EMPLOYEE SAFETY

Questions and Answers:

Q: I'm a City of Edmonton employee and work in a facility so I don't have easy access to a computer. I have specific health and safety-related questions related to COVID-19. Who can I talk to?

Call Inside Information (780-944-4311), they will be able to provide you with COVID-19 health and safety-related information and resources.

Q. What if I am concerned about my personal safety?

Both workers and the City have the responsibility to maintain safety in the workplace. Please reach out to your supervisor and address any concerns you are having immediately. Hazard assessments are completed for all work sites and the duties performed, and should be reviewed by supervisors and employees together to determine whether further controls are needed. Examples of such controls are enhanced cleaning to remove visible soil and following disinfecting practices in high touch and common areas, and promotion and enforcement of personal hygiene practices.

Q. What are my rights and responsibilities?

Workers have three basic rights in the workplace:

- the right to refuse dangerous work and know that you’re protected from reprisal;
- the right to know about workplace hazards and have access to basic health and safety information; and
- the right to participate in health and safety discussions and health and safety committees.

As a worker, among other things, you need to:

- follow health and safety procedures;
- work safely and encourage others to as well;
- use required safety equipment and clothing; and
- inform your supervisor if you have any personal circumstances that could affect your ability to work safely.
Q. Can I refuse unsafe work?
Under the Occupational Safety Act, an employee has the right to refuse dangerous work, if the worker believes, on a reasonable ground, that there is a dangerous condition at the work site. A dangerous condition is a risk that the refusing worker actually observes or experiences at the work site where the work is to occur. Theoretical, anticipated or potential risks are not reasonable grounds for a work refusal – workers should bring these to the employer's attention as part of their general duty to protect the health and safety of themselves and others in the workplace.

If an employee observes or experiences a dangerous condition, the employee shall promptly report the refusal and reason to the supervisor or designated supervisor in charge. The City will inspect the condition as soon as reasonably practicable and take any steps to remedy the condition as necessary. This process will involve you, your supervisor and Workforce Safety and Employee Health.

Q. I’m feeling very stressed and worried about COVID-19 and it's impacting me mentally. What resources are available to help me cope?
Caring for yourself and others in times of uncertainty can be challenging. In times like this, it is normal to feel anxious and worried, and not know what to do. If you are feeling overwhelmed, taking a moment to acknowledge you are having a normal reaction to an abnormal situation can be a helpful first step. Whatever you are feeling is OK, but know there is help available.

Often when we face stress, our wellness practices and healthy habits may give way to other priorities or concerns. Maintaining our wellness physically, mentally and spiritually during times of stress is one of the most important things we can do both for ourselves and those around us.

There are steps that you can take to recharge your own battery and prepare for the unknown. Consider these tips and resources to help you maintain your own wellness.

The City is also offering free and confidential counselling services to all employees (permanent/provisional/temporary/probationary) and their families (e.g. spouses, children, and/or dependents). You can access these services by calling our Employee and Family Assistance Program provider, Homewood Health, at 1-800-663-1142.

If you have any additional questions or are experiencing difficulty in accessing these supports, please contact Lacey Ranslam at 780-496-5449 or John Dowds at 780-496-7863.

Q. If I am a designated first aider, am I required to provide mouth-to-mouth resuscitation during CPR if I am concerned about catching COVID-19?
According to the Canadian Red Cross, compression-only (or hands-only) CPR is an acceptable alternative for those who are unwilling, unable, untrained, or are no longer able to perform full CPR involving mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. Employees should perform compression-only CPR unless wearing appropriate PPE, which includes respiratory protection (properly fitted N95, eye protection, a single pair of disposable gloves, etc). For
additional information consult the Canadian Red Cross' first aid information and resources page for compression-only CPR.

Q. There is no more soap in the washroom - what should I do?
Report it immediately, take action and make sure an alternative for proper hand washing is in place, such as use of alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

Q. My workspace has run out of hand sanitizer - when will it be restocked?
Due to the COVID-19 outbreak, demand for critical supplies required to keep employees safe has dramatically increased and the ability for suppliers to keep up with demand has decreased. To ensure supplies are getting to where they are needed most, the COVID-19 Task Team has tasked CPSS to coordinate the procurement and distribution of these supplies across the City including to Police, Fire, Peace Officers, Transit, Fleet and Facilities, and Parks and Roads. Please notify your supervisor or your CPSS representative to order these supplies.

