

City of Kitchener Corporate COVID-19 Safety Plan: A Snapshot

This plan outlines the steps City of Kitchener is taking to provide a safe working environment for our employees and public in our facilities. It also acts as a resource for employees to refer to for policies, processes and guidelines that have been developed as we move through this pandemic together.

As the COVID-19 situation continues to evolve, we will adapt and update policies, guidelines and practices to reflect the latest directions.

Business name: The Corporation of the City of Kitchener

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Measures we're taking to keep you safe

Protecting the health and safety of our employees and those we serve remains our highest priority. It is the foundation our recovery plan was built upon, and informs our decision making on an ongoing basis.

Our commitment to safety is a shared responsibility; organizationally, we have put in place the strategies, tools and procedures to create an environment that supports the safe delivery of programs and services.

How we're ensuring workers know how to keep themselves safe from exposure to COVID-19:

- Completion of Mandatory COVID-19 Health and Safety Training for all Staff.
- COVID-19 specific guidelines, safety talks and procedures have been implemented including physical distancing, hygiene, screening, PPE and non-medical masks.
- Ongoing communication of existing or new COVID-19 measures in the workplace on our COVID-19 staff intranet page, Staff Newsletters, tailored talks and meetings, and management emails.
- Signage and markings are posted at all facilities identifying requirements and reminders for non-medical masks, health screening, physical distancing, occupancy requirements and hygiene.
- Weekly oversight of our organization's response to the pandemic by our Emergency Operations Command team.
- Ongoing open, transparent and timely communication to staff through:
 - All department e-mails

- Internal e-newsletters (which can be printed and posted in high-traffic areas for those not on email)
- Posting information on bulletin boards
- Intranet COVID-19 updates page
- Virtual townhalls
- Frequent communication between supervisors and their staff outlined in a [Shared Management Mandate](#)
- Safety talks
- Online learning
- Employee pulse surveys

How we're screening for COVID-19

- Staff are required to self-monitor and complete active health screening daily, prior to arriving to a work location. If staff do not pass the active screening questions, they are not permitted to report to a work location and must advise their supervisor and health and safety staff of their status to determine next steps.
- Volunteers, contractors and essential visitors must also pass an active screening questionnaire before being permitted to enter City of Kitchener facilities/workplaces.
- The general public must also pass health screening questions if receiving in-person critical services that require staff-public interactions; for example, work with contractors/consultants, in-home inspections, and facility visitors to ensure their safety.
- Health Screening signage is posted at all facility entrances to remind employees, council, volunteers and essential visitors to self-screen before entering.
- When facilities and services are open to the public, public-facing posters and active screening is also required for visitors to self-screen prior to entering. Members of the public are required to follow the guideline for [Health Screening – Non-Staff/Non-Council](#). City locations either have a staff screener, or screening will be conducted by our facility user groups prior to entry into the facility using electronic methods or a screener.

How we're controlling the risk of transmission in our workplace

Physical distancing and separation:

Physical distancing is proven to be one of the most effective ways to stop the spread of COVID-19. That's why we've developed a robust [physical distancing plan](#) based on best practices to protect staff and the public.

Signage:

Numerous high-visibility markings have been installed to help staff and customers maintain a physical distance of two meters (six feet) between others.

Workspaces:

We have implemented a variety of measures, as appropriate, to ensure workspaces adhere to physical distancing guidelines including:

- Staggering shifts start-times
- Shift rotations
- Altering workspaces with partitions/dividers
- Relocating staff to a vacant office or meeting room
- Assigning tools and equipment to individuals during shifts
- Limiting use of shared workspaces
- Work from home
- Cohorting of staff
- Limited staff movement to various facilities where possible

Vehicles:

Staff operating city vehicles must adhere to [physical distancing guidelines](#). Supervisors will limit the number of staff per vehicle to a maximum of 2. If a vehicle is assigned 2 persons they must remain seated in the assigned seating to maximize distance, and wear a mask and eye protection (if a barrier is not in place). Staff must disinfect high touch surfaces in vehicles at the start and end of each shift.

