



Employers'
Advisers Office

COVID-19: WorkSafeBC Claims

Resource Guide

Ministry of Labour

Employers' Advisers Office (EAO)

The EAO is branch of the Ministry of Labour.

The mandate of the EAO is found under section 352 of the *Workers Compensation Act*. All services are complimentary as the expenses for the Office are paid out of the Worker's Compensation Accident Fund, which is funded entirely by the employers of British Columbia.

The EAO provides independent advice, assistance, representation and education to all employers or potential employers on workers' compensation issues. Advisers are available to discuss workers' compensation claims management, assessments, experience rating, safety or other areas of concern with you, your management staff or your association.

Telephone, Fax or Email

Toll free: 1-800-925-2233 (Canada and USA)

Toll free fax: 1-855-664-7993 (Canada wide)

Website address: <http://www.gov.bc.ca/employersadvisers>

Email: EAO@eao-bc.org

RESOURCES

WorkSafeBC

Description	Link
General Information	
Home page – Find links to COVID-19 updates in banner at top of page	https://www.worksafebc.com/en
COVID-19 frequently asked questions (includes illness in the workplace; employer obligations; and controlling exposure)	https://www.worksafebc.com/en/about-us/covid-19-updates/health-and-safety/covid-19-fags
Industry-specific information (for example; health care; hospitality; construction; manufacturing; transportation; retail)	https://www.worksafebc.com/en/about-us/covid-19-updates/covid-19-industry-information
Safe return to work information and resources	https://www.worksafebc.com/en/about-us/covid-19-updates
Claims Information	
Online option for claim questions	https://www.worksafebc.com/en/about-us/news-events/announcements/2020/April/convenient-online-option-for-claim-questions
Claims information for workers, employers and COVID-19 claims data by industry sector	https://www.worksafebc.com/en/about-us/covid-19-updates/claims
Prevention Information	
Preventing Exposure to COVID-19 in the Workplace – Employer Guide	https://www.worksafebc.com/en/resources/about-us/guides/preventing-exposure-to-covid-19-in-the-workplace?lang=en NOTE: Guide is also reproduced below
New Guide to keep your workers healthy and safe while working from home	https://www.worksafebc.com/en/about-us/news-events/announcements/2020/April/new-resources-support-health-safety-while-working-from-home NOTE: Guide is also reproduced below
Setting up, organizing, and working comfortably in your home workplace	https://www.worksafebc.com/en/resources/health-safety/information-sheets/setting-up-home-workspace?lang=en NOTE: Guide is also reproduced below
Staying safe at work – prevention resources, including links regarding protecting mental health	https://www.worksafebc.com/en/about-us/covid-19-updates/health-and-safety/staying-safe-at-work

Orders, Guidelines, General Information and Support

Source	Description	Link
Provincial Health Officer	Orders, Notices and Guidance for individuals, households and industries	https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/about-bc-s-health-care-system/office-of-the-provincial-health-officer/current-health-topics/covid-19-novel-coronavirus
British Columbia Centre for Disease Control (BC CDC)	For the latest medical updates, including case counts, prevention, risks, and testing	http://covid-19.bccdc.ca/
HealthlinkBC	Provides information and resources, including information about calling 8-1-1 for healthcare questions	https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/
British Columbia COVID-19 – Thrive Health	Self-assessment tool	https://bc.thrive.health/
Government of British Columbia	Support and Information	https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/emergency-preparedness-response-recovery/covid-19-provincial-support

Financial Assistance

Source	Description	Link
Canadian Government	Financial assistance: Canada's COVID-19 Economic Response Plan	https://www.canada.ca/en/department-finance/economic-response-plan.html
Government of British Columbia	Financial assistance: BC COVID-19 Action Plan	https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/emergency-preparedness-response-recovery/covid-19-provincial-support/financial-benefits#business

Preventing exposure to COVID-19 in the workplace

A guide for employers

Orders from the provincial health officer (PHO) and guidance to employers and businesses provided by the BC Centre of Disease Control represent the minimum standard that employers must meet, to comply with obligations to ensure worker health and safety. To address health and safety concerns in the workplace raised by COVID-19, ask yourself the following questions:

- 1 How are you telling your workers about COVID-19 (i.e. exposure to COVID-19 in your workplace)?
- 2 Do you have a system in place where workers (including joint health and safety committee representatives and worker representatives) can inform you of concerns relating to being exposed to COVID-19 in the workplace? Find out if there are any specific tasks that concern them (e.g. tasks that involve interacting with others).

