



## CPMA COVID-19 Emergency Preparedness Resources

### Intro

This document is provided to Canadian Produce Marketing Association (CPMA) members to support them in finding resources to help manage their business during this crisis. The document will be updated as new information becomes available.

- CPMA staff are working remotely and are available to support members through this difficult period.
- If you are looking for a specific staff member, please use this link: [CPMA Staff Directory](#)
- Staff have provided their CPMA cell numbers in their voicemail messages and those without a CPMA cell phone will be checking voicemails frequently. All staff will be accessible via email during business hours.
- Please also see CPMA's COVID-19 web updates at [CPMA - Covid-19 Updates](#) for additional information.

Please review the legal disclaimer at the end of this document.

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### 1. COVID-19 - What we know.

COVID-19 is a new virus in humans which is currently circulating around the globe. It has been labelled a pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO) and is present in 185+ countries.

“Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses, some of which infect only animals, and others that can infect humans. Seven strains of coronavirus are now known to cause illness in humans. The strain of coronavirus found in Wuhan is the most recent of 7 known strains. Of the 6 others, 4 cause only minor respiratory symptoms similar to those of a cold, and 2, severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS CoV) and Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS CoV), have been associated with more serious and life-threatening diseases. ([www.canada.ca/en/public-health](http://www.canada.ca/en/public-health))”

The federal government has created a [Government of Canada: Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\): Outbreak Update](#) page to keep Canadians and businesses informed on the federal response. All provincial governments have done similar pages which are specific to their provinces. Most, if not all, municipal governments and municipal health departments would also have set up information sites.

Please check your provincial and municipal sites for specific information relevant to your business.

Resources:

[Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\): Being prepared](#)

[Know the facts about coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\)](#)

[WHO - Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\) Pandemic](#)

[CDC - Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)

## 2. Employee Protection and Health

COVID-19 is primarily spread by respiratory droplets expelled (cough, sneeze) by an infected individual which is inhaled by a non-infected individual. Infected people may not feel ill or show any signs of illness. Social distancing, a minimum of 2 metres between individuals, is key to slowing down the spread of the virus. Frequent hand washing, and/or hand sanitizer use, coupled with minimizing hand-to-face contact, will lessen the risk of the virus gaining access to the respiratory system. The virus can easily infect someone if it contacts the eyes, nose or mouth, so care must be taken to not touch one's face.

If an employee is confirmed or symptoms suggest they have COVID-19, they should be immediately sent home and encouraged to phone or email their local health department or doctor's office for further instructions on care. These employees should be self-isolating for 14-days and must not return to work before this even if symptoms pass.

Employers should be examining their business processes with the goal of respecting the social distancing recommendations. Wherever possible, employees should be working from home, shifts should be staggered to minimize employee contact and non-essential activities should be cancelled.

If an employee has tested positive, the business is not required to close and product recalls would not be initiated by CFIA. COVID-19 is not a foodborne pathogen. Companies should, however, ensure the specific area the employee worked in is thoroughly cleaned and sanitized. Employees working in the same general vicinity should be reminded of the procedures in place if they should become ill. In general, cleaning and sanitation activities should be increased to reduce the likelihood of the virus contaminating surfaces.

During this outbreak, all of the legislative responsibilities of both the employer and employee are still relevant. Health and safety, privacy, harassment, etc. policies are still in effect and must be maintained.

Key points:

- Respect social distancing protocols.
- Wash hands / use hand sanitizer frequently.
- Sneeze or cough into the crook of your arm or a tissue. Discard tissue immediately.
- Protective Barriers for front line workers interacting with the public.

- If you feel ill (i.e. cough, fever, difficulty breathing) isolate yourself and contact your health care provider Below is a list of resources:

[Preventing COVID-19 in the workplace: employers, employees and essential service workers](#)

[Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\): Awareness resources](#)

[CFIB COVID-19 Small Business Help Centre](#)

[Provincial and territorial resources for COVID-19](#)

### 3. Workforce Reduction

COVID-19 has created an environment of uncertainty for employees. They are concerned about the safety of their families, friends, co-workers and themselves. Employee absenteeism will likely be a drain on most organizations over the coming months. Balancing these fears against the needs of the business, an employee's rights and workplace regulations will be challenging.

It is expected that a significant number of businesses will be making difficult decisions regarding retaining staff. To protect the business, it is important that any company-initiated changes to an employee's status (i.e. full time / part time / furlough) be done as per the legislative requirements applicable to the business and their specific jurisdiction.

Generally, the provinces have jurisdiction over workplace legislation and the federal government legislates over the Human Rights issues. This may vary depending on where your business is located.

Businesses working in a collective bargaining situation should review the relevant clauses and open lines of communication with the union.

