



**MINISTRY
OF HEALTH**

WORKPLACE GUIDELINES DURING COVID-19 (V10)
THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH OF THE BAHAMAS

GUIDING PRINCIPLE

Health and Safety at Work Act of 2002

“It shall be the duty of every employer to ensure, so far as is reasonably practical, the health, safety and welfare at work of all his employees.”

This document is to provide recommendations to employers regarding best practices for maintaining the physical and mental health of their employees during the COVID-19 pandemic. The guiding legislature is the Health and Safety at Work Act (2002), which requires employers to provide a hazard-free work zone, and substantially reduce risk of injury and death in the workplace setting. Other guiding documents were sourced from the World Health Organization, Centers for Disease Control, and the International Labour Organization.

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Table of Contents

BACKGROUND	5
OBJECTIVES GUIDELINES AND ASSESSMENT	6
RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF EMPLOYERS AND WORKERS	7
REOPENING OF THE WORKPLACE	8
JOB TASKS & RELATED RISK EXPOSURE IN THE WORKPLACE	9
Lower Risk Exposure Tasks/Jobs	10
Medium Risk Exposure Tasks/Jobs.....	10
High Risk Exposure Tasks/Jobs	11
Very Risk High Exposure Tasks/Jobs.....	11
ASSESSING YOUR WORKPLACE ENVIRONMENT & READINESS	13
Accessing the Tool	14
Instructions for Completing the Tool.....	14
Knowing Where Your Business' COVID-19 Risk & Readiness Status.....	14
Understanding the current COVID-19 situation	15
Preparedness and Response Planning: Prevention and Mitigation	15
Command, control, and coordination arrangements	16
Training & Communication.....	16
Workplace Mitigating Actions Based on Score Assessment Level	18
Specific mitigation measures for workplaces and jobs at moderate risk.....	18
Specific mitigation measures for workplaces and jobs at very high risk.....	20
What To Do If There Is An Exposure In The Workplace	21
Scenario A – An Employee Becomes A Confirmed COVID-19 Case	22
Scenario B – A Customer/Visitor Becomes A Confirmed COVID-19 Case.....	23
ANNEX I: Proven Public Health Measures	25
ANNEX II: Management of People with COVID-19 or Their Contacts	28
ANNEX III: Management of Mental and Psychosocial Hazards	29
ANNEX VI: POSTER EXAMPLES	30
Works Cited	32
ANNEX V –	33
THE ASSESSMENT TOOL:	33

BACKGROUND

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a public health emergency and pandemic. The Bahamas continues to be impacted in every sphere of society. The first case in The Bahamas was documented on 15th March, 2020.

The Bahamas has been responsive to the COVID-19 epidemic. Over time, a range of public health and social measures have been implemented, with demonstrable results. These including curfews, closure of schools and non-essential businesses, quarantine, and national and international travel restrictions. As the epidemiology of the disease changes locally, measures are adjusted.

Noting the need to balance the health and economy of the country, the Ministry of Health has crafted guidelines for businesses to re-open responsibly and remain diligent in the application of the public health measures. and should perform interim risk assessments and monitor for compliance. To reduce the impact of COVID-19 on workplaces should know there level of readiness and risk; and act to minimize possible exposure and transmission of COVID-19.

COVID-19 is a highly contagious respiratory disease caused by the novel coronavirus, SARS-CoV-2 virus. Symptoms typically include flu-like symptoms such as fever, cough, and shortness of breath. Knowledge about the virus grows daily. It is now known that persons with COVID-19 can have non-respiratory symptoms such a gastrointestinal, neurological, and dermatologic symptoms. Symptoms can range from mild to severe and, in some cases, can be fatal. The time from exposure to when symptoms can appear may range from 2 days to as long as 14 days after exposure to the virus. However, eighty (80) percent of persons with the disease have been noted to be asymptomatic. Those with certain co-morbidities tend to have a longer and more severe course of illness.

OBJECTIVES GUIDELINES AND ASSESSMENT

The purpose of this document is to

1. Offer technical guidance on measures to be implemented in the to reduce the COVID-19 risk in the workplace and identify sensible measures to control the risks in your workplace;
2. Help workplaces objectively decide whether everything has been done to meet the requirements by completing the MoH COVID-19 Assessment and committing to interim re-assessments; and
3. Propose possible mitigating actions and monitoring.

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF EMPLOYERS AND WORKERS

Employers are required to ensure, within reason, that workplaces are safe. In the context of COVID-19, employers ought to execute and sustain measures that mitigate unnecessary risk of exposure to the virus for employees and patrons.

Specifically, the employers responsibility, at minimum, are:

1. To provide basic personal protective equipment (PPE), safety training and supervision, and adequate first aid measures. Employees are not to bear any expenditure for required PPE or related safety protocols, as stated in the Health and Safety at Work Act of The Bahamas (5);
2. To provide training to employees on facility and job specific safety protocols;
3. To maintain a regular and informed dialogue with their workers to provide updates on the workplace and national situation, and their right to voice concerns regarding their health and safety without fear of being reprimanded;
4. To notify the Ministry of Health of any suspected cases of COVID-19 in the workplace¹;
5. To identify a health and safety champion within the organization;
6. To support access opportunities for mental and psychosocial support (3) (4); and mitigating other risks related to COVID-19;
7. To require all employees abide by the public health measures; and
8. To requires all patrons, for entry and service, to abide by public health measures.

Workers must at all times takes responsibility for their own health and the contribution of their actions to the COVID-19 experience in The Bahamas. At a minimum, workers are:

1. To habitually practice the public health measures outlined by the Ministry of Health (see Annex ##) in all environments – at home, at work , during work related activities and while about in the community;
2. To encourage others to practice the measures; and
3. To participate in related training provided by the employer and report immediately to their supervisor if they believe a situation presents and imminent and serious danger to their life or health.

There must be no discrimination by the employers or workers against persons that were suspected of being infected, infected with, or recovered from COVID-19. There should also be no discrimination in the access of workers to protective measures for prevention of COVID-19 (5) .

¹ Call the Ministry's Surveillance Unit at 502-1021.

REOPENING OF THE WORKPLACE

Re-opening of workplaces should be carefully planned in advance and all possible risks for health and safety should be properly assessed and mitigated. Factors such as health and safety, staff training, and workplace specific risks should be comprehensively assessed and gaps addressed. The Ministry of Health offers the following Decision Tree developed by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) as an illustrated example of an initial process to be used by businesses as they look to re-open.



