



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

The Attached Frequently Asked Questions are intended to cover general inquiries related to the current pandemic of COVID-19. More questions and answers will be added as information becomes available and the situation evolves.

General

1. Will employees of CFMWS be provided with a safe working environment?

CFMWS is committed to employee well-being and to promoting a healthy and safe work environment. The employer is working closely with the National Occupational Health and Safety Committee to resume operations in a thoughtful, logical and safe way. Division Heads will determine the timing for resumption of each operation as well as the additional protection measures for employees and customers that will be in place prior to the resumption of each Service.

2. What will a phased return to work look like, for example how many people would be in office at one time?

Depending on the nature of the business or service and the workplace, the local manager will identify how many employees, including clients or visitors can enter the workplace at once. Local manager will always ensure to the best of their ability to maintain physical distancing between employee, clients and visitors. When physical distancing is difficult to ensure, the local manager will use other methods to protect the employees, such as physical barriers, signage, personal protection equipment, etc.

3. Will training be provided to employees who return to work?

New safety procedures will be developed and reviewed prior to the resumption of each CFMWS Service. This will involve three crucial elements:

- Signage for clients to ensure that they understand the new safety measures;
- Protective safety measures and procedures for employees and
- Training for employees on the new procedures prior to their first shift.

When they return to work, employees can expect new procedures for themselves and their clients. A review of the new procedures and training will be provided so that employees feel safe and secure upon their return to work.

4. How do we ensure we are protecting ourselves in the workplace as much as possible to ensure we aren't bringing Covid-19 into our homes and to people who rely on us?

It is the responsibility of everyone to follow the safety measures out in place by the employer and by the public health. Following the safety measures provided by your local manager, following good hygiene practice such as hand washing, not touching your face, mouth, eyes and nose, and practicing physical distancing will help reduce the exposure to the virus and mitigate the risk that you bring the virus home.

5. What support will be provided to employees who may feel anxious about returning to work?

The Employee and Family Assistance Program is available to all employees and their family as a confidential resource to discuss their fear and anxiety over a return to work. Managers and supervisors will inform employees of this resources during the training for re-opening and on a on-going basis.

6. Can I get COVID-19 if it is on food?

Based on information about this novel coronavirus thus far, there has been no reported cases but additional investigation is still needed.

7. Is it possible to get COVID-19 from packages sent in the mail?

There is still a lot that is unknown about COVID-19 and how it spreads. Coronaviruses are thought to be spread most often by respiratory droplets. Although the virus can survive for a short period on some surfaces, it is unlikely to be spread from domestic or international mail, products or packaging. However, it may be possible that people can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads.

Illness in the Workplace

8. An employee has tested positive for COVID-19 – what should managers do?

The employee will not be permitted to return to the workplace until they are free of the COVID-19 virus. As per the public health direction, all person who have tested positive for COVID-19 must take another test, as directed by their health care professional, to ensure that they are free from the virus. The employee must present a proof form their doctor that they have tested negative before re-entering the workplace.

The current advice from health authorities is that all employees who worked closely with the infected employee will not be in the workplace for a period of at least a 14-day to ensure the infection does not spread in the workplace. A doctor's note may be required stipulating that the employee is free from the virus before the employee can return to the workplace.

9. One of our employees appears sick with symptoms associated with COVID-19 - What to do?

As with a confirmed case, the employee will be sent home until further notice. The Public Health Agency of Canada encourages any person who has even mild symptoms to stay home and call the public health authority in their municipality, province or territory. They will provide advice on what the employee should do.

Other employees who may have been exposed will be informed and sent home for at least a 14 day period or until the diagnosis of COVID-19 is ruled out by health authorities.

It is extremely important not to share the name of employees who appear to be sick or who are sick to protect their privacy.

10. One of our employees told us that they came into contact with someone who has COVID-19 - What should we do?

Once the contact is confirmed, the employee will be sent home or told to stay home for at least 14 days or as otherwise directed by public health authorities. Co-workers who may have come into close contact with the employee should also be send home or told to stay home from the workplace for at least a 14 day period.

It is extremely important not to share the name of employees who appear to be sick or who are sick to protect their privacy.

11. If one of our employees tests positive for COVID-19, does the employer have to report it to the provincial or federal government?

No, the CFMWS is not obligated to report a confirmed case of COVID-19 to federal or provincial health authorities. The medical professional who received the diagnosis has the obligation to report the positive test result to provincial health authorities.

However, if an employee in the workplace is diagnosed, employers may want to voluntarily contact public health authorities to receive advice and assist in identifying contacts the infected employee had in the workplace.

Work Refusal

12. What if an employee refuses to work because they are afraid of contracting COVID-19 in the workplace?

The health and safety of employees of CFMWS is important. If an employee feels unsafe to report to work because of COVID-19, the manager or supervisor must inquire on the specific reasons from the employee and provide realistic and necessary measures to ensure the safety of the employee. Once all realistic and necessary measures have been implemented and the safety of the employee has been ensured, the employee should report to work.

There could be personal or medical reasons that would put an employee at a higher risk of contamination than the average population and those situations must be assessed individually. If you have a condition that puts you at higher risk, discuss this with your manager or supervisor.

13. Can employees be disciplined for a work refusal?

No, employers cannot dismiss, discipline, or intimidate employees for **properly** exercising a health and safety right.. An employer may be justified in imposing discipline if the work refusal has been exercised in bad faith. The appropriate right to refuse work process will be followed to make that determination. An employer considering discipline for a refusing worker should only do so after consultation with their local Human Resources Office.

14. What if an employee cannot work because they have no child care?

Employees will be provided with as much notice as possible with regards to the resumption of their CFMWS Service. The employer will endeavour to give as much warning as possible to allow employees the time to make arrangements for child care, elder care, etc.

In the event that the employee cannot secure childcare, the employee should advise their manager as soon as possible. Consult the applicable collective agreement or CFMWS HR Policy and Procedures for applicable leave provisions.

15. What if a CFMWS Service does not have enough healthy workers to operate?

In the unlikely scenario that many of our employees are unable to work, the CFMWS may ask healthy employees to work additional hours. As a last resort, we could also consider hiring employees on a temporary basis in accordance with relevant collective agreement provisions where there are provisions.

Workers' Compensation

16. If an employee contracts COVID-19 at work – are they covered by workers' compensation?

Possibly, but the assessment of whether the employee is entitled to compensation would be determined on a case-by-case basis. Workers compensation boards will have to assess whether COVID-19 is an occupational disease: e.g. it was caused by and arose out and in the course of employment. If as an employee you feel that you contracted COVID-19 in the workplace, please advise your supervisor and complete the necessary documentation for Worker's Compensation:-

17. Do I still fill out an accident report on SMAAT if I hurt myself on the job?

Yes, we must all continue to report workplace accidents and near-misses using SMAAT. Also inform your manager/supervisor immediately if you are injured or if there is a near-missed.