Staff working in close proximity:

There are roles where employees will be required to [work within two meters \(six feet\) of each other](#) as a result of the work requirements. That's why our multi-layered approach to ensuring workplace safety includes cleaning, pre-screening as well as requiring PPE as additional precautions.

Common areas: city meeting rooms, eating/break areas, change rooms/locker rooms:

Staff are advised to avoid the use of common areas. If use is required, physical distancing of two metres (6 feet) must be maintained. Measures to ensure a safe space such as maximum room occupancy, installing physical distancing signage, limiting seating, equipping the room with hand sanitizer and frequent cleaning have been implemented and posted.

Staff have been instructed to:

- Maintain a two metre (six feet) distance from others whenever possible, even when barriers and Personal Protective Equipment and non-medical masks are available.
- Conduct virtual meetings or conference calls whenever possible.
- If meetings in person are required outdoors is preferred with physical distancing.
- Attend conferences and training virtually.
- Follow restrictions on how many people can use an elevator.
- Respect bathroom occupancy guidelines.
- Adhere to maximum room occupancy guidelines.
- Slow down or yield to others when walking through facilities.
- Avoid physical contact with others when not necessary.
- Follow guidelines for vehicle physical distancing, entry into private residences and facility specific requirements to ensure physical distancing.

Hygiene:

- Workers have been trained on the frequency and procedures for hand hygiene through hand washing or hand sanitization.
- Signage has been placed near hand-washing facilities in washrooms or hand-washing areas as a reminder of the procedures for hand washing.
- Workers have been instructed to avoid touching their face with unwashed hands, and to practice cough and sneeze etiquette.
- Handwashing and sanitizer has been made readily available in our facilities.

Cleaning:

Following best practices in facilities maintenance we have enhanced our cleaning protocols to include:

- Disinfecting high touch public surfaces according to the Ontario Public Health Guideline.
- Limiting the use of shared equipment and administrative supplies among staff.
- Providing cleaning products and supplies like disinfectant and paper towel to all locations identified as multi-user areas such as meeting rooms, and reception and customer service locations. Disinfecting products that meet the Health Canada requirements for COVID disinfection are used and available in all our facilities.
- Providing additional cleaning supplies to staff who request it for cleaning their workspaces.
- All staff have been instructed on these procedures and products as part of online learning and safety talks in the work area.

Custodial staff clean occupied work areas as part of their daily routines. However, staff members are required to clean their personal workstations, vehicles, equipment and tools and customer service areas.

Staff are responsible for disinfecting:

- Immediate work area (i.e. chairs, computer screens, mouse, keyboard)
- Meetings rooms/break rooms after use
- Kitchenette amenities (i.e. fridge handle, microwave, sink)
- Inside city vehicles (i.e. steering wheel, shifter, door panels, windows, outside door handle)
- Shared printer/photo copier/administrative supplies
- Shared equipment/tools
- Shared computer stations
- Reception and customer service locations (i.e. protective barrier, PIN pads, cash drawers, pens)

Managing spaces where a confirmed case has been identified:

If there is a probable or confirmed case of COVID-19 in the workplace or vehicle, procedures for request for any necessary additional cleaning of an individual workspace, shared work area and vehicles will be followed to address any needs for disinfection. This is found in our guidelines [PAN010 Deep Cleaning After Suspected of Confirmed Case of COVID](#) and [PAN011 Vehicle/Equipment Deep Cleaning](#).

Personal Protective Equipment:

To support the health and safety of staff, a comprehensive PPE protocol has been developed. To ensure ongoing availability of appropriate PPE, a Task Force has been established to monitor supply chain and internal distribution. Evidence-based research has been used to inform the City's Health and Safety recommendations for PPE, and staff can review the [COVID-19 Approved Safety PPE Chart available on the City's intranet](#).

