

2022 COVID Protocols

Introduction

The framework outlined in this document has been updated by CUPE effective for 2022. The details in this document have been derived taking into account input from all Directors and the staff unions. This document is intended to highlight the most important preventative measures CUPE will take to protect its employees and visitors who enter our offices.

Working from CUPE Offices

As always, we will continue to work within the government restrictions, orders and recommendations of the Public Health Agency of Canada and will continue to monitor the situation in all regions.

With the uncertainty that COVID-19 has brought, CUPE sees return to working from offices to be undertaken in a phased approach:

Phase 1 – voluntary return – those staff that wish to do some or all of their work from the office may do so.

Phase 2 – mandated return with accommodations made for certain staff who are considered vulnerable to COVID-19 or who have family issues that they cannot work around.

Phase 3 – full return to the office for all staff.

As outlined in our original COVID-19 framework, CUPE will:

- Provide clear information about the safety measures being implemented.
- Implement an ongoing assessment of control measures to address the identified hazards related to COVID-19 in the workplace.

Implementing Specific Procedures to Help Ensure Safe Workplaces

Each office will continue to exercise preventative measures in the following broad categories:

1. Employee Self-screening
2. Vaccination
3. Cleaning and Disinfecting
4. Ventilation
5. Workplace Hygiene
6. Physical Distancing
7. Protective Equipment
8. Work-related travel
9. Visitors

1. Self-screening

CUPE has an obligation to provide a safe and healthy workplace for its staff. All staff and members are encouraged to complete a daily screening by filling out a self-screening survey prior to attending any of our premises. All visitors and contractors are required to complete the daily screening using the QR code posted at the entrances of our premises. The option to complete the survey via a paper screening is still available to anyone who doesn't have access to a computer or cell phone. Access to our premises, for visitors and contractors, will only be granted upon passing the self-screening survey. Anyone who fails the survey will be denied access to our premises until such time that they are able to pass the survey. All staff who are not able to pass the self-screening survey should not attend in person. Contact your immediate supervisor to inquire whether working remotely is an option.

2. Vaccination

As part of CUPE's responsibility to take every reasonable precaution to protect the health and safety of our workers, CUPE has developed a new vaccination policy. In addition to this COVID-19 Protocol, staff will comply with CUPE's Vaccination Policy, where CUPE:

- Expects all employees to be fully vaccinated.
- Asks all unvaccinated staff or those who have not disclosed their vaccination status to conduct a COVID-19 rapid test before entering our premises on that day or on a testing schedule prescribed by the employer.
- Asks all unvaccinated visitors/members or those who have not disclosed their vaccination status to conduct a COVID-19 rapid test before entering our premises on that day.

CUPE will provide staff with pertinent information related to COVID-19 vaccination and testing, as well as provide support to all staff to facilitate vaccination.

Refer to CUPE's Vaccination Policy for more details.

3. Cleaning and Disinfecting

CUPE will:

- Direct cleaning staff and contractors to clean and disinfect public spaces nightly using approved cleaning products.
- Ensure targeted cleaning of shared spaces where there is an actual case of COVID-19.

4. Ventilation

Given the infectious nature of the COVID-19 virus, CUPE has made all efforts to increase the exchange of air in buildings using functions and capabilities in our HVAC mechanical ventilation systems.

CUPE will:

- Supply as much outside air as reasonably necessary ~~into the office~~ to move any potential virus particles out of occupied spaces.
- Run ventilation systems 24/7 where possible.

5. Workplace Hygiene

Maintaining good work and hygiene practices continues to be of utmost importance in our plan to return to the office.

CUPE will:

- Remind and promote the importance of regular and thorough handwashing by employees and other individuals present in the workplace.
- Ensure all staff and visitors have access to soap and water or alcohol-based sanitizer, put hand sanitizer dispensers at points of entry and other prominent places around the workplace, ensuring these dispensers are regularly refilled.
- Provide disinfecting wipes in common areas such as kitchens, meeting rooms, wellness rooms, workrooms, photocopy areas, etc. to enable staff to clean and disinfect touch points in these areas as needed during the day.
- Encourage respiratory etiquette (e.g., coughing or sneezing into a bent elbow, using tissues, and promptly disposing them in the trash) is followed. Hands must be washed or sanitized afterwards.
- Place informational posters throughout the workplace that remind staff and visitors to practice respiratory etiquette and hand hygiene in areas where they are easily seen (e.g., entrances, washrooms, and break rooms).

