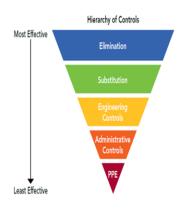## Abattoir and Meat Processing Addendum

NOTE: This document is intended for informational purposes only to provide an overview of the potential hazards posed in the workplace due to COVID-19. It is not intended as medical advice, to provide a comprehensive risk assessment for all workplaces, or to replace any legislated workplace safety obligations. WSPS has not endorsed and does not endorse any particular product or company as a solution to the risk presented by COVID-19. Due to the ongoing evolution of the situation in Ontario and around the world, this document may be used as a guide for Employers in addition to guidance delivered by public health authorities such as the World Health Organization (WHO), Ontario Ministry of Health, Public Health Ontario and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Any use which is made of this document by any Employer or individual, or any reliance on or decisions to be made based on it, are the responsibility of the Employer or individual. WSPS and its partners, officers, directors, employees, agents, representatives, suppliers and service providers accept no responsibility for any errors or omissions in content or for damages of any kind or nature suffered by any Employer or any third party as a result of use of or reliance on this communication. This information is only as accurate as the date it is posted, February 25, 2020.  It is the responsibility of the user to confirm most current recommendations and requirements with respective sources.

## Introduction

This addendum is intended to be used in conjunction with the Pandemic Business Playbook to support the selection and implementation of controls to reduce the risk of COVID-19 exposure in the workplace. The information in this addendum, although a great starting point for employers, may not be adequate for all workplaces. A detailed review of site specific risk factors will support a safer workplace.

Each workplace is unique and therefore should implement controls based on the level of risk in their workplace. This begins with conducting a risk assessment and using the hierarchy of controls to help reduce the risk of exposure and transmission. The risk can be further mitigated by implementing a combination of controls to increase overall effectiveness.

A successful prevention program requires continuous review, the pandemic response program developed by the employer should be evaluated for continual improvement and changes should be made as identified and needed.



**Elimination:** This involves removing the risk of exposure entirely from the workplace. Having all workers stay home would eliminate COVID-19 risk from the workplace.

**Substitution:** This involves replacing a hazardous substance with something less hazardous (e.g. replacing one chemical with another). For an infectious disease such as COVID-19, there is no option for substitution.

**Engineering controls:** These involve making physical changes in the workplace that separate workers from the hazard or support physical distancing, disinfecting and hygiene.

**Administrative controls:** These involve making changes to the ways people work and interact, using methods such as policies, procedures, training and signage.

**Personal protective equipment (PPE):** This is equipment and clothing worn by a worker to minimize exposure to hazards and prevent illnesses and infection. PPE is used to protect the wearer.

Some controls may be more difficult to implement than others (e.g. engineering controls versus administrative controls). The examples provided herein are based on best practices and the most current information available on COVID-19 transmission from the Public Health Ontario (PHO) and the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC). Employers are encouraged to review supporting documentation and seek further guidance from their local public health units. It is important that workplaces are aware of the most current national, regional, and local government direction and implement controls as appropriate. When elimination, engineering and administrative controls are not adequate in reducing the risk to an acceptable level, personal protective equipment can be considered. The employer is responsible for ensuring adequate supplies of personal protective equipment are available at the workplace, as required by the company's hazards risk assessment. Do review the Personal Protective Equipment section of the Post-Pandemic Playbook. Do refer to local public health unit and other government resources for additional guidance specific to your region or area.

## A focused look at the risk factors and controls in abattoir and meat processing

Wherever workers may have contact with co-workers and/or various surfaces there is the potential for the spread of COVID-19. It is important that employers review how they can minimize these risks within their facilities.

Employers should anticipate and recognize the risk of COVID-19 in the workplace and use the hierarchy of controls to further protect their workers. When implementing new controls, it is important that they do not affect other safety controls (i.e. emergency stops, access/egress, heat stress, etc.) already implemented in the workplace. The following table provides a variety of controls that may assist the abattoir and meat processing sector by providing considerations for various risk factors, however it does not provide an inclusive list of options available.

The controls listed in the table below are made in addition to the following controls:

-   Health screening (onsite and self-screen)
-   Physical distancing (2 metres or 6 feet), where distancing cannot be established, communicate specific work procedures to minimize exposure
-   Personal hygiene (including access to handwashing/hand sanitizers, cough and sneeze etiquette
-   Increased cleaning and sanitation

Employers should anticipate and recognize the risk of COVID-19 in the workplace and use the hierarchy of controls to further protect their workers. When implementing new controls, it is important that they do not affect other safety controls (i.e. emergency stops, access/egress, heat stress, etc.) already implemented in the workplace. The table below provides a variety of controls that may assist the abattoir and meat processing sector by providing considerations for various risk factors, however it does not provide an inclusive list of options available.

