workers to three rights:

The right to know about health and safety matters.

The right to participate in decisions that could affect their health and safety.

The right to refuse work that could affect their health and safety and that of others.

General duties of employers

302(1) An employer shall, at a place of employment:

(a) monitor the use or presence of, or a worker's exposure to, any chemical substance or any biological substance that may be hazardous or harmful to the health or safety of a worker;

(b) where reasonably practicable, substitute a less hazardous or harmful chemical substance or biological substance for a hazardous or harmful chemical substance or biological substance;

(c) subject to subsection 307(1), to the extent that is reasonably practicable, reduce any contamination of the place of employment by a chemical substance or biological substance; and

(d) develop and implement work procedures and processes that are as safe as is reasonably practicable for the handling, use, storage, production and disposal of chemical substances and biological substances.