



# COVID-19: A Guide for Temporary Foreign Workers in Canada

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## Section 1: What COVID-19 (coronavirus) is

COVID-19 causes a respiratory (lung) infection. Most healthy people who are sick with COVID-19 will have a mild illness, like a cold. Some people who are sick with COVID-19 will need to get care in the hospital.

### Symptoms of COVID-19

People who are sick with COVID-19 may have symptoms like a fever, a cough, difficulty breathing, or pneumonia. Symptoms may be very mild or more serious. If someone has COVID-19, they may not show symptoms at all. These people can still infect others. Or, someone sick with COVID-19 may not show symptoms until up to 14 days later.

### How COVID-19 spreads

The COVID-19 is most commonly spread by an infected person through:

- Droplets of liquid when they cough or sneeze
- Close personal contact, such as touching or shaking hands
- Touching something with the virus on it, then touching your eyes, nose or mouth before washing your hands
- Sharing forks, spoons, or drink containers

### How to stop the spread of COVID-19

- Wash your hands often with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds, or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available
- Avoid touching your face
- Cover your mouth and nose with your arm when coughing or sneezing
- Clean and disinfect surfaces regularly
- Always stay at least 2 meters away from other people

You have a higher risk of having serious health problems related to COVID-19 if you are 65 years or older or if you have certain medical conditions. Some of these medical conditions include:

- Heart disease
- High blood pressure
- Lung disease



- Diabetes, or
- Cancer

You are also at a higher risk of having serious health problems related to COVID-19 if you have a weakened immune system, such as if you have had a medical treatment like chemotherapy.

## Section 2: What you need to know before leaving your country

All air passengers must have a non-medical mask or face covering to cover their mouth and nose during travel to Canada. You will need to show your non-medical mask or face covering during the boarding process. If you do not have it, you will not be allowed to continue on your journey.

COVID-19 is a serious health threat, and the situation in Canada is changing every day.

Instructions to follow before you travel to Canada:

- If you have symptoms of COVID-19, you will not be permitted to board the plane:
  - If you show signs of COVID-19 upon arrival, officials will contact a quarantine officer and the officer will perform a more detailed assessment
  - If necessary, the quarantine officer may:
    - Order you to be transported to hospital to undergo a medical examination
    - Inform the local public health authority that you may have COVID-19
- If you have no symptoms of COVID-19, you should:
  - Ask your employer if your job is still available
  - Read the email that you received from Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) and follow their advice
- You will likely need to undergo mandatory quarantine for the first 14 days when you get to Canada. You need to discuss the plan for this period with your employer before you arrive.

Information you need to have with you when boarding and may be asked of you upon arrival:

- The address of your accommodation (housing)
- A telephone number or email so that Canadian officials can contact you
- Your employer's contact information



- How you will get from the airport to your accommodation, confirming that you are going directly from the airport to your quarantine location without any stops for food and/or basic supplies
- Your plan for how you will access food and other essentials, which may include asking your employer to help. Note that your employer cannot prevent you from accessing food. The employer is not responsible for covering the cost of these items. If you wish, you may arrange a plan with your employer for recouping these costs, as long as both you and your employer are in agreement
- Confirmation that you will not be in isolation with vulnerable groups
- Work permit or port of entry (POE) letter of introduction that shows you were approved for a work permit. Show your work permit or POE letter to the airline attendant. This document shows that you are allowed to travel to Canada during the travel restrictions

## **Section 3: What to know for your initial period of quarantine in Canada**

Most workers are required to quarantine for 14 days. Only workers considered “essential” by the Chief Public Health Officer of Canada are exempted (for example, healthcare workers, workers in transportation of medical products, truck drivers, crew on planes, trains and vessels). Visit the following webpage to get more information on the Temporary Foreign Worker Program, what is expected from employers during the COVID-19 pandemic, and frequently asked questions: <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/services/foreign-workers/notice-covid-19.html>

It is your responsibility to follow the COVID-19 guidelines issued by the Government of Canada and the province and territory you live in. For the most recent updates, please visit the following webpage: [https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/coronavirus-disease-covid-19.html?utm\\_campaign=not-applicable&utm\\_medium=vanity-url&utm\\_source=canada-ca\\_coronavirus](https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/coronavirus-disease-covid-19.html?utm_campaign=not-applicable&utm_medium=vanity-url&utm_source=canada-ca_coronavirus)