Q. Is the City planning to provide additional protective clothing or equipment?
Protective equipment and clothing is dependent upon the task the employee is performing. If there are tasks where employees are at risk of being exposed to COVID-19 and other viruses, the appropriate personal protective equipment will be provided to them based on their Hazard Assessment and Control documentation. Due to the high demand for personal protective equipment as a result of COVID-19, personal protective equipment that is deemed critical for City-wide operations and delivering essential services is being centrally procured and managed through CPSS to ensure adequate stock and availability.

Q. What is the City doing to clean facilities and keep work sites safe?
Here are some examples of steps being taken (not a comprehensive list):

ETS:

- We have enhanced our transit cleaning and disinfecting activities in both intensity and frequency. This includes cleaning and disinfecting for buses, LRT, DATS vehicles, transit centres, LRT stations as well as high touch areas in individual and shared workspaces. As part of standard daily cleaning practices, ETS regularly cleans and then disinfects buses and trains to help maintain a safe environment for staff and customers. This involves disinfecting handles, buttons, stanchions, floors, and other commonly-touched surfaces. We’ve also added a new disinfecting agent applied with an electrostatic sprayer that is used daily on all ETS vehicles coming out of service, LRT stations and transit centres.
- All DATS vehicles go through rigorous cleaning and disinfecting protocols on a daily basis and operational controls are in place to ensure every driver coming on shift is using a clean bus. Custodial staff are also doing daily cleaning and disinfecting of Percy Wickman garage, including using the electrostatic sprayer. Our service planning has also adapted to ensure proper physical distancing between DATS riders.
- Distributing **hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes** to front line employees and closely monitoring soap levels at Operator washrooms at transit centres.

- **Service changes** (enhanced Saturday service on weekdays, regular Saturday service on Saturdays and Sundays) ensure we have enough healthy staff available to provide service across the city for a sustained period of time. The reduced schedule also allows for more frequent and thorough cleaning and disinfection of transit vehicles. In addition, ETS has swapped the 30’ buses on community routes with 40’ buses. These larger buses support physical distancing for operators and customers, and they also have driver shields as an additional safety measure. These adjustments have allowed for all buses on the road to have **driver shields**, when possible. Thereby protecting drivers through a physical barrier and greater physical distancing.

- ETS has adjusted **Bus Route 747**. To protect our Operators and the public, we will no longer provide service to and from the airport for travellers and shoppers. The route remains operational as a charter service for regional, airport, outlet mall and area employees only.

- **Peace Officers** will continue to regularly patrol transit property and vehicles to ensure safety and security.

- **Temporarily Suspending fares** adds another layer of protection for our conventional and DATS operators as it eliminates the need for cash and transfer handling, thereby minimizing contact with others and increasing social distancing measures.

- For the health and safety of our Operators, and to keep our service reliably running during the uncertain weeks ahead, customers are asked **to board and exit using the back doors only**. Customers requiring the use of ramp deployment or kneeling of the bus are still allowed to board or alight at the front of the bus.

- **The shuttle buses** going to the EXPO centre have been outfitted with sealed, double-plastic, vapour barriers near the front of the bus to provide full protection for Operators. Operators are sealed in, and also have a safety shield as well. These precautions have been approved by health officials at the EXPO centre. Operators have no exposure to individuals on the bus. The vapour barrier is regularly inspected to ensure the seal remains intact. A social worker travels in the back with the clients and a manual ramp is available for the back door, if it is required. Staff, rather than the Operator, set-up and dismantle the ramp. Lastly, there is a Transit Peace Officer unit assigned to support and follow the bus on the Charter route.

- Despite an 80 per cent reduction in ridership, the City actively continues to encourage customers to stay home, **only make essential transit trips**, travel off-peak, and practice physical distancing.

- **Prioritizing Operator alerts** for sleeping patrons, riders with no destination, intoxicated passengers or those threatening any staff member. Operators are to contact Control for further instructions, if the bus reaches approximately the half full capacity with the standing riders.