Figure 1: CDC Decision Tree

The following sections of this document address areas of consideration in more detail.

JOB TASKS & RELATED RISK EXPOSURE IN THE WORKPLACE

COVID-19 is transmitted from human to human by respiratory droplets or contact with contaminated surfaces. Work-related exposure can occur anytime at the workplace, during work, during workplace related travel to an area with local community transmission, as well as on the way to and from the workplace. The risk of work-related exposure to COVID-19 depends on the probability of coming into close (less than 1 meter or 3 feet) or frequent contact with people who may be infected with COVID-19 or with contaminated surfaces and objects. Employers and managers, in consultation with workers, should assess their work places and the tasks and responsibilities of their employees for work-related exposure to COVID-19. These assessments should be regularly updated.

In the same work setting there may be jobs with different levels of risk, and different jobs or work tasks may have similar levels of exposure. Therefore, **each specific work setting and each job or group of jobs should be assessed for risk**. As risks are assessed consider:

- the environment
- the task
- the threat, if any, to specific higher risk staff based on age or pre-existing medical conditions
- resources available, such as personal protective equipment (PPE)

Further occupational hazards for health and safety may exist for some essential public services, such as security and police, food retail, accommodation, public transport, deliveries, water and sanitation, and frontline workers. The Department of Public Health can serve as a resource to employers with questions, preferably with support of occupational health services.

Job Tasks Exposure Risk Level

As a further guideline for businesses and workplaces to assist with determining risk level, The Ministry of Health offers the following framework from the United States Occupational Safety and Health Association (OSHA). The organization has divided job tasks into four risk exposure levels: very high, high, medium, and lower risk, as shown in the occupational risk pyramid, below. The four exposure risk levels represent the probable distribution of risk. While very high risk is included in the pyramid and examples of such workplaces shared, guidelines for this exposure risk level is beyond the scope for this document.



Figure 2. OSHA classification of occupational risk.

Lower Risk Exposure Tasks/Jobs (*Caution*)

Jobs that do not require contact with people known to be, or suspected of being, infected with SARS-CoV-2. Workers in this category have minimal occupational contact with the public and other coworkers. Examples include:

- Remote workers (i.e., those working from home during the pandemic).
- Office workers who do not have frequent close contact with coworkers, customers, or the public.
- Manufacturing and industrial facility workers who do not have frequent close contact with coworkers, customers, or the public.
- Healthcare workers providing only telemedicine services.

Medium Risk Exposure Tasks/Jobs

Jobs that require frequent/close contact with people who may be infected, but who are not known to have or be suspected of having COVID-19. Workers in this category include:

- Those who may have frequent contact with travelers who return from international locations with widespread COVID-19 transmission. Example, airport workers, and hotel and restaurant frontline staff and servers; as well as tourism transport operators.
- Those who may have contact with the general public (e.g., in schools, high population density work environments, and some high-volume retail settings). Example, tourism industry concession workers in addition to storefront and straw market workers.

High Risk Exposure Tasks/Jobs

Jobs with a high potential for exposure to known or suspected sources of SARS-CoV-2. Workers in this category include:

- Healthcare delivery and support staff (hospital staff who must enter patients' rooms) exposed to known or suspected COVID-19 patients.
- Medical transport workers (ambulance vehicle operators) moving known or suspected COVID-19 patients in enclosed vehicles.
- Mortuary workers involved in preparing bodies for burial or cremation of people known to have, or suspected of having, COVID-19 at the time of death.

Very Risk High Exposure Tasks/Jobs

Jobs with a very high potential for exposure to known or suspected sources of SARS-CoV-2 during specific medical, postmortem, or laboratory procedures. Workers in this category include:

- Healthcare workers (e.g., doctors, nurses, dentists, paramedics, emergency medical technicians) performing aerosol-generating procedures (e.g., intubation, cough induction procedures, bronchoscopies, some dental procedures and exams, or invasive specimen collection) on known or suspected COVID-19 patients.
- Healthcare or laboratory personnel collecting or handling specimens from known or suspected COVID-19 patients (e.g., manipulating cultures from known or suspected COVID-19 patients).
- Morgue workers performing autopsies, which generally involve aerosol-generating procedures, on the bodies of people who are known to have, or are suspected of having, COVID-19 at the time of their death.

Job Duties Affect Workers' Exposure Risk Levels

As workers' job duties change or they perform different tasks in the course of their duties, they may move from one exposure risk level to another. Additional examples of workers who may have increased risk of exposure to COVID 19 include those in:

- Other types of healthcare positions (including pre-hospital and medical transport workers, allied medical care professionals, and support staff) Emergency response (e.g., emergency medical services workers, firefighters, and law enforcement officers)
- Other postmortem care positions (e.g., funeral directors)
- Research or production laboratory workers
- Airline operations

- Retail operations, particularly those in critical and/or high-customer-volume environments Border protection and transportation security
- Construction
- Correctional facility operations
- Solid waste and wastewater management
- Environmental (i.e., janitorial) services
- In-home repair services
- Travel to areas where the virus is spreading
- Pastoral, social, or public healthworkers in jobs requiring contact with community members who may spread the virus
- Transit and delivery drivers, depending on their degree of close contacts with the public

This list is not intended to be comprehensive, and employers should always rely on thorough risk assessments to identify if and when their workers are at increased risk of exposure to the virus on the job.

ASSESSING YOUR WORKPLACE ENVIRONMENT & READINESS

The Ministry of Health has adapted a tool from the World Health Organization to give workplaces an objective view of their readiness for Phase 5 of the national reopening plan. It is recommended that staff members be involved in the completion of the assessment. The COVID-19 business readiness self-assessment tool is comprised of three broad components:

- I. Business demographics
- II. A risk assessment
- III. A mitigation assessment

All components should be fully completed. The tool contains a series of 22 questions across five (5) thematic areas, each is detailed later in the document:

1. Understanding the current situation
2. Emergency Preparedness & Response
3. Control & Coordination
4. Training & Communication
5. Public Health Awareness on COVID-19

Before assessing risks, workplaces should consider the specific external and internal issues that can affect an organization's ability to work safely and how these issues have been impacted by the pandemic.

External issues can include, but are not limited to:

1. how workers travel to work;
2. workers' access to childcare and schooling;
3. changes or problems in the supply chain;
4. changes in customer needs and expectations, or behaviours;
5. increased or decreased demand for products/ services;
6. prevalence of COVID-19 within the organization and the community; and
7. local, regional and national circumstances and related official guidance.