When staff are required to work in close proximity to others a medical mask and eye protection is required. When staff are working in close proximity to the public, or other workplace situations, based on the risk other PPE may be appropriate.

All staff have received training on properly wearing and using masks such as medical or non-medical masks and personal protective equipment.

Non-medical masks:

Staff are required to wear a [non-medical mask](#) to help prevent the spread of droplets to others. The Province and Region of Waterloo public health requires the use of non-medical masks anytime a person is in a public indoor place. In our facilities, staff must wear a non-medical mask at minimum in:

- Indoor public places
- Common areas of the workplace such as but not limited to lobbies, hallways, stairwells, elevators and corridors
- Situations where physical distancing of 2 meters is not guaranteed indoors and outdoors
- When meeting with others indoors and outdoors
- When interacting with the public indoors and outdoors
- When in a vehicle with 2 persons
- Training sessions

Non-medical masks do not replace the need for personal protective equipment or to remain physically distant. Staff are required to wear medical masks or other personal protective equipment when they are required to work in proximity to others. The required PPE is identified in our [COVID-19 Safety Approved PPE Chart](#).

Additional safety measures:

In addition to the measures listed above, the following safety measures have been implemented to ensure our facilities are safe for staff, visitors, customers, contractors etc.:

- Assessment of mechanical and HVAC systems
- Testing fire and life safety systems
- Flushing water and wastewater systems
- Reviewing and updating building access controls

How we are protecting the psychological wellbeing of our workforce:

We're committed to [supporting mental health and programming](#) for staff by:

- Ensuring supervisors are openly communicating with staff on a regular basis outlined in the [Shared Management Mandate](#) on the City's intranet
- Implementing Pulse Surveys to understand the current state of employee well-being and developing strategies in response to identified staff needs
- Providing supervisors with tools and resources to support staff

- Promoting available mental health supports and programming such as the [Employee Family Assistance Program](#)
- Implementing immediate supports for staff based on Pulse Survey results as part of the Mental Health and Resilience Strategy

What we will do if there is a potential case, or suspected exposure to, COVID-19 at our workplace

- Workers with potential or suspected exposure to COVID-19 are required to self-isolate and complete the active daily health screening as well as the Ontario Screening Tool on the Government of Ontario's website.
- Workers must follow guidance on the Ontario Screening Tool and ensure they provide updated information to the COVIDScreening@kitchener.ca email.
- Human Resources staff are in contact with employees to provide support in the return to work process. Management and human resources will identify potential risk in the workplace and assist with any next steps required internally such as additional cleaning, staffing changes or any impacts to service. If the City is notified of a potential positive person in our facility the City will work with Public Health to support the Public Health contact tracing efforts and follow guidance provided. The City will identify potential close contacts through internal employee processes and patron contact logs/bookings.

How we're managing any new risks caused by the changes made to the way we operate our business

- The incident management system (IMS) for emergency management is in place to monitor risk, changes in legislation or guidance and meets regularly to determine appropriate actions or communications required to manage the emergency.
- As the Provincial government lifts or imposes COVID-19 restrictions, our decisions for staff, city facilities, and resuming the important programs, services and events will be made with the utmost care and caution for protecting staff health and well-being. We are committed to ensuring staff feel safe and supported as they return/continue to work.

How we're making sure our plan is working

- Staff feedback is gained through regular meetings with labour groups, Joint Health and Safety Committee bi-monthly meetings, pulse surveys and management observations.
- Staff monitor the implementation of COVID controls in public facilities and provide feedback through a data collection tool so adjustments can be made such as increased awareness. Feedback is provided at the various emergency IMS meetings to determine actions for improvement or correction. These meetings occur weekly (more frequently as the circumstances require it). Additionally, customer feedback is monitored through our staff and corporate contact centre and provided to the various emergency IMS meetings to determine actions for improvement or correction.

Questions or comments about our COVID safety plan?

Please contact Shelley Ogilvie, Manager, Corporate Health and Safety at Shelley.Ogilvie@kitchener.ca