Identifying exposure hazards and developing measures to control exposure

- 3 What are you doing to prevent your workers from being exposed to COVID-19?
 - Have you done a walk-through of your workplace, to identify specific conditions or tasks that may increase the risk of exposure of your workers to COVID-19?
 - Have you asked your workers (including your joint committee or worker representative) where potential exposures may occur and how they think exposures can be controlled?
- 4 Have you developed controls that will eliminate or minimize the risk of exposure?
 - What are those controls?
 - Have you put them in place?
 - How are they working (are they effective)?
 - How do you know how they are working?

Controlling the number of people on site

- 5 How are you controlling the number of workers and other people at your workplace?
 - Do all your workers need to come to work? Can some work from home? (Learn about [Health and safety responsibilities when working from home.](#))
 - Can you stagger shifts, to reduce the numbers present at one time?
 - Are you ensuring there is adequate cleaning between shifts?
 - Can you prioritize the work that needs to be done at the workplace to help your business operate as close to normal under the circumstances? This will require a determination of core work and where it can safely and productively be performed.

6 If you have workers who need to come to the workplace, how are you ensuring the following steps are being taken to reduce their risk of COVID-19 exposure? Different workplaces will have different needs but the following steps are a good start:

- Position workers to allow for physical distancing. Keep 2 metres distance between workers and customers, clients, and other workers.
- Provide soap and water or hand sanitizers and encourage workers to wash their hands frequently.
- Enhance cleaning and disinfecting of the workplace, particularly high-contact items such as door handles, faucet handles, keyboards, and shared equipment (e.g., photocopiers).

7 How are you checking and tracking whether the above steps are being taken?

Prohibition of workers who are sick and those returning from outside Canada

8 What are you and your supervisors and managers doing to prohibit the following workers from coming to work?

- Workers who are displaying symptoms (e.g., fever, cough, sore throat, sneezing), whether or not the illness has been confirmed as COVID-19.
- Workers who have travelled internationally. It is mandatory for all travellers returning to Canada to self-isolate for 14-days.
- Workers who live in the same household as a confirmed or clinical COVID-19 case who is self-isolating, or who have been exposed to a confirmed COVID-19 infected person and advised by 811 (public health) to self-isolate.

9 How are you communicating these messages to your managers, supervisors, and workers?

10 What are you doing to track and communicate with workers who fall into one of the above categories?

For more information about preventing workplace exposure to COVID-19 visit [worksafebc.com](https://www.worksafebc.com) and the [BC Centre of Disease Control](https://www.bccdc.ca/).

March 31, 2020

Working from home:

A guide to keeping your workers healthy and safe

Working from home on a regular basis can benefit both you and your workers by reducing business expenses, allowing for a more flexible lifestyle, and improving the environment. Sometimes it can also be necessary to work from home temporarily while dealing with health concerns, child care arrangements, or other issues that may unexpectedly arise in daily life.

As an employer, you must ensure the health and safety of your workers when they work from home. It's important to understand that working from home is an extension of the workplace, and the *Workers Compensation Act* and *Occupational Health and Safety Regulation* still apply. With consideration and planning, working from home can be positive and safe for both workers and employers.

This guide discusses a health and safety policy for working from home and outlines some useful tips and resources to help ensure the health and safety of your workers.

Develop a health and safety policy for working from home

As an employer, ensure you have a working from home health and safety policy in place, and that everyone understands their roles, duties, and responsibilities. This policy should require workers to assess their workspace and report any potential hazards to their manager. Your policy should also include the following information:

- Protocols for evacuating from the worker's home to a safe location if needed and how workers can contact you in case of emergency
- Safe work practices and how to report any work-related incidents or injuries
- Communication protocols and procedures for check-ins if a worker is working alone or in isolation
- Requirements for education and training
- Ergonomic considerations



Reduce risks while working from home

Setting up a safe workspace at home will be different for everyone, but there are some common risks. As an employer, ensure that you and your workers adequately identify and control unsafe conditions and activities

that may cause injury or illness. Some factors to consider include the following:

- Environment (e.g., asbestos, mould, tobacco smoke)
- Electrical safety
- Ergonomics
- Slips, trips, and falls
- Violence
- Working alone

For more information on these topics and related resources, visit [worksafebc.com](https://www.worksafebc.com).

Find more information

- [Setting up, organizing, and working comfortably in your home workspace](#) (WorkSafeBC publication)
- [How to Make Your Computer Workstation Fit You](#) (WorkSafeBC publication)
- [Ergonomics](#) (WorkSafeBC webpage)
- [OHS Guidelines on the Definition of working alone or in isolation \(G 4.20.1\) and Procedures for checking the well-being of workers \(G.4.21\)](#)

Setting up, organizing, and working comfortably in your home workspace

Working from home can be safe, positive, and productive with a well-planned workspace.

