



Peterborough and District Labour Council  
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Chartered by the Canadian Labour Congress  
Affiliated with the Ontario Federation of Labour

## COVID-19 Primer for Workers\*

### General Information

The latest information about COVID-19 from Peterborough Public Health can be found [here](#). Please visit this site often since the situation continues to evolve and recommendations change.

### Self-Assessment

[On-line self-assessment tool](#)

### Screening and Travel

1. For anyone who thinks they have 2019 novel coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms or have been in close contact with someone who has it, they should be directed to use the self-assessment tool.
2. If after using the self-assessment tool, if the individual needs further assessment, they should contact one of the following:
  - a. Call their primary care provider.
  - b. Call a local Public Health Unit. In the Peterborough region call 705-743-1000.
  - c. Call Telehealth Ontario at 1-866-797-0000.
3. Based on the assessment provided by one of the providers listed above, the individual may be referred for testing. There is no testing of individuals without symptoms.
4. At present, testing in our area is only available through:
  - a. Peterborough Regional Health Centre
  - b. Peterborough Public Health
  - c. EMS – Home testing and assessment

NOTE - It is very important for your residents/clients to know that testing is available by referral only and is not available as a walk-in service at this time.

*\*Much of the information in this document was taken verbatim or adapted from materials produced by Peterborough Public Health. Monique Beneteau, Recording Secretary for the Peterborough and District Labour Council and member of OPSEU Local 327 prepared this document. She is also a Health Promoter at Peterborough Public Health.*

### ***For anyone who has travelled outside of Canada:***

- Anyone (except healthcare workers deemed critical to operations) who has travelled outside of Canada within the last 14 days (since March 2, 2020), should [self-isolate](#) for a period of 14 days, starting from their arrival in Ontario. You should self-isolate even if you are not showing symptoms.
- Information for healthcare workers deemed critical to operations can be obtained from Peterborough Public Health's [COVID-19 Health Professionals](#) website and click on the "What if I am a Healthcare Worker" title.

## **Personal Practices**

### ***Life***

- Make sure you have enough groceries and household products to last you a "prolonged period of time" at home.
- Avoid all non-essential travel.
- Only essential visitors should be permitted to enter long-term care facilities. Essential visitors must continue to be actively screened into these settings. Those who fail screening should not be permitted to enter. Essential visitors are those who have a resident who is very ill or requiring end-of-life care. **Please note:** Other housing facilities may want to follow similar guidelines.
- Stay at home as much as possible. Spending time outdoors is safe and encouraged as long as social-distancing is practiced!
- If in public, avoid crowds and practice physical (social) distancing by keeping at least two metres (six feet) from other people. Wear a mask if you feel that you are at risk. A surgical mask is all you need.
  - Peterborough Public Health: [Social Distancing](#)
  - Public Health Agency of Canada: [Social Distancing Fact Sheet](#)
  - Occupational Health Clinics for Ontario Workers Inc.: [Staying Apart to Stay Healthy](#)
- Keep in touch with family and friends while practicing social-distancing.
- If any individual requires specific services, they are invited to contact Ontario 211 for more information by phone at 2-1-1 or online at <https://211ontario.ca/>.
- If you know anyone living in the City or County of Peterborough who is struggling to meet their basic needs, refer them to the City of Peterborough Social Services Intake line at 705-748-8830 to discuss their circumstances. Special emergency funding may be available to them.

### ***Public Education on Precautions***

- Cancel non-essential doctor's appointments.
- Designate an emergency contact.
- Wash your hands [frequently for 20 seconds](#) at a time and do not touch your face.

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- Use [hand sanitizer](#) when soap and water isn't available.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your upper elbow/sleeve.
- Use the Public Health Ontario (PHO) fact sheets to learn more about:
  - [How to self-monitor](#)
  - [How to self-isolate](#)

## **Workplace Practices**

- If your work allows, you should try to work from home to minimize exposure. We recognize that many workers won't have this option, especially those providing essential services.
- If you have to report to your workplace, Peterborough Public Health has a [designated page for workplaces](#) that includes resources about:
  - Getting the workplace ready for COVID-19
  - Guidance for [Personal Service Settings](#)
  - Guidance for [Food Premises](#)
  - [Cleaning and Disinfection for public settings](#)

The page also has information about:

- The [Employment Standards Amendment Act \(Infectious Disease Emergencies\), 2020](#) that provides for job protected leave and not requiring sick notes.
- Advice for employers
- Advice for what you can do in the workplace to reduce the spread of the virus
- Advice is an employee gets sick or might be sick
- Information about employment insurance
- more...
- Ontario Federation of Labour – [COVID-19: Wash your hands of germs, racism, and xenophobia!](#)

## **Health and Safety**

- Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety: [Flu and Infectious Disease Outbreaks. Tips for both employers and workers.](#)
- Workers Health and Safety Centre: [COVID-19 Resources](#)
- Public Health Agency of Canada: [Preventing COVID-19 in the workplace: employers, employees and essential service workers](#)
- If you believe your health and safety is in danger, please seek direction from your steward and/or your health and safety representative. Depending on the quality of your relationship, you could speak with your manager to determine the best resolution. Find out what the recommended infection protection and control measures are for your workplace.
- You do have the [right to refuse unsafe work](#) but it would be a good idea to have your union president discuss this option with your labour/staff rep.

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## **Employment Supports**

- Government of Canada: [Coronavirus disease – benefits and services](#)
- Broadbent Institute: [guide to applying for federal benefits](#)
- Government of Ontario: Stop the Spread Business Information Line: 1-888-444-3659. For businesses that have questions about closures of at-risk workplaces or how emergency measures impact their business or employment. Help is available from Monday to Sunday, from 8:30 a.m.—5:00 p.m. (May likely be for business owners rather than workers.)

## **Action**

- \$15 & Fairness [petition](#): H.E.L.P. (Health Emergency Labour Protections) which is seeking immediate action to protect workers affected by COVID-19. Protections include: a) 21 paid emergency leave days; b) an immediate, non-repayable emergency fund; c) greater access to Employment Insurance, and; d) no worker left behind. (2 minutes)
- If you are able, please book an appointment today to donate blood. You can book on line at <https://www.blood.ca/en> or call 1-888-236-6283.

## **Information from Other Sources**

**PLEASE NOTE:** Many unions are issuing their own communiques about COVID-19. Visit your union's website to get more details.

- Canadian Labour Congress: [COVID-19 Resource Centre](#)
- Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL): [COVID-19 Information](#)
- Chief Medical Officer of Health for Ontario: [Managing Health Worker Illness and Return to Work COVID-19](#)
- Government of Canada: [Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\)](#)
- Government of Ontario: [The 2019 Novel Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)
- Steps to Justice: Your guide to law in Ontario (CLEO): [COVID-19: Updates on the law and legal services](#)
- Labour Start: [COVID-19: News from the world's trade unions](#)
- A [song](#) by Miranda Guitard (OPSEU member)

If you have any questions that you would like answered, please contact Monique Beneteau at [ptbogreenie@gmail.com](mailto:ptbogreenie@gmail.com).

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