The Ontario government has developed a guide to help employers develop and maintain a COVID-19 workplace safety plan. The guide provides a framework for assessing risks of COVID-19 transmission and planning how to mitigate those risks. Employers should also consult the COVID-19 response framework available at this link to determine additional workplace requirements for their region. All workplaces are required to have a current COVID-19 Safety Plan in place.

| Potential Risk & Examples | Sample Controls |
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| **Administration of Workplace COVID-19 Protocol and Guidelines** | <ul><li>Post and communicate your COVID-19 Safety Plan</li><li>Encourage workers to monitor their own symptoms and stay home if they are sick</li><li>Perform screening of workers or essential visitors in accordance with the Workplace Screening Tool.</li><li>Make sure it is clear that no-one is permitted to enter a property if they have symptoms of COVID-19</li><li>Encourage all workers and essential visitors wash their hands thoroughly with soap and water before entering the workplace and after contact with surfaces others have touched</li></ul> |

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| | • Maintain a list of individuals that enter the property in the event that contact tracing is required<br>• Ensure workers are aware of all updated policies and procedures (shadow policies, revised work processes, operational changes)<br>• Conduct regular safety talks and open discussion with workers<br>• Make visible public health guidance and resources<br>• Stagger work schedules where possible and/or limit the number of workers as needed<br>• Schedule work in line with work groups/bubbles in work areas<br>• Maintain a staff schedule/log for 30 days, including information on the area for which each employee is responsible<br>• Ensure sufficient amount and availability of hand washing and sanitizer stations available<br>• Create a hand washing schedule to maintain frequency<br>• Encourage/facilitate the washing of all uniforms and clothing after each shift<br>• Clean and sanitize all high-touch or frequently touched surfaces and objects<br>• Refer to local government bylaws and guidelines regarding face coverings and other requirements |
| **Working in Close Proximity with Other Workers**<br><br>• Packing lines<br>• Kill floor | • Maintain processes which promote physical distancing requirements of 2 meters between individuals through re-arranging spaces and work areas, limiting capacity, and managing processes appropriately where necessary<br>• Physical barriers where distance cannot be added<br>• Where distancing cannot be established, communicate specific work procedures to minimize exposure<br>• Increase walkway width where possible or create one-way pedestrian routine, one-way entry/exit routes<br>• Limit unnecessary worker interaction/ limit access to work areas<br>• Where workers are at a fixed location, face workers away from each other<br>• Avoid the use of individual comfort fans at work stations when possible<br>• If fans are used, minimize air blowing from one person to another |
| **Working in Close Proximity with Livestock** | • Stagger shift and break times<br>• Defined handwashing schedule<br>• Physical barriers between work areas<br>• Implement staggered workstations, expanded work surfaces<br>• Stagger shift and break times<br>• Create work groups, maintain group composition to reduce cross exposure if possible<br>• Where distancing cannot be established, communicate specific work procedures to minimize exposure<br>• Sneeze screen for communication point between worker and delivery person |
| **Shared Spaces**<br><br>• Lunch rooms<br>• Break rooms<br>• Locker rooms<br>• Office | • Stagger shift start times and breaks to reduce overlap in use of common spaces<br>• Reorganise room layout and space occupancy<br>• Use electronic physical distancing indicators<br>• Encourage workers to change prior to leaving work<br>• Adequate and contained storage of used uniforms<br>• Increase frequency of laundry services<br>• Schedule breaks in line with work groups/bubbles in work areas<br>• Physical barriers where distance cannot be added<br>• Reduce furniture and high-touch surfaces in common areas |

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| | • Distancing in-use lockers where possible; assignment based on start times of shift to reduce close contact<br>• Conducting breaks or meetings outdoors (increased room)<br>• Where distancing cannot be established, communicate specific work procedures to minimize exposure<br>• Encourage workers to maintain distance during breaks and upon arrival or leaving work |
| **Shared Use of Equipment and Tools**<br><br>• Knives/ saws<br>• Hand tools<br>• Wash sinks/ pressure washers<br>• Office equipment<br>• Vehicles | • Assign single user to equipment, machine, task or workspace where possible<br>• Defined hand washing schedule<br>• Create and maintain a cleaning and sanitization schedule of all surfaces, equipment and tools<br>• Create a policy and procedure for cleaning and disinfection<br>• of equipment |
| **Machine Maintenance**<br><br>• Conveyors<br>• Saws<br>• Forklift<br>• Packaging & Wrapping | • Ensure physical distancing when performing maintenance on or<br>• near equipment<br>• Create additional space and section off machinery during maintenance<br>• Schedule maintenance after hours or during downtime when possible; limit maintenance work to off-peak hours<br>• Limit the number of workers within the area of concern; ensuring people are 2 metres apart from each other<br>• Clean and sanitize frequently touched equipment and surfaces<br>• Defined handwashing schedule |
| **High Touch Point Materials and Surfaces**<br><br>• Production<br>• Boxes / packaging<br>• Shipping /receiving | • Establish pick up and placement areas for material<br>• Limit number of workers picking from an area<br>• Create one-way pedestrian routing<br>• Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points (HACCP) |
| **External Visitors**<br><br>• Inspectors<br>• Other authorities<br>• Visiting drivers | • Screening protocol for visitors<br>• Visitor to follow host instructions communicated in advance and onsite<br>• Driver to remain in vehicle when trailer is being loaded<br>• Where distancing cannot be established, communicate specific work procedures to minimize exposure<br>• Any additional industry specific guidance as required |
| **Meetings**<br><br>• Safety talks<br>• Operational meetings<br>• Safety meetings | • Establish suitable area for meetings, limit number of participants in a room or space<br>• Ensure workers are 2 meters apart in standing space, or when using seats and table placement<br>• Discontinue interaction when physical distancing is not possible<br>• No physical contact<br>• Leverage communication boards and electronic or virtual communication where possible |
| **Loading Docks** | • Permit only necessary deliveries<br>• Inform delivery companies of internal requirements |