Internal issues can include, but are not limited to:

1. the number and types of workplaces;
2. the type of work;
3. the type of workers in the organization (e.g. employed, contractors, volunteers, freelance);
4. the degree to which it is possible to change the workplace to implement social distancing measures;
5. individual needs of workers (e.g. the clinically vulnerable, workers with childcare issues, carers of the clinically vulnerable, disabled workers, pregnant workers);
6. increased worker absence (e.g. due to sickness, self-isolation requirements, bereavement);
7. resource availability; and

8. how work is organized (e.g. changed work demands, pace of work, time pressure, shift work) and supported and how this impacts health, safety and wellbeing at work.

Accessing the Tool

To know your business’ readiness/risk score click the link below:

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/2kk145zIpi0u75a/Adapted%20COVID-19%20Workplace%20Readiness%20Tool%20v6%20%28Link%29.xlsx?dl=0>

If challenges occur in accessing the tool via the link, see Annex I which gives a hard copy version of the tool.

Instructions for Completing the Tool

1. Questions from both Parts 1 & 2, must be completed;
2. Once you’ve answered all the questions, please save your assessment with your business’ name as the file name. Example if the business name is Orange Cargo then the file name should be ‘Orange Cargo Assessment’;
3. Email your saved file to covidvirtual@bahamas.gov.bs; and
4. Your score will be calculated and shared with you via return email.

Knowing Where Your Business’ COVID-19 Risk & Readiness Status

Total Risk Score	Very Prepared to Mitigate COVID-19 Impacts (76-100)	Somewhat Prepared to Mitigate COVID-19 Impacts (51-75)	Somewhat Unprepared to Mitigate COVID-19 Impacts (26-50)	Very Unprepared to Mitigate COVID-19 Impacts (0-25)
0 (very low risk)	Very low	Very low	Low	Moderate
1 (low risk)	Very low	Low	Low	Moderate
2 (moderate risk)	Low	Low	Moderate	Very High
3 (high risk)	Moderate	Moderate	Very High	Very High
4 (very high risk)	Very High	Very High	Very High	Very High

KEY	
	Adequately prepared for reopening/maintaining business operations while mitigating COVID-19 impact
	Recommend overview and strengthening of mitigation measures within 14 days
	Recommend significant efforts to strengthen mitigation measures immediately
	Recommend closure until at least a moderate classification is obtained, as establishment may contribute to increase in community spread

Figure 3. Decision matrix and key for business assessment tool.

Understanding the current COVID-19 situation

- Provide regular information about the risk of COVID-19 using official sources, such as Ministry of Health, WHO/PAHO and CDC, and emphasize the effectiveness of adopting protective measures and counteracting rumors and misinformation.
- Check covid19.gov.bs and the Office of the Prime Minister Facebook pages regularly to get updates and resources.
- Reduce and manage work-related travels by cancelling or postponing non-essential travel to areas with community transmission of COVID-19. Provide hand sanitizer to workers who must travel, advise workers to comply with instructions from local authorities where they are travelling, as well as information on whom to contact if they feel ill while travelling.
- Workers returning from an area where COVID-19 transmission is occurring should monitor themselves for symptoms for 14 days and take their temperature twice a day. If they are feeling unwell, they should stay at home, self-isolate, and contact a medical professional.

Preparedness and Response Planning: Prevention and Mitigation

Planning for safe working enables the workplace to identify and prioritize risks related to COVID-19 that can affect work-related health, safety and wellbeing. Although it is not possible to eliminate the risks related to COVID-19 entirely, planning should aim to ensure the risk to workers is reduced to the lowest reasonably practicable level. To this end, Workplaces should develop action plans for prevention and mitigation of COVID-19 as part of the business continuity plan and according to the results of the risks assessment and the epidemiological situation. At the core of all plans should be the proven public health measures (Annex I), managing sick and COVID-19 employees (Annex II) and addressing the psycho-social component of COVID-19 in the workplace (Annex III). These three Annexes should guide your plan development.

When planning for safe working, workplaces should consider:

1. the types of work activities and how that work is organized;
2. where the work takes place and practical changes that need to be made;
3. interaction between workers or others, including the public;
4. the safe use of common areas and shared equipment; and
5. the impact of the pandemic on workers' psychological health and wellbeing at work.

Workplaces should take a systematic approach to determining and addressing risks related to COVID-19.

Workplaces should identify work activities that:

1. can be done from home;

2. cannot be done from home but can comply with social distancing guidelines in the workplace, if practical adjustments are made; and
3. cannot be done from home and cannot comply with social distancing guidelines in the workplace.

The COVID-19 situation is fluid, action plans should then be updated in case of changes in local epidemiological trends, identified cases of COVID-19 at the workplace, or lack of compliance by workers, visitors, and clients/customers.

In developing and implementing workplace action plans for prevention and mitigation of COVID-19, conditions related to risk should be assessed. Co-operation between management and workers and their representatives must be an essential element of workplace related prevention measures. Workers should be properly consulted and all workers should be informed about the measures introduced, using specific risk communication and community engagement approaches.

To understand the specific risks to workers, workplaces should consider what can affect the ability of individuals to work safely during the COVID-19 pandemic. The current increased risk to health, safety and wellbeing at work requires workplaces to adjust how they operate.

Command, control, and coordination arrangements

- Employers should establish a system and designate a staff (where possible) for ongoing monitoring and enforcing compliance with public health measures, as recommended by the Ministry of Health. Employers should look to augment infection prevention and control measures as necessary.
- Employers should promote mental and psychosocial health measures and support access of employees to available resources, such as those offered through The Ministry of Health.

Training & Communication

- Where applicable, provide posters, videos, and electronic message boards to increase awareness of COVID-19 among workers and promote safe individual practices at the workplace, engage workers in providing feedback on the preventive measures and their effectiveness. See Annex IV for relevant examples.
- Engage workers in providing feedback on the preventive measures and their effectiveness.
- Special attention should be given to reaching out to and engaging vulnerable and marginalized groups of workers, such as those in the informal economy and migrant workers, domestic workers, subcontracted and self-employed workers, and those working under digital labour platforms.

- Train workers who need to use protecting clothing and equipment how to put it on, use/wear it, and take it off correctly, including in the context of their current and potential duties. Training material should be easy to understand and available in the appropriate language and literacy level for all workers.

