

Workplace Sanitary Standards Guide for
the mining industry – COVID-19

OHS is everyone's business!



The purpose of this guide is to support mining companies in managing occupational health and safety (OHS) in their work environment. It seeks to guarantee that operations can resume or continue under the safest and healthiest possible conditions in the context of COVID-19.

In a crisis period, it is important that workers, employers and other workers, employers and other stakeholders all work together to have healthy and safe work environments for all! Dialogue and cooperation are essential to achieve this.



Management of occupational health and safety

Management means implementing the necessary measures to honour the employer's legal obligations, namely identify, correct and control the risks and encourage the workers' participation in this preventive approach.

Good cooperation between the employer and the personnel is crucial to promoting management of OHS.



The employer must **proceed with identification of the risks of transmission of COVID-19 in the work environment**. If the risks of contamination cannot be eliminated, the employer must seek to reduce and control them. The employer must identify the tasks during which workers may be exposed to the virus.

Preventive measures may be applied to reduce the risks of transmission of COVID-19. They are based on the principles of exclusion of symptomatic persons from the workplace, physical distancing, hand washing, respiratory etiquette and maintenance of hygiene measures for the tools, equipment and frequently touched surfaces.

The COVID-19 context can be a major stress factor, whether for the employer or for the workers, suppliers, subcontractors, and partners, due to the upheaval it causes in the different spheres of society. Special attention must therefore be paid to the psychosocial health of personnel.



Exclusion of symptomatic workers from the workplace

Persons exhibiting symptoms are part of the COVID-19 transmission chain in the workplace. Procedures accounting for the following factors can avoid transmission of the disease:

- Identification of workers with COVID-19 symptoms before they enter the workplace. For example:
 - a questionnaire,
 - a self-evaluation by the workers;
- Isolation in a room of a worker who starts feeling symptoms in the workplace, wearing a procedure mask and reporting to 1-877-644-4545;
- The suppliers, subcontractors, and partners have been informed of the measures implemented in the company to control the risks associated with COVID-19 and made aware of the importance of complying with these measures.



Physical distancing

- Whenever possible, a minimum of 2 metres of distancing between people must be maintained at work, from arrival to departure;
- This distance must also be maintained during breaks and lunch hour;
- Handshakes and hugs must be avoided;
- Arrangements have been made to respect 2-metre distancing between workers, by rearranging the physical layout or changing work methods;
- Traffic and interactions between workers are limited.

Adjustments that must be made to limit the risk of transmission when the principles of physical distancing cannot be respected:

- Use of technological means (telework);
- Installation of physical barriers (transparent full partitions) between different workstations when they are too close or cannot be spaced or in the transportation vehicles whenever possible;
- Organization of work methods. For example:
 - prefer teams that are as small and stable as possible,
 - reduce the number of workers and job rotation,
 - If applicable, do not hold meetings that require a physical gathering,
 - avoid sharing objects,
 - limits outings and trips to those strictly necessary;

- Personal protective equipment adapted to the risk is supplied:
 - respiratory protection,
 - protective glasses,
 - visor,
 - gloves;
- Gloves, protective glasses (protective eyewear) and respirator are removed safely;
- Single-use personal protective equipment is placed in a trash can or in reclosable containers or bags reserved for this purpose, and then discarded;
- Reusable personal protective equipment (e.g. protective eyewear or visor) is disinfected with a product adapted to the equipment.



Hand washing

Frequent hand washing with lukewarm water and soap or with a 60% hydroalcoholic solution for at least 20 seconds limits the risks of transmission in the work environment, especially:

- before touching the face (eyes, nose, mouth);
- after coughing, sneezing or wiping the nose;
- before and after eating;
- after handling something that is frequently touched.



Respiratory etiquette

Respecting respiratory etiquette consists of:

- covering your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze, and using tissues or the crook of your elbow;
- using single-use tissues;
- immediately discarding used tissues in the trash can;
- frequent hand washing;
- not touching your mouth or eyes with your gloved or bare hands.



Maintenance of hygiene measures for tools, equipment and frequently touched surfaces

Given that the virus responsible for COVID-19 can survive on surfaces, application of hygiene measures is essential.

- Sharing of work accessories and equipment (e.g. pens, telephone, tablets, computer mouse) is limited;
- Collective equipment (e.g. telephone, computer, mouse, photocopier, printer) is cleaned and disinfected regularly or as soon as more than one person uses it;

- Ensure efficient operation and maintenance of the ventilation systems, according to the regulatory requirements for the type of facility and the tasks performed;
- Clean the sanitary facilities at least every shift and disinfect them daily;
- Clean the meal areas before each meal and disinfect them daily. For example:
 - the refrigerator door handle,
 - chair backs,
 - microwaves;
- Clean the frequently touched surfaces at least every shift and when they are visibly soiled. For example:
 - tables,
 - counters,
 - doorknobs,
 - faucets,
 - toilets,
 - telephones,
 - computer accessories;
- Clean and disinfect the driver and passenger workstations and the heavy machinery operator's cab, at least every shift. Pay special attention to surfaces frequently touched during driving, such as:
 - the steering wheel,
 - the interior and exterior door handles,
 - the interior rear-view mirror,
 - the seat belts,
 - the gearshift,
 - the joysticks,
 - the doors,
 - the seats;
- Clean the tools and equipment used after every shift or when they must be shared;
- Use the appropriate cleaning products or disinfectants (see the manufacturer's recommendations and do not mix cleansers);
- Remove non-essential objects (magazines, newspapers and knickknacks) from the common areas.

Resources are available online for more information concerning [cleaning of surfaces](#) or [recommended disinfectants](#).



Legal obligations

The legal obligations in occupational health and safety, both for the employer and the workers, must be applied in the context of COVID-19. Here is a summary.

Employer


Every employer has the obligation to protect the health and ensure the safety and physical well-being of their workers. The *Act respecting occupational health and safety* (AOHS) requires every employer to take the necessary measures to achieve this ([section 51](#)). To do this, the employer, in particular, must implement methods for the identification, correction and control of risks.

In the context of COVID-19, the employer must ensure that the preventive measures usually implemented are always adapted. Otherwise, he must modify them to protect the workers against the risks of contamination.

The employer must also inform the workers about the risks related to their work, including those related to COVID-19. The employer must also assure the workers of the appropriate training, supervision and coaching so that everyone has the skills and knowledge required to perform the work assigned to them safely.

Worker

Every worker has the obligation to protect their health, safety or physical well-being, and to ensure that they do not endanger the health, safety or physical well-being of other persons found in the workplace ([section 49](#) of the AOHS). To do this, they must comply with the rules and measures implemented in the context of COVID-19 on the same basis as the other rules applied in the work environment. The workers must also participate in the identification and elimination of risks. If they see risks or have suggestions in this regard, they must inform the health and safety committee (if there is one), their superior or a representative of the employer.



The guide and the kit result from a reflective process intended to support the work environments in management of occupational health and safety in the context of COVID-19. The project is scalable and will harmonize with the preventive measures order by the public health authorities.

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