### **COVID-19 guidelines**

- When leaving the airport, you must quarantine and monitor yourself for symptoms. In some cases, like in BC for example, seasonal farm workers will be quarantining in government-managed accommodations upon arrival and food-service will be provided
- During the quarantine period, you must stay in your residence and must keep a 2-metre distance from others (physical distancing) at all times (unless you are members of the same family arriving at the same time)
- If someone new arrives at your accommodations during this time, you must restart a new quarantine period
- Workers in quarantine should not be housed with workers who are not in quarantine.



- Clean and disinfect your accommodations and common areas. This includes shared surfaces that are touched often, such as door knobs, tables, counters, sinks, taps, TV remote and toilets. If your employer is providing accommodations, they should provide you with cleaning products
- Other important things to do:
  - Do not have visitors
  - Stay in a private place like your yard or balcony if you go outside for fresh air
  - Wash your hands regularly with soap and hot water
  - Once your quarantine begins, no new person should move into the same accommodation as the one where you or your group live

You must be paid for the quarantine period for a minimum of 30 hours per week, at your regular hourly rate of pay. The payment you receive is not an advance and you don't have to reimburse it later. This requirement also applies to workers in the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program (SAWP) and the period of paid quarantine will be in addition to the minimum 240 hours of pay as specified in the SAWP contract.

The employer can make regular deductions, but no additional amounts due to the quarantine period are allowed, except in the case of an agreement to recoup the costs of groceries. For more information, see Section 3.

Under current guidance, you are not allowed to work during the quarantine period, and your employer cannot ask you to perform other duties, such as building repairs or administrative tasks. Should this requirement change, it will be communicated on the Government of Canada website. Visit the following webpage to get more information on the Temporary Foreign Worker Program, what is expected from employers during the COVID-19 pandemic, and frequently asked questions: <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/services/foreign-workers/notice-covid-19.html>

If you start having symptoms (like a fever) at any time, including after the quarantine period:

- You must immediately fully isolate yourself from others, contact local public health officials, and tell your employer. You may also choose to contact your consular official
- If your employer provides accommodations, they must provide you with separate accommodations, including your own bedroom and bathroom
- You and your employer must follow the advice of the local public health authority.
- Your employer must not force you to work during your isolation. If they do, refuse to work and use the contacts in Section 7 to report them

When contacting health services, be ready with the following information:

- Your symptoms
- Where you have been travelling or living (address of accommodation)
- If you had direct contact with animals (for example, if you visited a live animal market)



- If you had close contact with a sick person who had a fever, cough or difficulty breathing

After you provide them with this information, they will provide advice on what you should do next.

You can find the phone numbers and websites for health services in your province or territory in Section 6.

## **You may face serious consequences if you are not following COVID-19 requirements**

You may receive a fine of up to \$1,000,000 or go to jail, or both if you do not follow the COVID-19 procedures from the time you arrive in Canada. In addition to receiving penalties, you may not be allowed into Canada again and face a removal order.

Your employer cannot prevent you from meeting the requirements under the Quarantine Act, and they may also face serious consequences if they do not respect the requirements. You can safely report them by contacting the confidential Government of Canada Tip Line (1-866-602-9448). You can also safely report them by contacting the phone numbers in Section 7. Keep evidence, like screenshots of text messages, videos, or pictures if your employer is breaking the rules, like asking you to work, not paying you, or preventing you from accessing food. If your employer is providing you with housing, you can report them if they are not providing you with cleaning supplies, putting you in housing where beds are not two meters apart, or housing you with workers not in quarantine. You can also report them if they are not isolating workers who exhibit the signs or symptoms of COVID-19.