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| • Shipping and receiving<br>• Inbound material<br>• Courier services<br>• Operating doors | • Driver screening ahead of arrival<br>• Deliveries to call ahead to inform of arrival<br>• Delivery drivers to remain in trucks<br>• Drivers verbally report pertinent information on paperwork<br>• Paperwork to be deposited in designated location |
| **Waste Disposal**<br><br>• Use of compactors<br>• Handling waste material<br>• Sweeping and clean-up | • Limit number of workers handling waste<br>• Place waste in assigned areas away from workers<br>• Use tools/equipment to pick up waste where possible<br>• Establish route and times for collection of waste bins<br>• Safe disposal of potentially contaminated waste |
| **Restroom Usage and Capacity** | • Limit the number of people inside the washroom; meeting public health guidelines for physical distancing and capacity<br>• Consider indicator communicating current capacity or usage in washroom if not single use<br>• Section off washroom stalls/urinals or install physical barriers to promote physical distancing<br>• If the facility cannot accommodate distance, reduce all washroom use to one patron at a time<br>• Contactless hand washing stations and doorways where possible; otherwise maintain hand sanitizer outside of entrance<br>• Ensure regular cleaning and sanitizing schedule<br>• Ensure regular removal of trash receptacles<br>• Ensure continual supply of hand washing soap (paper towels for drying) |
| **Administration of COVID-19 Protocol and Guidelines with Essential Visitors** | • Maintain a visitor log for a minimum of 30 days to include name and contact information, time/date (If required locally, complete pre-screening and/or communication regarding expectations of visitors<br>• Encourage visitors wash or sanitize their hands thoroughly before entering the workplace and after contact with surfaces others have touched<br>• Communicate the processes in place for reducing the spread and transmission in the space to ensure all outside parties of aware of expectations<br>• Refer to local government bylaws and guidelines regarding face coverings and other requirements |

## RESOURCES

Stay updated with daily government updates:

- **COVID-19 Ontario**
- **Government of Canada**
- **Public Health Ontario**

**Ontario government and agency-issued resources about COVID-19**

The Ontario government is providing guidance and resources to help businesses and employers operate more safely and stop the spread. This includes a portal to assist them in finding supplies and equipment through the Workplace PPE Supplier Directory.

**Ontario Ministry of Health** is providing consistent updates on the provincial government's response to the outbreak, including:

- status of cases in Ontario
- current affected areas
- symptoms and treatments
- how to protect yourself and self-isolate
- updated Ontario news on the virus

**Public Health Ontario** is providing up-to-date resources on COVID-19, including:

- links to evolving public health guidelines, position statements and situational updates
- synopsis of key articles updating on the latest findings related to the virus
- recommendations for use of personal protective equipment
- information on infection prevention and control
- testing information
- other public resources

## OTHER COVID-19 RESOURCES

**Health Canada** outlines the actions being taken by the Government of Canada to limit spread of the virus, as well as what is happening in provinces and communities across the country. It also maintains a live update of the number of cases by province.

The **World Health Organization** is updating the latest guidance and information related to the global outbreak and spread beyond Canadian borders.

It also provides the most up-to-date information on:

- current research and development around the virus
- a COVID-19 situation "dashboard"
- emergency preparedness measures
- live media updates on the spread of the virus

**Occupational Health Clinics for Ontario Workers**

This site provides a tool to determine your local infection risk and corresponding tips for COVID-19 prevention in non-healthcare workplaces;

- Regional Risk Tool & Tips
- Escalating Advice Based on Your Region's COVID-19 Infection Experience for communicating, Cleaning, Handwashing, Ventilating, Distancing, Screening, and Masking
- Ventilation Checklist

This resource does not replace the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* (OHSA) and its regulations, and should not be used as or considered legal advice. Health and safety inspectors apply the law based on the facts in the workplace.

**For more information visit www.wsps.ca/COVID19**

**Covid 19 Resources for the Agriculture Sector**