Workplace Mitigating Actions Based on Score Assessment Level

The colour-coded table below reminds of the varying assessment level, and the recommendation for each.

- Red – Very high risk work environment
- Amber – Moderate risk work environment
- Yellow – Low risk work environment
- Green – Very low risk work environment

KEY	
	Adequately prepared for reopening/maintaining business operations while mitigating COVID-19 impact
	Recommend overview and strengthening of mitigation measures within 14 days
	Recommend significant efforts to strengthen mitigation measures immediately
	Recommend closure until at least a moderate classification is obtained, as establishment may contribute to increase in community spread

Beyond these general recommendations, the Ministry of Health sets forth below targeted mitigation actions based aligned with the workplace readiness assessment evaluation.

Specific mitigation measures for workplaces and jobs at moderate risk

In addition ensuring adherence to the proven public health measures, the workplace should review responses in the assessment and improve areas with low scoring. Additionally, workplaces and jobs assessed to be at moderate risk, the following measures should be put in place:

- Enhanced cleaning and disinfection of objects and surfaces that are touched regularly, including all shared rooms, surfaces, floors, bathrooms, and changing rooms;
- Where the physical distancing of at least 6 feet cannot be implemented for a particular activity, workplaces should consider whether that activity needs to continue, and if so, take all the mitigating actions possible to reduce the risk of transmission between workers, clients or customers, contractors, and visitors; such as:
 - staggered activities
 - minimizing face-to-face and skin-to-skin contacts, placing workers to work side-by-side or facing away from each other rather than face-to-face
 - assign staff to the same shift teams to limit social interaction
 - installing plexiglass barriers at all points of regular interaction and cleaning them regularly

- Apply physical barriers to limit direct interaction where appropriate, such as installing a drive-through window for customer service or plexiglass between workstations.
- Enhanced hand hygiene – regular hand washing with soap and water or use of alcohol-based hand rub, including before entering and after leaving enclosed machinery, vehicles, confined spaces, and before putting on and after taking off personal protective equipment
- Provide personal protective equipment and training on its proper use – e.g. masks, disposable gowns, disposable gloves or heavy-duty gloves that can be disinfected. Provide face or eye protection (medical mask, face shields, or goggles) during cleaning procedures that generate splashes (e.g. washing surfaces).
- Increased ventilation rate, through natural aeration or artificial ventilation, preferably without re-circulation of the air. Where appropriate consider installing high-efficiency air filters or specialized negative pressure ventilation in some settings, such as for aerosol generating procedures (e.g., airborne infection isolation rooms in healthcare settings and specialized autopsy suites in mortuary settings).

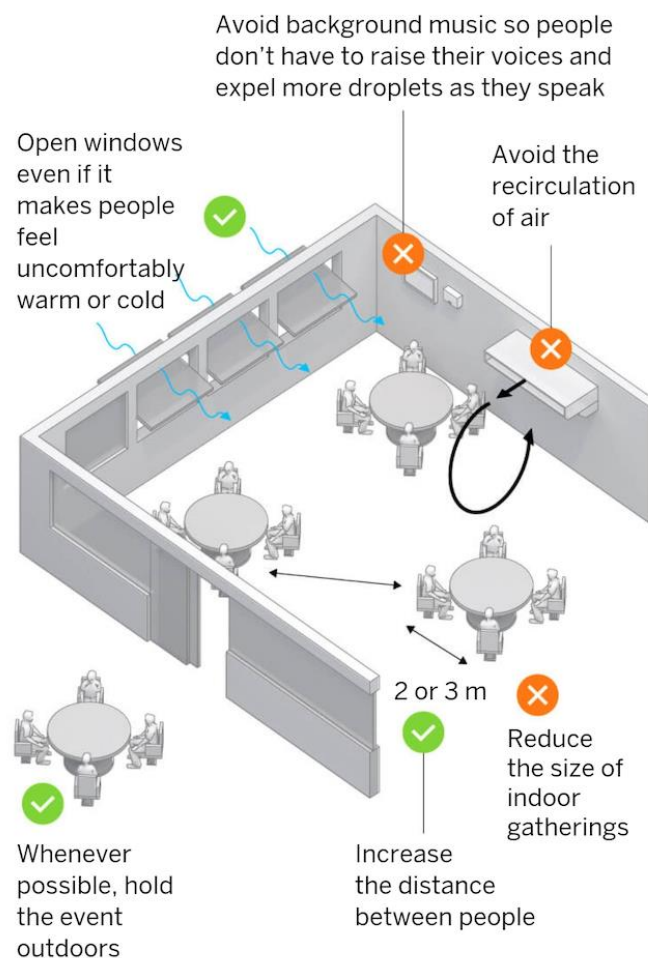


Figure 2: Mitigation Measures for All Workplaces

Specific mitigation measures for workplaces and jobs at very high risk

In addition ensuring adherence to the proven public health measures, the workplace should review responses in the assessment and improve areas with low scoring. Additionally, workplaces and jobs assessed to be at very high risk, the following measures should be implemented:

- Assess the possibility of suspending the activity;
- Adherence to hygiene before and after contact with any known or suspected case of COVID- 19, before and after using PPE;
- Use of medical mask, disposable gown, gloves, and eye protection for workers who must work in the homes of people who are suspected or known to have COVID-19. Use the protective equipment when in contact with the sick person, or respiratory secretions, body fluids, and potentially contaminated waste;
- Employers should check the OSHA and CDC websites regularly for updates about recommended PPE.

All types of PPE must be:

- Selected based upon the hazard to the worker.
- Properly fitted and periodically refitted, as applicable (e.g., respirators).
- Consistently and properly worn when required.
- Regularly inspected, maintained, and replaced, as necessary.
- Properly removed, cleaned and stored or disposed of, as applicable, to avoid contamination of self, others, or the environment.
- Training of workers in infection prevention and control practices and use of personal protective equipment;
- Encourage workers to report immediately to their supervisor any situation which they have reasonable justification to believe presents and imminent and serious danger to their life or health.
- Avoid assigning tasks with high risk to workers who have pre-existing medical conditions, are pregnant, or older than 60 years of age.
- Develop emergency communications plans, including a forum for answering workers' concerns and internet-based communications, if feasible.