## **Taking care of your mental health during quarantine and during the pandemic**

- Stay informed, but take breaks from social media and news stories
- Practice physical distancing, but stay connected:
  - Talk to friends or family about your feelings and concerns through email, telephone, video chats and social media like Facebook
  - If you don't have access to a telephone or computer, try writing letters to loved ones that can be sent at a later date
- Take deep breaths (in for 3 seconds, out for 3 seconds), stretch, or meditate
- Try to eat healthy meals, drink water, exercise regularly, and get plenty of sleep
- Focus on the positive aspects of your life and things you can control
- Be cautious of excessive intake of alcohol or other substances
- Be kind and compassionate to yourself and others

## **Section 4: What to know for the rest of your stay in Canada**

The information in this section will be useful for the rest of your stay in Canada, after the initial quarantine period has elapsed.



For the rest of your stay in Canada, to avoid the spread of COVID-19, you (as well as all Canadians) are asked to:

- Stay at home unless you have to go to work
- Avoid all non-essential trips in your community
- Do not gather in groups
- Limit contact with people at higher risk, such as older adults and those in poor health
- Go outside to exercise but stay close to home

If you leave your home, always keep a distance of at least 2 arms lengths (approximately 2 metres) from others. People you live with do not need to distance from each other unless they are sick or have travelled in the last 14 days.

If you become sick, please follow the same health advice as provided in Section 3.

**Reminder:** While in Canada, it is important to keep track of the hours you work.

## **Section 5: COVID-19 income support measures**

Your employer cannot end your contract if you are sick with COVID-19. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, new financial supports have been made available which you may be eligible for if you are laid off or if you become sick due to COVID-19. If you become ill after the initial quarantine period, you may be entitled to either paid or unpaid sick leave, depending on your employment contract and the relevant federal, provincial or territorial employment standards. Contact the employment standards office by telephone or visit their website to find out more. You can find these phone numbers and websites in Section 7. Please note that although employers must pay you for the quarantine period, employers do not have to continue paying you if you get sick after this period. However, there are income supports available to you if you do get sick.

If you have lost your income because of COVID-19, you may be able to receive the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB). The CERB gives a payment of \$2,000 for a 4-week period (\$500 a week) for up to 16 weeks.

You may be eligible for the CERB if you:

- Reside in Canada (including temporary foreign workers)
- Have stopped working because of reasons related to COVID-19 or are eligible for Employment Insurance (EI), regular or sickness benefits or have exhausted your EI regular benefits between December 29, 2019 and October 3, 2020
- Had employment and/or self-employment income of at least \$5,000 in 2019 or in the 12 months prior to the date of your application, and
- Have not quit your job voluntarily

Note: You will not be eligible for the CERB for the initial quarantine period, so please do not apply for that period.

To apply for CERB, visit <https://www.canada.ca/en/services/benefits/ei/cerb-application.htm>

You may qualify for the Special Goods and Services Tax (GST) Credit payment. The amount you may receive will be calculated based on the information you provided in your 2018 income tax and benefit return. This is only applicable if you filed income taxes for 2018.

## Section 6: Contacts for questions or help related to COVID-19

The Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) responds to public health emergencies. For more information about COVID-19, please visit: [https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/coronavirus-disease-covid-19.html?utm\\_campaign=not-applicable&utm\\_medium=vanity-url&utm\\_source=canada-ca\\_coronavirus](https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/coronavirus-disease-covid-19.html?utm_campaign=not-applicable&utm_medium=vanity-url&utm_source=canada-ca_coronavirus). The information presented there is reliable, accurate and up to date.

Each province and territory in Canada has its own health care system. People who work for the health care system in the province or territory where you live will help you if you have concerns about your health. You can contact them.

### Health service and information contacts

Province or Territory	Phone number	Website
British Columbia	811	<a href="http://www.bccdc.ca/covid19">www.bccdc.ca/covid19</a>
Alberta	811	<a href="http://www.myhealth.alberta.ca">www.myhealth.alberta.ca</a>
Saskatchewan	811	<a href="http://www.saskhealthauthority.ca">www.saskhealthauthority.ca</a>
Manitoba	1-888-315-9257	<a href="http://www.manitoba.ca/covid19">www.manitoba.ca/covid19</a>
Ontario	1-866-797-0000	<a href="http://www.ontario.ca/coronavirus">www.ontario.ca/coronavirus</a>
Quebec	1-877-644-4545	<a href="http://www.quebec.ca/en/coronavirus">www.quebec.ca/en/coronavirus</a>
New Brunswick	811	<a href="http://www.gnb.ca/publichealth">www.gnb.ca/publichealth</a>
Nova Scotia	811	<a href="http://www.nshealth.ca/public-health">www.nshealth.ca/public-health</a>
Prince Edward Island	811	<a href="http://www.princeedwardisland.ca/covid19">www.princeedwardisland.ca/covid19</a>
Newfoundland and Labrador	811 or 1-888-709-2929	<a href="http://www.gov.nl.ca/covid-19">www.gov.nl.ca/covid-19</a>
Nunavut	1-867-975-5772	<a href="http://www.gov.nu.ca/health">www.gov.nu.ca/health</a>
Northwest Territories	911	<a href="http://www.hss.gov.nt.ca">www.hss.gov.nt.ca</a>

