

COVID-19 POST-EXPOSURE RESPONSE

This checklist tool is intended to evaluate the part of the COVID-19 response program that deals with exposures. There is no requirement that there be a separate policy to address this part of the response, only that it be covered somewhere.

Here are some key concepts to remember.

Exposure means that there is a confirmed or suspected contact with a hazard. In the COVID-19 pandemic, the hazard is the virus SARS-CoV2, which causes the disease COVID-19.

When an exposure happens, there are 3 possible responses.

Self-monitoring is recommended when there is a low-risk exposure. When self-monitoring, an individual is focusing attention to their overall health, keeping track of their activities, and limiting their contacts for 14 days, but still going out in public.

Quarantine is recommended when there is a high-risk exposure. Quarantine is a method to prevent spread. When in quarantine, an individual remains at home with as few contacts as possible during the 14-day period. It's like self-isolation, except that there are no symptoms. It is the position of CUPE that if you are in quarantine because of a (potential) workplace exposure, you should be paid, and this should not count against your sick bank. If your collective agreement doesn't contain this type of language, you may wish to consider adding this to your next bargaining package.

If symptoms develop, then you may be asked to get tested. While you have symptoms, **self-isolation** will be required, and you will need to follow public health advice on how best to do this. More information on COVID-19 can be found on the CUPE National website. Please see the resource section at the end.

POST-EXPOSURE RESPONSE POLICY AND PROGRAM

Use this section of the checklist to evaluate the COVID-19 response program with the health and safety committee. This section is to evaluate whether you have all the elements in place before an exposure has occurred. This is a description of what will/should happen if a worker reports an exposure event. If the answer to any question is "no," it should be discussed with the health and safety committee.

Post-Exposure Response (PER) - Policy and Program	Yes	No	N/A
Is there an established process to address COVID-19 exposures during the pandemic?			
Was the health and safety committee consulted on the PER?			
Does the PER establish how low- or high-risk exposure risks will be defined?			
After the Public Health Agencies of Canada's recognition of airborne transmission, has the employer reassessed the worker's risks of exposure to COVID-19?			
After the reports of heightened risks from more infectious variants that cause COVID-19, has the employer reassessed the worker's risks of exposure?			
Have these risk reassessment reports been shared with the health and safety committee?			
Does the PER process describe the measures and procedures carried out at the workplace in response to an exposure event?			
Does the PER process describe the measures and procedures carried out at the workplace in response to a confirmation of COVID-19-infection?			
Does the PER process describe how and when the employer will interact with the local public health unit?			
Does the PER describe how a worker is to self-monitor, quarantine and what to do in the event of symptoms?			
Does the PER describe how a worker is to self-isolate?			
If a worker suspects that they may have had a low- or high-risk exposure, is there a process to report the exposure event to the employer and health and safety committee? (for example, is there a form and if so, does it contain the appropriate information fields?)			
If a worker suspects that they may have had a low- or high-risk exposure, is there a designated person responsible to provide them with instructions on how to submit an incident report?			
If a worker suspects that they may have had a low- or high-risk exposure, is there a designated person responsible to provide them with a compensation form and instructions on how to submit?			
Does the PER describe what mental health supports are available to a worker who has been asked to self-monitor, quarantine or self-isolate by the employer?			
Does the PER describe what financial or benefits supports are available to a worker who has been asked to self-monitor, quarantine or self-isolate by the employer?			

POST-EXPOSURE INVESTIGATIONS

Use this section to evaluate what took place after an exposure was reported. In this section, it's about what has happened, instead of what is supposed to happen. If the answer to any question is "no," it should be discussed with the health and safety committee.

Post-exposure Investigation	Yes	No	N/A
Has the employer investigated to determine which type of exposures (low or high risk) workers have experienced?			
Has the employer provided the relevant public health unit with a list and exposure information of workers who had a low- or high-risk exposures?			
Has the health and safety committee received a report of the investigation which describe how the exposure may have occurred?			
Has the employer provided information and instruction to the workers who had a low-risk exposure on the need to self-monitor for symptoms and what steps to take in the event of symptoms?			
Has the employer provided information and instruction to the workers who had a high-risk exposure on the need to quarantine and what steps to take in the event of symptoms?			

IN THE EVENT OF SYMPTOMS OR INFECTION

Use this section to evaluate what has happened after a worker has reported symptoms to the employer. Symptoms may or may not have started while at work. However, in some jurisdictions, if the employer is informed of an occupational illness, they have an obligation to disclose this information to the health and safety committee. If the answer was "no", then it should be discussed with the health and safety committee.

In the event of COVID-19 infection	Yes	No	N/A
If symptoms started while at work, was the worker isolated promptly?			
Has the employer conducted an investigation to determine if the COVID-19 infection resulted (or not) from workplace transmission?			
Has the investigation report been shared with the health and safety committee?			
Has the employer provided information and instruction to the worker on the need to self-isolate and follow advice from public health?			
Has the employer filled out a compensation form? (WorkSafe or WSIB)			
Has the employer provided notice to the jurisdictional health and safety regulator, the Union and the health and safety committee?			
Has public health declared a full or partial outbreak at the workplace?			

In the event of COVID-19 infection	Yes	No	N/A
Has the employer provided a worker compensation form (WSIB or WorkSafe) to the affected worker(s)?			
Has the employer received a claim of occupational illness filed with the workers compensation board? If yes, has the employer provided notice to the occupational health and safety regulator, the Union and the health and safety committee?			
Has the employer reassessed the worker's risks of exposure to COVID-19? If yes, what were the results?			
Have additional measures and procedures been implemented in the workplace by the employer as a result?			

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

COVID-19 Information

<https://cupe.ca/covid-19-health-and-safety-practices-0>

Self-Isolation, Quarantine and Self-Monitoring

<https://cupe.ca/self-isolation-and-quarantine-why-its-important>

Health and Safety Committee Resource Kit

<https://cupe.ca/health-and-safety-committee-resource-kit>

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