

Preventive measures at workplaces in response to the danger of COVID-19 infection where contact is necessary between people.

When a risk assessment has been done, consideration must be given to what measures are practicable, under the circumstances, to prevent or reduce the danger of COVID-19 infection. We must remember that there is no “one size fits all” solution; a separate assessment must be done for each workstation.

General preventive measures to reduce risk of infection:

- ✓ Ensure an appropriate distance (2 meters) between employees.
- ✓ Urge employees to wash their hands frequently.
- ✓ Have alcohol-based hand disinfectant accessible to workers throughout the workplace.
- ✓ Reduce physical contact between people, i.e. handshakes and embraces or other contact. Find other ways of greeting that do not involve skin contact.
- ✓ Remind employees to avoid touching their faces, particularly their eyes, noses and mouths.

If the nature of the work is such that face-to-face contact is essential, then various special measures can be taken to reduce the risk of infection.

These include the following:

- ✓ Issuing employees with the appropriate protective clothing, and with information and practical training in how to use it. It must also be clear why and when they are obliged to use it.
- ✓ Ensure that employees have access to hand-washing facilities.
- ✓ Give employees the opportunity to wash their hands frequently with soap, and for at least 20 seconds each time.
- ✓ Where water and soap are not immediately within reach, alcohol-based hand disinfectant must be accessible both to employees and to customers. For example, dispensers of disinfectant can be placed on service counters and customers encouraged to disinfect their hands before being served.
- ✓ Clean frequently used surfaces, using disinfectants.
- ✓ Ensure that it is clear to all employees what their day-to-day tasks and duties are while the virus infection lasts.
- ✓ Ensure that employees have access to hand written answers to questions asked frequently by customers.
- ✓ Ensure that, in general, there is a suitable distance between people unless physical contact is necessary (e.g., in care-giving work); in such cases, measures must be taken to ensure that employees use satisfactory protective clothing and equipment.
- ✓ Examine other possible ways of carrying out tasks that will limit physical contact or close proximity to other people.
- ✓ Put up notices reminding employees and customers not to shake hands when greeting or parting.
- ✓ Put up signs encouraging employees and customers not to cough or sneeze without covering their mouths and noses, but rather to use tissues or the crook of their elbows. Such precautions will reduce the likelihood of droplets bearing infection coming into contact with their hands.
- ✓ Give employees encouragement and opportunity to discuss their concerns, e.g. by exchanging information and chatting with their immediate superiors or colleagues on a daily basis.