It's important to use equipment in a way that helps you work in a healthy and safe manner. You will reduce the risk of injury if you maintain your body in a neutral position while sitting at a work surface. Maintaining a neutral position means you should be relaxed with your joints aligned (i.e., no twisting or awkward angles) to minimize stress on the body. Some relatively simple modifications can be made if you don't have the same adjustable equipment at home as in your workplace.

Here are some tips to help you achieve correct posture and reduce the risk of injury while working from home.

Setting up your workspace

Choosing a chair

- The chair you use should be stable with a back rest. Try using a small cushion or rolled up towel behind your lower back for additional lumbar support.
- You should be able to put three fingers of space between the back of your knees and the front of the chair. If not, add a cushion to the back to shorten the seat depth.
- Sit with your buttocks all the way back against the backrest. Your back should be nearly upright.
- Make sure you sit with your knees and hips at the same height to avoid pressure on the back of your thighs. Consider using a raised footrest (for example, a stool, box, or book) to support your feet. Make sure your footrest does not raise your knees higher than your hips.

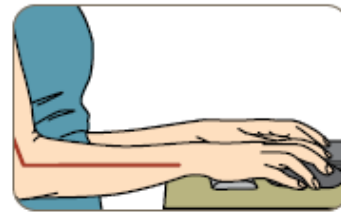


Using your keyboard and mouse

On a work surface:

- Make sure the work surface you choose allows for a neutral posture and is not too high.

- Use an external keyboard and mouse and place them at the same height.
- Your elbows should be at the same height as the keyboard surface with your elbows at your side and not reaching forward.
- To keep your upper extremities neutral, position the keyboard and mouse just above your thighs so you can keep your shoulders relaxed and wrists straight.



On your lap:

- If you are using the keyboard on your laptop, it should be placed on your lap. This means you will have to flex your neck, but your upper extremities will be neutral.
- If you use your laptop while sitting on a couch or a chair, put it on top of a pillow or lap tray. This will help keep your elbows at 90 degrees and reduce the amount of neck flexion when you look at the screen.

Adjusting your monitor and reducing glare

- Ideally, the monitor should be an arm's length away and the top line of text at eye level. This requires creativity with a laptop. Neck flexion for short periods of time is okay for most people, but make sure you take regular stretch breaks. Looking slightly downward helps with eye strain.
- If you wear bifocals or progressives, your screen may need to be lowered so that you don't tip your head back.
- Possible sources of glare include windows, overhead lights, or any shiny surfaces.
- Try switching off room lights and using task lights. Adjust blinds and curtains.
- Windows should be at your side and not in front of or behind your monitors.
- Adjust brightness and contrast on the monitor so that it is similar to your surroundings.
- Clean your screen and eyeglasses.
- Use the zoom feature to adjust font sizes to help reduce eye strain.



For more information, please see the *How to Make Your Computer Workstation Fit You* publication and other information at worksafebc.com/ergonomics

Organizing your work area

- Reduce the risk of injuries by identifying the tasks you work on and analyzing them to find out the safest way to do them.
- High-use items (e.g., keyboard and mouse) should be reachable with your elbows at your side and not reaching forward.
- Occasionally used items (e.g., phone, pens) should be reachable with your arm extended while keeping your back on the backrest.
- Reference material and other documents should be in line with the monitor to avoid excess neck rotation and placed on a slanted surface, if possible, to reduce neck movement.
- Use a phone headset or speaker phone for long or frequent phone use. Avoid holding the phone with your shoulder.
- Make sure your work area is free from tripping hazards, including electrical cords, loose carpeting, and other objects.



Working comfortably

- Examine your work habits and activities to ensure you are avoiding awkward postures and staying in one place for too long.
- Alternate tasks to change posture and use different muscle groups.
- Avoid working for too long on a task. Try to insert shorter tasks in the middle of longer ones.
- You may have less interruption at home, which can lead to fewer breaks from work. It's important to find ways to break work into smaller chunks.
- Follow the 20/20/20 guideline: Take a 20-second stretch break every 20 minutes, and look about 20 feet away.
- Leave the radio or TV on in the background if you miss the noise or energy of the office environment.
- Use a morning start-up routine (e.g., shower, get dressed, and eat breakfast) to help psychologically trigger your mind into work mode.
- Having an "end of the workday" routine (e.g., change your clothes, go for a walk, do some exercise) is also helpful to keep work and home life separated.



If you experience any discomfort when working at home, discuss this with your manager immediately.