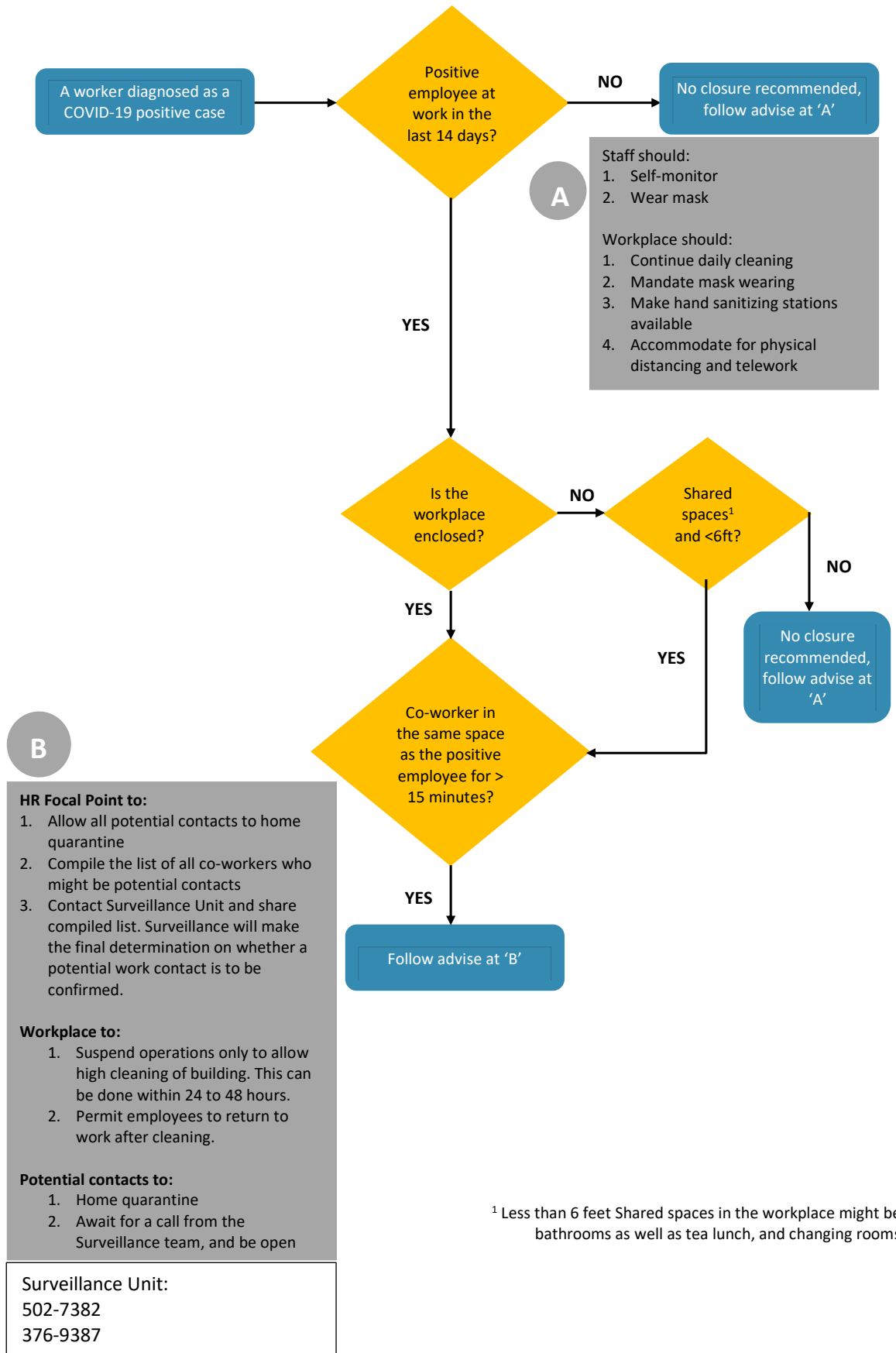
What To Do If There Is An Exposure In The Workplace

Education and orientation for all employees is critical in time of COVID-19. Workplace policies should be aligned to enable employees to remain at home if feeling unwell with symptoms that can be consistent with COVID-19. Workplaces should develop and agree on a response plan in case someone at the worksite becomes ill with symptoms of COVID-19 (dry cough, fever, malaise, nausea, vomiting, loss of smell/taste etc) or tests positive for COVID 19.

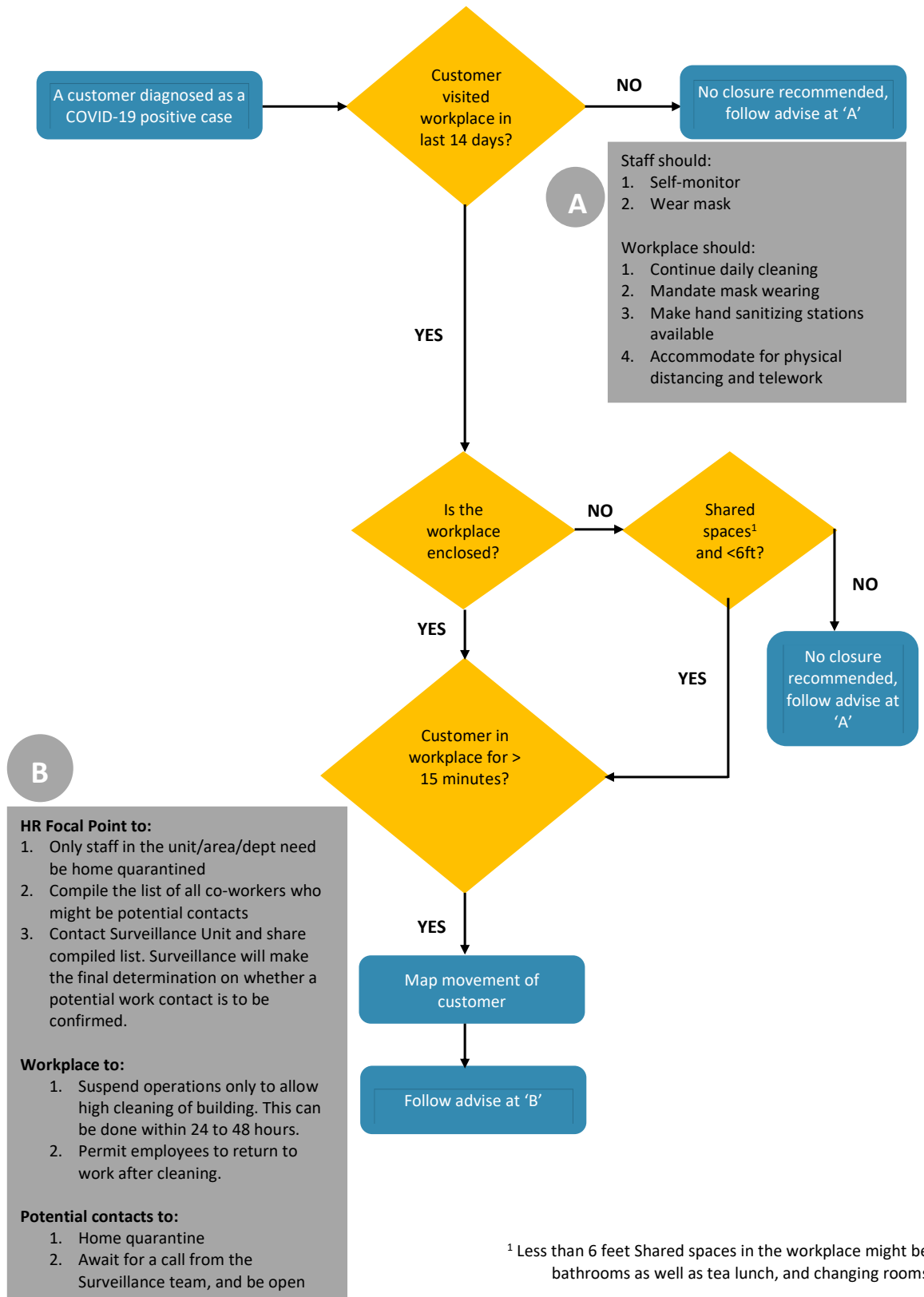
This plan should include at least:

