

# Frequently Asked Questions - 2019 COVID-19 (As of March 13, 2020)

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## General Information

### Q1. Where can I learn more about 2019 COVID-19?

A1. You can visit [Canada.ca/coronavirus](https://Canada.ca/coronavirus) for more information, including [Frequently Asked Questions](#) about the virus and the Government of Canada's actions. You can also contact the Government of Canada's information line at 1-833-784-4397.

### Q2. What should I do to avoid getting this virus?

A2. Parks Canada team members should follow the advice provided by the [Public Health Agency of Canada](#) to the general population.

Employees can play an active role in staying healthy and preventing the spread of COVID-19. Follow these simple steps recommended by the [Public Health Agency of Canada](#):

- wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds;
- avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands;
- avoid close contact with people who are sick;
- cough or sneeze into your sleeve and not your hands; and
- stay home if you are sick to avoid spreading illness to others.

For more information on COVID-19 prevention, consult [Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\): Outbreak update](#). Health Canada's [Public Service Occupational Health Program](#) is responsible for issuing specific occupational health advice on personal protective measures for public service employees. **Q3. Why is so much attention being paid to hand hygiene?**

A3. The [Public Health Agency of Canada](#) has indicated that hand washing with soap and water is the best defense against common infectious diseases. Should soap and water not be readily available, employees should be encouraged to use hand sanitizer. Scent-free hand sanitizers should be available to employees in the workplace when soap and water are not readily available.

### Q4. Where should employees seek guidance regarding workplace risk of exposure to the COVID-19?

A4. Employees who are concerned about their health and safety should consult with their manager to discuss their concerns.

## Responsibilities and Rights

### Q5. Who is responsible for employees' occupational health and safety?

A5. Under the [Canada Labour Code](#) (Code), Part II, the employer (represented by the manager/supervisor) is responsible for the occupational health and safety of his/her employees.

Under the [Code](#), employees also have a role to play to ensure their own occupational health and safety as well as the occupational health and safety of other employees and any person likely to be affected by their acts or omissions. This includes members of the public visiting a federal workplace.

[Employment and Social Development Canada](#)'s Labour Program created a brochure, [Pamphlet 2A - Employer and Employee Duties](#), which outlines the duties of both the employer and employees under the Code.

### Q6. How is the Government of Canada working to protect its employees?

A6. The Government of Canada is providing information to its employees on how to protect themselves against COVID-19 including general public health information provided by the [Public Health Agency of Canada](#) and Occupational Health and Safety Advisories issued by [Health Canada's Public Service Occupational Health Program](#). **Manager Responsibilities**

### Q7. As a manager, what are my responsibilities in the context of COVID-19?

A7. Managers are responsible at all times, both by policy and by law, to provide their employees with a healthy and safe work environment. In the context of COVID-19, managers must remain informed of orders, directions and guidance issued by the [Public Health Agency of Canada](#), [Health Canada](#) and from their own organizations. They also have the duty to inform their employees of these orders, directions and guidance. Given this, managers are encouraged to assess whether or not telework arrangements are feasible within their field or business units.


Managers can obtain advice from their Occupational Health and Safety Coordinator or Advisor regarding health and safety processes and procedures but, at a minimum, must familiarize themselves with their responsibilities in dealing with an employee's [right to refuse dangerous work](#), and/or [health and safety complaint](#). These processes are set out in the [Canada Labour Code](#) and are explained on the [Employment and Social Development Canada](#) webpage on [occupational health and safety](#).

Managers can also consult the [Manager's Handbook Canada Labour Code Part II](#), developed to assist them in interpreting and implementing the requirements of Part II of the [Canada Labour Code](#).

### Q8. How do managers/supervisors address the anxiety that some employees may be experiencing?

A8. Under circumstances such as these, it is natural to experience different levels of anxiety. Employees may wish to speak to their manager/supervisor, who will be able to

advise them on what services are available to help them via the Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP):

EFAP provides free short-term confidential counselling for personal or work-related problems as well as crisis counselling to employees and their immediate family members 24 hours a day, 7 days per week. To access EFAP services call, 1-800-268-7708 or  1-800-567-5803

**Employee Responsibilities**

### **Q9. As an employee, what are my responsibilities in the context of COVID-19?**

A9. Employees have the responsibility to inform themselves by consulting information provided by health authorities and by their employer, such as [2019 novel coronavirus \(COVID-19\): Outbreak update](#) . They are responsible for following their management's directions regarding reporting to work and workplace health procedures in the context of the COVID-19.

Section 126 of the [Canada Labour Code](#) outlines reasonable expectations for all employees regardless of their position in the organization. Employees' duties include, among others:

- Using safety equipment provided to them;
- Complying with all instructions from the employer concerning the health and safety of employees; and
- Cooperating with any person carrying out a duty set out in the [Code](#).

While at work, employees must also report to the employer any thing or circumstance in a workplace that is likely to be hazardous to the health or safety of employees or other persons granted access to the workplace by the employer.

To avoid spreading the virus to colleagues and clients, employees who have symptoms of COVID-19 (fever, cough, and difficulty breathing) have a duty to stay at home as long as they present symptoms or as long as directed by their doctors.

### **Q10. What are my rights as an employee?**

A10. Employees have specific rights related to working conditions and leave provisions that are outlined in Parks Canada Agency Collective agreement . If employees require assistance in understanding these provisions, they should talk to their manager/supervisor or their union representative.

In addition, employees have three specific rights stemming from the [Canada Labour Code](#), Part II, in relation to their health and safety in the workplace:

- the right to know;
- the right to participate; and
- the right to refuse dangerous work.