6. Physical Distancing

Physical distancing is limiting close contact with other people and has been proven to be one of the most effective ways to reduce the spread of COVID-19. Physical distancing requires us to keep at least two meters (6 feet) apart from others; more distance is better. Where physical distancing is not achievable, every effort should be made to ensure other measures are put in place, such as plexiglass, working in other less frequented areas of the office, etc.

To ensure adequate physical distancing in each office CUPE will:

- Put markings on the floor in reception areas, near elevators, etc. to ensure awareness of keeping a proper distance between people.
- Remove or block the use of some furniture and chairs to ensure the required physical distancing in common spaces such as meeting rooms and waiting areas.
- Limit the number of people who may ride in an elevator at once to ensure the required physical distance can be maintained (1 or 2 persons at a time depending on the size of the elevator).
- Install plexiglass in reception areas where it is not possible for a proper physical distance from the receptionist to be maintained.
- Increase the panel height where workstations are adjacent.
- Post signs, to prevent bottlenecks in high traffic areas, smaller spaces such as areas around workstations, appliances, machines, and photocopiers, etc. to indicate appropriate two-meter spacing.
- Open lunchrooms and kitchens but staff should continue to be cautious in these small areas and ensure all COVID protocols and capacity limits are maintained at all times. If the lunchroom is at capacity, another location should be chosen.
- Any planned social events at the office need to be approved by your Director in advance.

7. Protective Equipment

Available public health information continues to assert that masks are one of the best ways to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. CUPE continues to believe that masking is still an important preventative measure at this time.

CUPE will:

- Require all staff, members, and other visitors to wear the best available mask (surgical mask, N95, or KN95) when in any common area such as a washroom, elevator, meeting room, photocopy area, workroom, lunchroom, hallway, etc. Surgical masks will be made available to CUPE staff and visitors at our offices. Masks should be well fitted. Adjustments can be used to ensure there are no gaps.
- The following applies:
 - Lunchroom: masks may be removed only while eating or drinking.
 - Meeting rooms: masks must be worn as recommended by the Public Health Agency of Canada.
 - Private office: masks will not need to be worn when working alone in a private office.
 - Workstations: CUPE will be enhancing the height of workstation panels for adjacent workstations as an added barrier. However, masks will still need to be worn when working in any open workstation as recommended by the Public Health Agency of Canada.

8. Work-Related Travel

CUPE recognizes that work travel is beginning to return to pre-COVID levels. Members are looking for face-to-face contact and travel between regions will become more frequent as things slowly get back to more normal times.

CUPE will:

- Require physical distancing prevention measures to be implemented in CUPE fleet vehicles. In most cases this will require a limit of one person per vehicle, but where this is not possible, mask should be worn by every individual in the vehicle.
- Ask staff to contemplate whether Microsoft Teams is an effective method for holding a meeting.

All work-related travel must adhere to any federal guidelines for travel. When travelling between provinces, staff should ensure they are aware of all restrictions in the province they will be entering. Staff will continue to require Director approval before booking any air travel.

9. CUPE Hosted Events

Events such as Union Education, branch meetings in hotels, national conferences, national committee meetings in hotels, etc.

- The CUPE Vaccination Policy will be followed for CUPE hosted events. This applies to all participants including member facilitators/member organizers doing in person work for CUPE.
- Every effort will be made to ensure physical distance standards are upheld at all CUPE sponsored events.

10. Staff Attending Meetings or Events Outside the Jurisdiction of CUPE National

- CUPE strongly recommends that all CUPE chartered organizations follow CUPE's Vaccination Policy and COVID-19 Protocols to ensure safety of members and staff.
- Where adequate COVID safety policies do not exist, and/or where the workplace is perceived to be unsafe, staff should contact their Director to discuss their concerns. No staff will be required to physically work in a location where no COVID safety protocols are in place.

11. Visitors to CUPE Offices

In all phases of this framework, members and other visitors will be allowed to enter CUPE offices on certain conditions:

- Be fully vaccinated or have conducted a COVID-19 PCR or rapid antigen test prior to entering our premises.