Key points:

- Check your provincial government website for any temporary changes to employer / employee legislation.
- Employees will be concerned about the safety of their family, friends and coworkers.
- Employees will be concerned about the future of their employment.
- Employees may be required to self-isolate, care for sick relatives coordinate childcare

Below is a list of resources:

[Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\): Prevention and risks](#)

[Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\): For businesses and employees](#)

[Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\) – Benefits and services](#)

### 4. Transportation

Canada's food supply chain is heavily dependent upon the unrestricted movement of food, food ingredients and food equipment. This is particularly true in the FF&V business considering 70% of Canada's produce is imported. As a nation, we have the ability to produce enough product to support a thriving export business, but this tends to be seasonal with respect to traditional agriculture.

Transportation, and in particular truck conveyance, is one of the government's critical infrastructure sectors. Thousands of trucks criss-cross the Canadian – US border every week. Canada, the US and Mexico have agreements in place to ensure the flow of trucks can continue even in a pandemic situation. Agreements, however, are only useful if a) they are respected b) drivers are available and willing to cross-borders.

At present, the 3 countries have agreed to continue with unrestricted movement of goods and services so commerce can continue. Non-essential travel has been restricted, with some exceptions, to individuals travelling for pleasure or non-business related activities.

Driver availability and willingness to cross borders is a very difficult dynamic to control. Truckers will be under additional stress during this period as they spend significant amounts of time away from family and friends. The pressures on this vital link must be acknowledged and industry must do what we can to support these workers.

Businesses should be contacting their carriers to ensure there is a mutual understanding regarding what is required to keep their product moving. Wherever possible, efficiencies should be implemented that optimize truck space and routes.

Key points:

- Stay in contact with your carrier so they understand your needs and you their challenges
- Maximize loads and routes whenever possible
- Support truck drivers as you can
- Communicate with your customers if transportation becomes a problem

Below is a list of resources:

[Canadian Trucking Alliance](#)

[CPMA - Doing Business in Canada Tool](#)

The CBSA has expanded its services available to provide information for the air, land, rail or marine modes using an existing automated **1-800-461-9999 Border Information Service Line (BIS)** that is now available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week with an automated, bilingual, interactive voice response system to provide basic information for travelers and businesses.

## 5. Food Safety, Sanitation and Process Control

COVID-19 is not a foodborne pathogen. Statements by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA), the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC), the US Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) have all confirmed the likelihood of contracting the virus via food is very low.

COVID-19 is a respiratory infection primarily obtained via inhalation of respiratory droplets produced when an infected individual sneezes or coughs. There is some evidence indicating the virus can survive on surfaces, but the science is still being developed with respect to the duration, type of surface and other environmental factors on the survival of the virus. Although the likelihood of contracting the virus via

surfaces is very low, individuals should be following public health recommendations regarding frequent hand-washing, using hand sanitizers and minimizing touching the face, eyes, nose and mouth.

Standard sanitation practices currently being utilized by the FF&V industry are an excellent way of reducing the risk to the business. It is recommended that companies contact their sanitation chemical provider to verify the sanitizers being used are effective against the *Coronavirus* family. It is important to follow existing Sanitation Standard Operating Procedures (SSOP's) as developed in your cleaning and sanitizing programs. If your chemical company recommends a change in chemicals, be sure to verify and/or modify your process to ensure the new chemicals are effective.

This would also be a good time to verify your chemical supplier is well stocked and can either produce, or has access to, inventory for the coming months.

Unusual circumstances can often lead to a sense of “we need to do something” mentality. It's important that the standard processes, which have helped build a successful organization, be continued. This is particularly true when dealing with food and food processing. Deviations from standard procedures heighten the risk of creating circumstances conducive to product contamination, introduction of foodborne pathogens and detrimental safety and efficiency practices. Process changes during this time should be based on sound understanding of why a change is required, what risks new procedures introduce and how business continuity will be maintained.

Key points:

- Food safety and employee safety must be maintained.
- Check with your chemical provider to ensure your sanitizer is effective against Coronavirus.
- Check that your chemical provider can produce, or has access to, sufficient inventories of chemicals.
- Ensure any process changes have considered food safety, employee safety, sanitation and business efficiency.

Below is a list of resources:

[Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\): Prevention and risks](#)

[Food Safety - Latest CFIA information for consumers on food and animal health – COVID-19](#)

[Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\): CFIA Information for industry](#)

[List of hard-surface disinfectants for use against coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)

[List of hand sanitizers authorized by Health Canada](#)

## 6. Government (Federal, Provincial, Territorial and Municipal)

All levels of Canadian government are coordinating their activities, responses and recommendations to keep Canadians informed, safe and healthy as this outbreak evolves.

At the federal level, the government is fully engaged in understanding the virus from a scientific / medical perspective. Agencies across the government are coordinating their responses and communications to keep Canadians informed. Internationally, the government is working with our trading partners (i.e. US

and Mexico) to ensure the food supply chain remains intact. They are also working with the WHO, CDC, FDA and other governments in coordinating responses and information sharing.

