

The news continues to grow in regards to the COVID-19 virus. We thought it might be helpful to do a little PSA when it comes to COVID-19 and the workplace. Much of the below is also just good advice for the cold and flu season!

The BC province is stating clearly that the risk of person to person transfer for COVID-10 Virus in Canada is still low. With today's news of 12 confirmed cases in BC we are getting more and more questions from our clients about what to do.

Our advice is to be aware and be prepared. We don't yet know if the WHO will declare this a pandemic nor do we know how Canada and BC will be affected. As responsible employers here in BC, it is our job to ensure our employees feel safe and know what to expect in regards to work?

Prevention/Preparation:

The BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC) still asserts that the risk to people in Canada is low. Offices should ask employees to be mindful of their health and manage themselves as they would for cold and flu season.

The most important thing you can do to prevent COVID 19 and other illnesses is to follow the same advice that public health officials recommend for the cold and flu season:

Wash your hands often with soap and warm water and avoid touching your face. Cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing. Avoid others who are unwell, and stay home when you are sick.

Stock up on hand sanitizer, tissues and toilet roll (EEK!) for the office.

Limit unnecessary travel for business and if relevant, personal. Many businesses

are putting a full stop on all business travel for the immediate future, some until May. Currently Canada has active COVID-19 travel advisories for: [China](#) [Hong Kong](#) [Iran](#) [Japan](#) [Italy](#) [Singapore](#) [South Korea](#)

If employees do absolutely have to travel for work or personal reasons, implement a self quarantine period following their return as per the BCCDC's recommendations.

As an employer, you can create manageable means for working remotely to limit the disruption to business. (More info on how to create a solid remote workforce can be found [here](#).) Suggesting all employees take their laptops home at night, isn't a bad idea! (Just remember you're doing it in case of a lock down, not because you want them to work on their own time!)

Educate:

The symptoms of COVID-19, are similar to other respiratory illnesses, including the flu and common cold. They include coughing, sneezing, fever, sore throat and difficulty breathing.

If you have traveled to a country listed above, and develop these symptoms, avoid contact with others. Call ahead to a health-care professional (or call 8-1-1) before you first arrive at the facility.

Tell your health-care professional:

your symptoms;

where you have been travelling or living;

if you had direct contact with animals (for example, if you visited a live animal market); and
if you had close contact with a sick person, especially if they had a fever, cough or difficulty breathing.

Do the same if you develop symptoms and have been in contact with a confirmed case or a traveller returning from the affected area with these symptoms.

Until more is understood about the virus, older people and people with a weakened immune system or underlying medical condition are considered at higher risk of severe disease. For more information follow the BCCDC

[http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/coronavirus-\(novel\)](http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/coronavirus-(novel))

****Disclaimer - we are not medical professionals and this advice should not replace anything you have received from the government or qualified medical professional - we just want your workplace to be safe!****