- Employers/HR Managers should retain documentation of the names and contact details of all employees and the shifts they worked for at least the past month.
- If an employee becomes ill with symptoms consistent with COVID 19 or feels unwell, identify a room or area where the person can be safely isolated
- If advised or directed, the employee should arrange to be tested at a health or other designated testing facility.
- Contact the Surveillance Unit of the Ministry of Health and inform them of the positive case and get further guidance.
- Employers/HR Managers should provide the names and contact details of all employees and the shifts they worked for at least the past month to the Surveillance Unit. This will help the Surveillance Unit or other public health authorities in contact tracing and determining the exposure risk level of the employees in the workplace.
- Human Resources Managers or other executive personnel should inform employees if someone in the workplace has tested positive for COVID-19. Maintaining confidentiality of the individual who tested positive for COVID 19 is important to prevent stigma and discrimination.

Scenario A – An Employee Becomes A Confirmed COVID-19 Case



Scenario B – A Customer/Visitor Becomes A Confirmed COVID-19 Case



Additional Support

The Ministry of Health will provide up to date information and facts, support community engagement activities, and offer specific recommendations on the prevention of COVID-19 among other groups of workers, such as domestic workers, workers in the informal economy, digital labour platforms, or others as required.

Additionally, with the assistance of the Healthy Bahamas Coalition Secretariat, the Ministry of Health will provide support and guidance for workplaces through the Bahamas Healthy Workplaces Initiative (BaHWI). Businesses and workplaces are encouraged to register with the Ministry of Health, by sending an email to: mmhbcs2017@gmail.com. Information required for registration include: Name of Business/Workplace, Name of Contact Person(s) and Contact Numbers and/or Email Address. Once registered, arrangements can be made for review of the proposed strategy for resuming safe business operations. The BaHWI help desk may also be contacted at 502- 4862.

ANNEX I: Proven Public Health Measures

The Ministry of Health offers universal measures (2) (3) (4) (6) that can apply to all workplaces and all people at the workplace, such as employers, managers, workers, contractors, customers and visitors, for addressing occupational health hazards that COVID-19 imposes.

Hand hygiene

- Provide resources and a work environment that promotes hygiene. For example, provide tissues, no-touch trash cans, hand soap, alcohol-based hand rubs containing at between 60 and 80 per cent alcohol, disinfectants, and disposable towels for workers to clean their work surfaces.
- Post hand washing signs in the bathroom. Encourage regular and thorough handwashing with soap and water or hand hygiene with alcohol-based hand-rub before starting work, before eating, frequently during the work shift, especially after contact with co-workers or customers, after going to the bathroom, after contact with secretions, excretions and body fluids, after contact with potentially contaminated objects (gloves, clothing, masks, used tissues, waste), and immediately after removing gloves and other protective equipment but before touching eyes, nose, or mouth.
- Hand hygiene stations, such as hand washing and hand rub dispensers, should be put in prominent places around the workplace and be made accessible to all staff, contractors, clients or customers, and visitors along with communication materials and promote hand hygiene.

Respiratory hygiene

- Promote respiratory etiquette by all people at the workplace. Ensure that all workers who have interaction with the public or other staff have face masks. Make paper tissues available at the workplace, for those who may develop a runny nose or cough at work, along with bins with lids for hygienic disposal.
- Develop policy on wearing a mask or a face covering in line with Ministry of Health guidance and appropriate to specific work places. Educate staff on proper use, care and disposal of Mask use as they may carry some risks if not used properly. The WHO provides regularly updated advice regarding use of masks, and employers should frequently check for updates.
- Train workers on the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 so that understand that if they are feeling sick, they should not come to work. They should also report their symptoms to their supervisor so that the competent authority can be informed.

Physical distancing

- Introduce workplace measures to keep a distance of at least 1 metre (3 feet) between people and avoid direct physical contact with other persons (i.e. hugging, touching, shaking hands),
- Implement strict control over external access to the workplace by the public such a queue management with floor markers and barriers.
- Reduce density of people in the work place
 - no more than 1 person per every 10 square metres,
 - physical spacing of at least 1 metre (3 feet) apart for work stations
 - ensure limited congregation or queuing of employees or visitors/clients in common spaces, such as entrances/exits, lifts, pantries/canteens, stairs or might occur.
- Minimize the need for physical meetings, e.g. by using teleconferencing facilities
- Stagger working hours to reduce congregation of employees at common spaces such as entrances or exits.
- Implement or enhance shift or split-team arrangements, or teleworking
- Defer or suspend workplace events that involve close and prolonged contact among participants, including social gatherings
- If the size of the building makes physical distancing impossible, consider installation of physical barriers, such as cubicles, plexiglass, clear plastic sneeze guards, or a drive through window for customer service if applicable.