[Employment and Social Development Canada](#)'s Labour Program created a brochure, [Pamphlet 1 – Summary Health and Safety](#), which contains general information on the [Code](#), Part II. The three rights mentioned above are explained in this brochure.

**Q11. Am I expected to report to work in the context of COVID-19?**

A11. The health, safety and well-being of Parks Canada Agency team members across the country are of the highest importance to the the Agency. Employees will be expected to report to work unless advised otherwise by their management based on the advice of health authorities. It is the manager's discretion to consider requests for alternative working arrangements subject to operational requirements.

If you have travelled abroad, please consult the [Novel Coronavirus infection: Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQ\)](#) page for the latest advice from health authorities.

**Q12. Do I have the right to refuse to work for health and safety reasons?**

A12. Under the [Canada Labour Code](#), employees have the right to refuse to do a job if there is reasonable cause to believe that the job presents a danger to themselves or another employee. Employees must be at work in order to legitimately refuse to work.

Part II of the [Code](#), which deals with health and safety in the workplace, sets out [steps](#) for an employee to follow. [Employment and Social Development Canada's](#) Labour Program created a brochure, [Pamphlet 4 – Right to Refuse Dangerous Work](#), that explains the process.

**Q13. Do I have the right to refuse to attend meetings and other workplace gatherings if I suspect that I could risk being contaminated with COVID-19?**

A13. Employees are responsible for following their management's directions regarding reporting to work and workplace health procedures in the context of COVID-19. Managers can consider alternatives to meetings and gatherings such as teleconferencing. Notwithstanding, under the [Canada Labour Code](#), employees have the right (with some exceptions) to refuse to do a job if there is reasonable cause to believe that the job presents a danger to themselves or another employee. (Refer to Q13 above). Health authorities are reviewing instructions related to mass gatherings.

**Q14. Does an employee have a duty to report to management if they have COVID-19 in the workplace?**

A14. If the employee is in the workplace and has COVID-19, under the Canada Labour Code, this would constitute a workplace hazard. As such, the employee has a duty to report this hazard to management.

**Q15. We have employees who have recently returned to work from travel to areas of higher risk of COVID-19, and colleagues are concerned about exposure. What should we do?**

A15. If employees have travelled outside Canada, they may have come in contact with the COVID-19. Please refer to the following websites for the most up-to-date information:

- GCintranet. <https://intranet.canada.ca/psc-fsc/messages/cmt-538-eng.asp> (accessible only from a Government of Canada device)
- Government of Canada. [Canada.ca/coronavirus](https://Canada.ca/coronavirus)

**Q16. I am experiencing anxiety about COVID-19. What can I do?**

A16. Under circumstances such as these, it is natural to experience anxiety. Employees may wish to speak to their manager/supervisor, who will be able to advise them on what services are available to help employees, including programs such as the Employee and Family Assistance Program. Alternative work arrangements where possible can also help alleviate anxiety.

**Q17. Should I avoid public transportation if I am not ill?**

A17. There is currently no public health advice recommending that individuals should avoid using public transportation. An employee who has such concerns remains responsible for making arrangements for getting to and from work.

## **Teleworking**

**Q18. Can I decide to work from home to avoid getting sick, or while in self-isolation?**

A18. It is up to management to review and approve where appropriate any request to telework. Managers and employees are responsible for ensuring that the operational needs of the organization are met and that neither productivity nor costs are negatively impacted by telework arrangements.

**Q19. I want to work from home but am not set up to do so. What do I do?**

A19. An employee's manager is the first point of contact in establishing whether an employee can or should telework. Both employees and managers are responsible to ensure that operational needs of the organization are met and that neither productivity nor costs are negatively impacted by telework arrangements.

**Q20. Will teleworking arrangements be made for all employees who provide critical services?**

A20. No, as some functions cannot be fulfilled from a location other than a designated workplace. This is why an employee's manager will review any request to telework.

## **Leave Requests and Benefits**

### **Q21. For employees that are symptomatic and/or infected with COVID-19, how will leave provisions be applied and will medical certificates be required?**

A21. Should either a symptomatic employee, or an employee infected with COVID-19 report to work, he or she should be sent home and/or referred to a medical treatment facility. The absence from the workplace should be covered by sick leave. If the employee does not have sufficient sick leave credits, management should consider advancing sick leave credits in accordance with the collective agreement. Managers may exercise their discretion in approving such requests.

Except in very limited circumstances, such as if a manager questions whether an employee is truly sick, a doctor's certificate should not be required.

### **Q22. Is there a leave policy that pertains specifically to COVID-19?**

A22. No, the collective agreement or the terms and conditions of employment for unrepresented employees continue to apply.

### **Q23. Can I apply for leave with pay for family-related responsibilities if a family member becomes ill with COVID-19?**

A23. Each employee's situation should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, and open communication with your manager is encouraged. Granting leave with pay for family-related responsibilities is subject to management's approval and conditional to the applicable provisions of the collective agreement or terms and conditions of employment for an unrepresented employee.

### **Q24. Can I apply for leave with pay for family-related responsibilities if my child's daycare or school is closed because of COVID-19?**

A24. The leave with pay for family-related responsibilities provision of the collective agreement. includes a provision that relates to unforeseeable closure of school or daycare facilities. Other types of leave in accordance with the collective agreement such as annual leave, could also be used if employees are unable to make alternative care plans for their children, or have exhausted their leave with pay for family-related responsibilities credits.

### **Q25. How will workers' compensation claims by alleging that they became infected with COVID-19 be managed?**

A25. The claims process is well established. All claims are carefully reviewed by the appropriate provincial workers' compensation authority to determine whether there is a causal link between an employee being infected by COVID-19 and the workplace.

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