

Managing COVID-19 in the Workplace

The aim and purpose of this guidance is to assist employers with information related to the Ontario Government’s [reopening framework](#). Employers must ensure that the [Ontario Ministry of Labour, Training, and Skills](#) Development and/or other relevant government authorities (e.g. WSIB) have been notified in accordance with the [Occupational Health and Safety Act](#), and other applicable law. More information is available on the [Province of Ontario’s website](#)

Employers may report cases of COVID-19 in the workplace to Toronto Public Health using the [COVID-19 Workplace Reporting Tool](#), if two or more cases within your workplace have tested positive or had symptoms of COVID-19 within a 10 day period.

Workplace vs. employer

- The *workplace* refers to the physical place of work – not the *employer*. A workplace can be any land, premises, location or thing at, upon, in or near which a worker works.
- The *employer* refers to a person, company, or organization that employs people or has under its service a person engaged in work.
- For example, City Hall is a workplace, while the *City of Toronto* is an employer.
- If an employer becomes aware of two or more people who test positive for COVID-19 within a 10-day period, and those people have a connection to the same physical place of work, the employer may notify TPH.
- Large employers that have many workplaces may notify TPH when there are two or more cases in the same workplace setting (e.g. the same office).

Examples:

Joe’s Auto Shop

Employee Susanna tested positive for COVID-19 on January 2.
 Co-op student Preya tested positive for COVID-19 on January 9.
 ✓ Two people tested positive within a 10-day period
 ✓ Both Susanna and Preya work at the Leaside auto shop location
 Joe may notify TPH.

Winnie’s Green Grocer

Ahmed works at 200 Warden Ave., and tested positive for COVID-19 on February 15.
 Ilana works at 96 Jane St., and tested positive for COVID-19 on February 28.
 ✓ Two people tested positive within a 10- day period
 ✗ Ahmed and Ilana work at different grocery locations
 Winnie does not need to notify TPH.

Employer and Employee Responsibilities

- People may enter a workplace for a variety of reasons. They may be an employee, contracted worker, customer, visitor, etc.
- The employer may report to TPH if they are aware of two or more people – workers, customers and/or visitors – at their workplace who have tested positive for COVID-19 or have symptoms of COVID-19 within a 10-day period.
- Employees should report to their employer any situation in the workplace that is likely to be harmful to the health or safety of others in the workplace. This includes one's potential exposure to COVID-19 that caused or may cause illness to another person.
 - For example, if Gary tested positive for COVID-19 and was at the workplace while he was infectious, Gary should tell his employer because other people at the workplace may be exposed.
- Promote COVID-19 screening and consider [posting signs](#) at all entrances of a business or organization for patrons and employees.
 - Staff may complete **COVID-19 worker and employee screening (ontario.ca)** before each shift.
- Staff should stay home and self-isolate if they are sick. Follow the current [provincial guidance](#) for:
 - Staff who are COVID-19 positive
 - Staff who may have been exposed to someone with COVID-19
 - When it is safe for an employee to return to work
- Support the Employee with COVID-19:
 - Ensure you have policies that support employees who need to be absent from work due to illness or confirmed COVID-19 infection
 - Ensure that all employees are aware of the [income replacement and workplace-related benefits](#) to which they are entitled
- Toronto Public Health does not recommend that employers require clearance testing or doctor's notes for return to work.

Infection prevention and control

- Toronto Public Health may conduct an investigation of workplace outbreaks in some circumstances.
- Employers must cooperate with infection prevention and control personnel from TPH, which may include:
 - allowing entry into the workplace premises for inspection; and
 - implementing additional measures to reduce the spread of COVID-19 to other people.

Other Resources

- [Guidance for Employers on Preventing COVID-19 in the Workplace](#)
- [COVID-19 Workplace Reporting Tool](#)

Revised September 28, 2022

- Toronto Public Health: [COVID-19: Reopening Guidelines for Businesses & Community Organizations](#)
- Province of Ontario: [Guidance to Prevent COVID-19 in the Workplace](#) (for sector-specific guidance)
- Government of Canada: [COVID-19: Your Rights and Responsibilities as an Employee](#)
- Government of Canada: [Risk-informed decision-making guidelines for workplaces and businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic](#)
- Canadian Centre for Occupational Health & Safety: [COVID-19 Tip Sheets](#)

Have questions? Call Toronto Public Health at 416-338-7600 (Monday-Friday 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.).