Provincial and Territorial, governments have the primary role with respect to the hands-on health practices in their jurisdictions. Provinces are coordinating with the various municipal health departments to coordinate supplies and information. Currently, a number of provinces have declared emergencies based on the severity of the viral spread and the need to access additional funding sources.

Municipal governments are relying on their public health departments, hospital systems and first responder networks to manage the outbreak. Your provincial and municipal government websites will be useful to help manage your businesses response and answer specific questions. The federal site is valuable if you are looking for information from a national or global perspective.

We recommend using the on-line resources and tools provided by government as your first source of information. 1-800 numbers or direct calls to government will likely result in long wait times or be immediately redirected to voice mails for future follow-up.

Key points:

- Your provincial and municipal governments will have information about your region.
- All government sites are being updated frequently.
- Utilize government website instead of calling 1-800 numbers

Below is a list of resources:

[Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\): Outbreak update](#)

[AAFC - Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\) - Information for industry](#)

[Resources for Canadian Businesses](#)

[Provincial and territorial resources for COVID-19](#)

## 7. Check List

Action	
<b>Everyone plays a role</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.</li> <li>• Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if proper hand washing facilities are unavailable.</li> <li>• Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.</li> <li>• Avoid close contact with people who are ill.</li> <li>• Emphasize to your employees and buyers to stay home when they have a cough, fever, or have difficulty breathing.</li> <li>• Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then immediately throw the tissue in the garbage and wash your hands.</li> <li>• If you don't have a tissue, sneeze or cough into your sleeve or arm.</li> <li>• Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Social distancing as recommended by public health authorities will be practiced, with distances of 2 metres being maintained at all times to the fullest extent possible, and no physical contact such as hand-shaking permitted.</li> </ul>
<b>Step 1 Employees prior to Arrival</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Confirm with employees if they have a cough, fever, or difficulty breathing?</li> <li>Confirm if they have travelled internationally in the last 14 days or been exposed to someone currently in isolation or who has tested positive</li> <li>If so, they must contact their primary doctor or their public health unit for clearance before entering the your business <a href="#">Provincial and territorial resources for COVID-19</a></li> </ul>
<b>Step 2 Facilities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clean and sanitize all common areas and equipment frequently</li> <li>Create barrier between front line workers and public - If not possible provide from line employees with protective equipment (face mask, gloves etc.)</li> <li>Ensure signage is posted to encourage social distancing and proper handwashing/cough and sneezing etiquette etc.</li> <li>All persons entering a warehouse must wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds</li> <li>If hand wash stations are unavailable, all persons entering a warehouse are to use the hand sanitizer at the entrance</li> <li>If possible, temperatures should be taken with a no touch thermometer and anyone with a fever should not be admitted (Fever is considered anything above 38.1°C (100.6°F)).</li> <li>Stagger your workforce hours so that not all their workforce has the risk of common exposure at the same time.</li> <li>Reduce and manage traffic within your warehouse, distribution or retail facilities to respect social distancing measure</li> <li>Limit entry into facilities by non-essential personnel and track interactions that their employees have with external personal coming to the premises in order to enable a rapid assessment of 'exposure' to be made</li> <li>Coordinate loading of product for distribution to next step in supply chain in a way that minimized individual contact</li> <li>Limit number of your workforce in interaction with external contacts - trucker, vendors, and buyers.</li> <li>Drivers will be required to stay with their vehicles at all times while on the premises</li> <li>Provide Drivers with separate washroom facilities and refreshment facilities (clean these areas daily)</li> </ul>
<b>Retail</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clean and sanitize all common areas and equipment frequently</li> <li>Provide public with materials to clean shopping carts</li> <li>Reduce and manage traffic within your retail facilities to respect social distancing measure</li> <li>Create barrier between front line workers and public - If not possible provide from line employees with protective equipment (face mask, gloves etc.)</li> </ul>

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|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ensure signage is posted to encourage social distancing and proper handwashing/cough and sneezing etiquette etc.</li><li>• At checkout mark floor with social distancing for public</li><li>• Ensure signage is throughout the store reiterating measures</li><li>• Open premises for a period to at risk shoppers only (seniors, those with respiratory issues etc.)</li><li>• Provide online options and click and collect. Provide customers with social distancing rules for car drop off.</li></ul> |
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## Legal Disclaimer

CPMA makes every effort to ensure that accurate information is provided but cannot accept any responsibility for any errors or omissions no matter how caused, including but not limited to whether as a result of an error by CPMA or in change a policy by the resources listed throughout the document. It is important that members consult the pertinent acts and regulations prior to developing their programs, procedures and materials (e.g. labelling , advertising, etc.) for the Canadian marketplace.

All information is provided “as is”, without warranty or guarantee of any kind as to its accuracy, completeness, operability, fitness for particular purpose, or any other warranty, express or implied. CPMA shall not be liable for any damages, loss, expense or claim of loss arising from the use, or reliance on the information.