You can also find support through community organizations in your region. These organizations can provide advice and support, help integrating into the community, interpretation, workshops, and more.

## Section 7: Contacts to report your employer for not respecting the COVID-19 requirements

For information about the Temporary Foreign Worker Program, what is expected from employers during the COVID-19 pandemic, and frequently asked questions, visit Temporary Foreign Worker



Program – COVID-19 by visiting this webpage: <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/services/foreign-workers/notice-covid-19.html>

Some documents are also available in Spanish, as well as in French.

Use the confidential Government of Canada Tip Line (1-866-602-9448) if your employer is:

- Forcing you to work during the initial quarantine period
- Not paying you during the initial quarantine period
- Not providing you with cleaning supplies during the initial quarantine period (applicable only if your employer is providing you with housing).
- Interfering with the quarantine requirements (for example, preventing you from accessing groceries, etc.)
- Housing workers in quarantine with workers who are not in quarantine
- Not isolating and providing a worker who has signs/symptoms with a private bedroom and bathroom (applicable only if your employer is providing you with housing)
- Preventing you from following the instructions of public health officials

You can also report your employer by using the multi-lingual Online Fraud Reporting Tool at this webpage: <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/corporate/transparency/access-information/prevention-signalement-fraude/report-online-fraud.html>

You can also notify the RCMP, local law enforcement, and local health authorities.

## Workplace health and safety offices

Call if you have been asked to do dangerous work, if conditions at your workplace are unsafe, or if you were injured or sick because of your work.

**Federal Labour Program (call if you are in a federally regulated workplace): 1-800-641-4049**

<b>Province or Territory</b>	<b>Phone number</b>
<b>British Columbia</b>	1-888-621-7233
<b>Alberta</b>	1-866-415-8690
<b>Saskatchewan</b>	1-800-567-7233
<b>Manitoba</b>	1-855-957-7233
<b>Ontario</b>	1-877-202-0008
<b>Québec</b>	1-844-838-0808
<b>New Brunswick</b>	1-800-222-9775
<b>Nova Scotia</b>	1-800-952-2687
<b>Prince Edward Island</b>	1-800-237-5049
<b>Newfoundland and Labrador</b>	1-800-563-5471
<b>Yukon</b>	1-800-661-0443
<b>Northwest Territories</b>	1-800-661-0792
<b>Nunavut</b>	1-877-404-4407





## Employment standards offices

Call if you are not being properly paid, if you are not being treated fairly at work, or if your employer is not respecting your contract.

**Federal Labour Program (call if you are in a federally regulated workplace): 1-800-641-4049**

Province or Territory	Phone number
British Columbia	1-833-236-3700
Alberta	1-877-427-3731
Saskatchewan	1-800-667-1783
Manitoba	1-800-821-4307
Ontario	1-800-531-5551
Québec	1-800-265-1414
New Brunswick	1-888-452-2687
Nova Scotia	1-888-315-0110
Prince Edward Island	1-800-333-4362
Newfoundland and Labrador	1-877-563-1063
Yukon	1-800-661-0408, extension 5944
Northwest Territories	1-888-700-5707
Nunavut	1-877-806-8402

If you think you are being abused, or at risk of being abused by your employer, you may be eligible to apply for an **open work permit for vulnerable workers** by visiting this webpage:

<http://www.canada.ca/vulnerable-foreign-workers>

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<https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/campaigns/foreign-worker-rights.html>