Keep yourself and others safe from COVID-19 when returning to work

Clean your hands often

- ✓ Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds especially after you have been in a public place, after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing, and after using others' or shared equipment.
- ✓ If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- ✓ Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

Avoid close contact

- ✓ Put distance (at least 6 feet) between yourself and other people.
- ✓ Wear cloth face coverings (if appropriate) when social distancing is difficult to maintain.
- ✓ Avoid using other employees' phones, desks, offices, or other work tools and equipment, when possible. Clean and disinfect between employees if sharing occurs.
- ✓ Remember that some people without symptoms may be able to spread virus.

If you are at increased risk for severe illness . . .

- ✓ Contact management to request special accommodations that will allow you to perform your job duties safely.

Protect yourself and others from COVID-19 by taking everyday preventive actions.

[cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus)

Figure 3: CDC Information

Regular environmental cleaning and disinfection

- High-touch surfaces should be identified for priority disinfection (commonly used areas, door and window handles, water fountains, refrigerators, tea pots/urns, light switches, kitchen and food preparation areas, bathroom surfaces, toilets and taps, touchscreen personal devices, personal computer keyboards, and work surfaces).
- Ensure regular cleaning of all common use surface areas, using soap or a neutral detergent, water, and mechanical action (brushing, scrubbing) to remove dirt, debris, and other materials from surfaces. After the cleaning process is completed, disinfection by a spray can be used to inactivate (i.e. kill) pathogens and other microorganisms on surfaces.
- Disinfectant solutions must always be prepared and used according to the manufacturer's instructions, including instructions to protect the safety and health of disinfection workers, use of personal protective equipment, and avoiding mixing different chemical disinfectants. Selection of disinfectants should align with the Department of Environmental Health Services COVID-19 Guideline.
- Spraying of people with disinfectants (such as in a tunnel, cabinet, or chamber) is not recommended under any circumstances
- Ensure appropriate ventilation in the workplace to avoid lung related injuries

ANNEX II: Management of People with COVID-19 or Their Contacts

- Workers who are unwell or who develop symptoms consistent with COVID-19 should be urged to stay at home, self-isolate, and contact a medical professional or the COVID-19 information line for advice on testing and referral.
- Consider waiving the requirement for a medical note for workers who are sick so that they may stay home.
- All workers should be trained in the office policies and the signs and symptoms of COVID-19. They should be encouraged to self-monitor their health
- Thermal screening at the workplace should be considered only in the context of a combination of measures for prevention and control of COVID-19 at the workplace and along with risk communication.
- Standard operating procedures should be prepared to manage a person who becomes sick at the workplace and is suspected of having COVID-19, including placing the person in an isolation space until they can be managed by healthcare personnel or sent home to quarantine, limiting the number of people in contact, using personal protective equipment, and performing follow-up cleaning and disinfection.
- It is important to keep attendance and meeting records in order to facilitate or undertake contact-tracing if required by the Ministry of Health Surveillance Unit.
- People who were in close contact at the workplace with persons with laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 should be quarantined for 14 days as guided by the Ministry of Health Surveillance Unit.
- There should be contact information of the local public health authorities visible for staff throughout the establishment. Employers may also consider providing staff with laminated business cards with the relevant contact information.

ANNEX III: Management of Mental and Psychosocial Hazards

- Provide an outlet for workers to confidentially express their concerns regarding their health risks and safety, and to have those concerns addressed in a non-confrontational manner.
- Include workers in discussions concerning workplaces changes that directly affect their health.
- Workplace wellness activities that promote the ability to recognize stress in self and other, that teach healthy coping mechanisms such as physical exercise, meditation, and support groups.
- For employees showing signs of mental distress or diminished coping skill, referral to psycho social support services such as telephone counselling, mental health day, etc
- Workplace messages and campaigns to reduce stigma associated with previous suspicion, diagnosis and/or recovery of COVID-19. Please refer the UNICEF Social Stigma guide for a comprehensive approach to reducing stigma in the workplace
- For employees working from home due to increased risk of suffering from severe illness due to COVID-19, consider adaptation of roles, working hours, and performance targets. This is especially important for those with young children, caretakers of the disabled or elderly.

ANNEX VI: POSTER EXAMPLES


Help Protect Yourself and Others from COVID-19

Practice Social Distancing

Stay 6 feet (2 arm's lengths) from other people.

And Wear a Cloth Face Covering

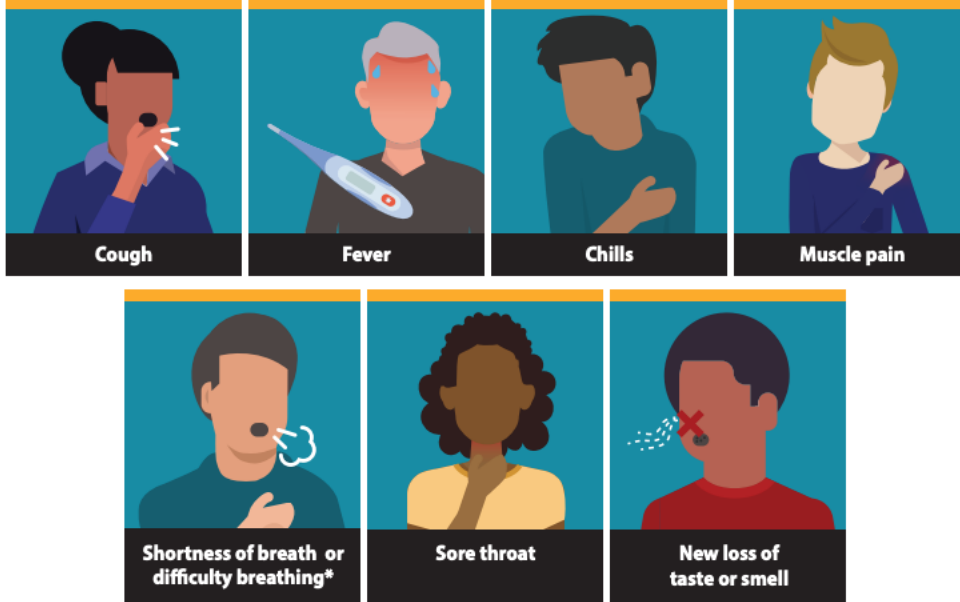
Be sure it covers your nose and mouth to help protect others.
You could be infected and not have symptoms.

