

COVID-19: Developing a Safety Plan for Your Workplace

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In a recent publication, the Government of Ontario is encouraging all employers to develop and implement a COVID-19 Safety Plan as part of their obligation to comply with the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* ("OHSA"). A government template is available to assist employers in this regard. While employers do not need to submit their plan to the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development, a ministry inspector may ask about a plan during a workplace inspection. Accordingly, it is wise for employers to create or update their existing plan.

In developing your safety plan, the Government of Ontario has noted six (6) questions for employers to consider. They are paraphrased as follows:

1. How will safety measures be communicated to employees?
2. How will employees be screened for COVID-19?
3. How will the risk of transmission be controlled?
4. How will the employer respond if there is a potential, or confirmed, case of COVID-19 in the workplace?
5. How will the employer manage any new risks that arise from changes to the workplace?
6. How will the employer ensure that the plan is, and will remain, effective?

Further details about these considerations can be found [here](#).

An understanding of the virus will be critical to answering the above questions and developing an effective safety plan. Employers are expected to use current public health and health and safety information. A useful resource in this regard is the Government of Canada's COVID-19 database, which you can find [here](#). Employers should also consult their local by-laws, health authorities, and workplace specific health and safety advisories to stay apprised about the virus and current government responses (particularly with respect to initiatives such as mask wearing protocols).

The COVID-19 pandemic remains an evolving situation, and challenges for workplace health and safety will certainly persist. Developing a sound COVID-19 safety plan and reviewing this plan frequently should be considered one piece of your workplace's strategy to proactively address the coronavirus and remain compliant with the OHSA.

We will continue to provide guidance on this issue and provide you with further updates as they become available. Please note that this bulletin is intended for informational purposes only and does not constitute legal advice or an opinion on any issue. We strongly recommend that you contact your Miller Canfield lawyer with your specific questions so that those questions can be addressed properly with you.