- They have a pre-arranged appointment with a staff member who works from that office.
- They are feeling well and pass the daily self-screening survey.
- They follow all instructions posted throughout the office including putting on the mask that will be provided to them at the entrance.
- They always maintain a proper physical distance.
- All meetings with visitors must be held in a common area such as a meeting room and masks must be worn as recommended by the Public Health Agency of Canada. Meetings with visitors will not be permitted in individual offices unless it is clear the proper physical distancing measures can be maintained.
- Access to member spaces normally available for members to hold meetings will again be available on evenings and weekends as they were before COVID. Posted capacity limits on all meeting rooms must be respected. In offices where members were allowed access without a staff member being present, this practice can be resumed.
- Signage will be posted at all entrances to require individuals to self screen before entering. The screening process will be handled electronically to reduce the number of touch points between individuals and allow for proper physical distancing.
- Any visitor who is not fully vaccinated or has not conducted a COVID-19 test and does not pass the self-screening questionnaire should not come into the office.

Dealing with an Actual or Suspected Case of COVID-19

Dealing with an actual case of COVID-19:

- In the office:

If a CUPE employee is at their place of work and is not feeling well with COVID-19 like symptoms, they should immediately notify their Director and take a rapid antigen test. If the employee tests positive for COVID-19, they must return home and apply the Public Health Agency of Canada's recommendations for self-isolation.

- At home:

If a CUPE employee is at their home and test positive for COVID-19, they should notify their Director and apply the Public Health Agency of Canada's recommendations for self-isolation.

When applying the Public Health Agency of Canada's recommendations for self-isolation, at a minimum, employees who are positive for COVID-19 must not return to the office for at least 5 days and until they are 24 hours symptom free. Employees who return to the office on the 6th day will be required to wear a mask at all times for the following 5 days (i.e.: days 6 to 10).

Dealing with a suspected case of COVID-19:

- In the office:

If a CUPE employee is at their place of work and is not feeling well with COVID-19 like symptoms, they should immediately notify their Director and take a rapid antigen test. If the employee tests negative for COVID-19, they should leave the workplace and go home. They should repeat the test in 24 hours, if the test is negative, the employee may return to the office as long as they have been symptom free for 24 hours. If the employee tests positive for COVID-19, they should follow the instructions above on 'Dealing with an actual case of COVID-19 in the office'.

- At home:

If an employee is working from home and has a suspected case of COVID-19, they should notify their Director take a rapid antigen test. If the employee tests negative for COVID-19, they should remain at home. They should repeat the test in 24 hours, if the test is negative, the employee may return to the office as long as they have been symptom free for 24 hours.

If the employee tests positive for COVID-19, they should follow the instructions above on 'Dealing with an actual case of COVID-19 in the office'.

In any case, whether an actual or suspected case of COVID-19, proper sick leave should be taken if an employee is too sick to work from home.

The Public Health Agency of Canada makes the following recommendation for self-isolation:

- Go directly to and stay in your home.
- Monitor your symptoms.
- Immediately contact your health care provider or local public health authority and follow their instructions if your symptoms get worse.
- Follow advice from your local public health authority for instructions on testing.

Employees will be required to pass the self-screening survey before being permitted entry to the office.

In the event there has been a confirmed case of COVID-19 of an employee or visitor who has been in the workplace, CUPE will:

- Advise all employees and visitors who may have been exposed and require them to follow the appropriate public health protocol.
- Protect the confidentiality of the employee who has contracted COVID in all necessary communications that result.

Evaluating Processes and Preventative Measures

The recommendations and preventive measures contained in this plan are in effect until October 7, 2022, and will be examined on an ongoing basis, adjusted to make improvements where they are not working well, modified if they are creating other problems, and evaluated to ensure staff are doing what they have been asked to do to ensure a safe and healthy workplace environment for all.

Future Plans

CUPE management will continue to monitor the pandemic situation and adjust accordingly and continue to base decisions on COVID protocols around the advice of public health, government authorities, and the Public Health Agency of Canada.

If staff encounter a situation that is not covered within this protocol, staff should consult with their Director if they have any questions.

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