 [cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus)

CS 117287-A 05/29/2020

Symptoms of Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Know the symptoms of COVID-19, which can include the following:



Symptoms can range from mild to severe illness, and appear 2-14 days after you are exposed to the virus that causes COVID-19.

***Seek medical care immediately if someone has emergency warning signs of COVID-19.**

- Trouble breathing
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- New confusion
- Inability to wake or stay awake
- Bluish lips or face

This list is not all possible symptoms. Please call your medical provider for any other symptoms that are severe or concerning to you.



[cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus)

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ANNEX V –

THE ASSESSMENT TOOL:

The COVID-19 Workplace Assessment Tool

(Parts 1 & 2)

Options for Type of Business:

Which of these apply to your business?

- Construction and other outdoor work
For example, construction, energy and utilities, farming and agriculture, forestry, waste management, and infrastructure
 - Close contact services
For example, hairdressers, barbershops, tattoo parlours, spas, sports, massage therapy and tailors
 - Factories, plants, warehouses
For example, manufacturing and chemical plants, food and other large processing plants, warehouses, port operations
 - Hotels and other guest accommodation
 - Labs and research facilities
For example, engineering centres, clean rooms, prototyping centres, wet labs, wind tunnels, computer labs, simulators, material development labs, specialist testing rooms
 - Offices, contact centres, operation rooms
 - Restaurants, pubs, bars and takeaway services
 - Retail businesses
 - Working in other people's homes
For example, repair services, fitters, meter readers, plumbers, cleaners, cooks, surveyors, delivery drivers who come to the door
 - Vehicles - working in or from a vehicle
For example, couriers, mobile workers, lorry drivers, on-site transit, work vehicles, field forces
 - None of the above
-

MoH COVID-19 Readiness Assessment Tool

The checklist below will enable business owners, of all size businesses to determine their risk assessment of COVID-19 in the workplace. If the workplace is a franchise, then a separate assessment tool must be completed for each franchise location. This tool should be applied at specified intervals to ensure compliance with the readiness measures.

Business Information:

Business Name (As stated on Business License)

Name of Individual Completing Assessment

Type of Business *

Business Address (Street and Postal Address)

Business Email

Business Phone Contact

Business License Number

Part 1: Risk Assessment

Please answer 1 (Yes) or 0 (No) to these risk questions:

Additional Risk of CoVID-19 to the business	Yes (1)/No (0)	Score
Does your workplace have more than 5 employees?	0	0
Does the workplace require customers/patrons to visit the establishment?	0	0
Is the workplace environment such that staff will be in close contact with one another or visitors for a prolonged period of time (> 15 minutes)?	0	0
Is the type of business such that it increases the likelihood of staff coming in contact with a COVID-19 confirmed case?	0	0
Total COVID-19 Risk Score		0

Part 2: Mitigation Assessment Questions

Please answer all questions. Answers can 2 (Yes), 1 (Maybe) or 0 (No) for each mitigation question

Topic	No.	Key consideration	Score Yes/Completed (2) Maybe/In Progress (1) No/Not Considered (0)	Weighting	Total Score	Comments
Understanding the current COVID-19 situation	1	Do you get COVID-19 information (both global and national) from reliable sources, such as Ministry of Health, WHO, PAHO, CDC, credible news stations et cetera.		1	0	
	2	Do you and your staff understand that COVID-19 can be fatal for people of all ages, and that prevention measures can decrease risk?		1	0	
	3	Are you committed to keeping informed of COVID-19 situation in The Bahamas?		1	0	
	4	Does at least 90% of your staff know how COVID-19 is spread, and how they can protect themselves against COVID-19 (both in the workplace, in the community and at home)?		1	0	
Preparedness and response plans	5	Do you have a plan on how you prepare for and respond to emergencies, including COVID-19?		3	0	
	6	Does the physical space of your business allow staff and/or patrons to be at a minimum of 3 feet apart at all times or have physical barriers (cubicles, plexiglass) which would reduce the spread of COVID-19?		3	0	
	7	Has your business put in place measures to limit person to person contact and have persons spaced at least 3 feet apart. For patrons/customers these measures can include curbside delivery and online ordering For staff, these measure can include teleworkand/ or shift systems for staff?		3	0	
	8	Does the building allow for natural ventilation (opening of doors and windows); or is the HVAC designed to prevent re-circulation of air?		2	0	
	9	Have you provided each staff member with at least two (2) cloth masks to be worn in the workplace, and and where applicable gloves and gowns, for staff based on the guidelines?		3	0	
	10	Do you have enough hand soap and tissue for all bathrooms in the establishment to allow restocking when levels are low?		3	0	
	11	Do you have hand sanitizers at key places such as entrances and other locations in the establishment, where applicable?		3	0	
	12	Is there a stocked first aid kit for every floor of the building?		1	0	

	13	If you think an employee or customer/visitor may have COVID-19, is there a clear and written plan on how to handle such a person?		2	0	
	14	If you think an employee or customer/visitor may have COVID-19, are you and your employees familiar with how to report such a person to the Ministry of Health for further investigations?		3	0	
	15	Is there an area in your institution/establishment/business that can be used should a staff or customer become ill and need to be separated from the general population until help arrives?		2	0	
	16	Has a cleaning schedule been developed to ensure the building is clean and hygienic i.e wiping surfaces with disinfectant as recommended?		3	0	
	17	Is a health screening risk assessment part of your institution's policy for determining categories of workers that can safely return to the workplace?		2	0	
Command, control, and coordination arrangements	18	Has a staff member been chosen to monitor and enforce adherence to the Workplace Guideline measures and public health measures?		3	0	
	19	Is there a system in place that supports the mental health of all staff?		2	0	
Training	20	Do staff have opportunities within the workplace to routinely be updated on the COVID-19 situation and relevant changes?		2	0	
	21	Are managers/department heads required to have current CPR or Basic Life Support (BLS) training?		1	0	
Public health awareness on COVID-19	22	Have you hung/displayed posters showing the COVID-19 symptoms (fever, dry cough, shortness of breath, etc.) for both staff and patrons?		3	0	
	23	Have you hung/displayed posters showing the proper way to wear a mask, wash hands and cover a cough, both staff and patrons to see?		3	0	
	24	Have you hung/displayed posters letting staff and patrons know how they can contact the healthcare system (e.g. helpline #, EMS# etc) if an emergency arises, including a person exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms?		3	0	

Sum of Mitigation Measures	0

0