- To prevent the spread of germs, **brochures have been removed** from all buses until we resume normal service.
In working with our Occupational Health and Safety partners, we have completed a COVID-19 hazard assessment and control document for all ETS employees and are currently in the process of working our way through reviewing this with all employees. Necessary controls required to prevent the exposure and spread of COVID-19 are identified within the hazard assessments.

We are offering free and confidential mental health counselling services to all employees and their families through Homewood Health, the City's Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provider.

**DATS Operators**

- DATS is currently providing single passenger trips only.
- The demand for DATS service has decreased by approximately 85%. This has allowed us to maintain physical distancing inside the vehicle and allowed us to thoroughly disinfect vehicles after they come out of service.
- Screening questions have been added to the DATS trip booking process for additional safety measures.
- In terms of supplying DATS operators with disposable plastic sleeves, we're continuing to follow the advice of public health officials at AHS. Plastic sleeves are a control measure where covering exposed skin is required to protect against a known pathogen. Based on how COVID-19 is transmitted, and the other protective measures in place, plastic disposable sleeves are not required at this time. The recommended control as the preferred method of preventing possible contamination is frequent hand-washing with soap and water or alcohol based hand sanitizer.

**Waste Services**

- Regular safety measures continue to be in place, such as the requirement for mandatory site/job specific PPE to be worn by staff. Additional safety measures, such as protective eyewear and gloves, have also been made available.
- Physical distancing rules, with a distance of at least two metres between people, have been implemented. Staggered start, break, and lunch times have been implemented to assist staff in maintaining a distance in common areas.
- Disinfectant wipes and sprays are available at all of our Waste Services facilities. Washing and sanitizing is promoted at all of our City locations.
- Disinfectant services, in addition to regular custodial services, have been increased at common staff locations.
- A small group of Quality 1 employees has been retained to continually disinfect areas throughout our Integrated Processing and Transfer Facility (IPTF) where other City staff, residents and contractors tip waste.
- Cash handling at the EWMC, Scale House and Eco Stations has been discontinued.
- In order to ensure proper physical distance is maintained, face-to-face tailgate talks have been cancelled and replaced with two-way radio and cell phone communications.
• Signs on entry and exit doors have been placed to make sure specific doors are used to come in and out of facilities. A new measure of having one person at a time enter or exit through a door is in place to keep two metres distance between employees at all times.

**Fleet and Facility Services**

• Frequently wash your hands with soap and water following the AHS hand washing guide.
• Shared computer stations including mouse, keyboard, monitor and desks are being wiped down with a disinfectant prior to use and immediately following use.
• Common areas, with frequently contacted surfaces such as door handles, service counters, lunchroom tables, lunchroom counters, and chairs are to be wiped down with a disinfectant prior to use and immediately following use.
• Upon entry to the building and prior to exiting the building, if available, utilize hand sanitizer following the AHS guide for hand sanitizer use. It is recommended that the posters linked in this document be visibly placed in your work area.
• The Trucks and Equipment Procedure outlines what the common touch areas are to be disinfected before they are operated (beginning of shift) and upon the completion of the operation (end of shift); or if there is any change of operator during a shift. Those areas include, but are not limited to, truck handles, gear shifts, radio handhelds, radio buttons, steering wheels, seat belt buckles, etc.
• Physical distancing rules, with a distance of at least two metres between people, have been implemented. Staggered start, break, and lunch times have been implemented to assist staff in maintaining a distance in common areas.

**Parks and Roads Services**

• Entrance doors, shared computer stations (including mouse, keyboard, monitor) and desks are being wiped down with a disinfectant wipe prior to use and immediately following use.
• Common areas, such as lunch rooms, are to be wiped down with a disinfectant wipe prior to use and immediately following use.
• Please wash your hands with soap frequently - especially upon entry to the building and prior to exiting the building. If available use hand sanitizer. It is recommended that the posters linked be visibly placed in your work area. Wash all parts of your hands with plain soap and water for at least 20 seconds, and rub hands together to create lather.
• The Trucks and Equipment Procedure outlines what the common touch areas are to be sanitized before they are operated (beginning of shift) and upon completion of operation (end of shift); or if there is any change of operator during a shift. Those areas include, but are not limited to; truck handles, gear shifts, radio handhelds, radio buttons, steering wheels, seat belt buckles, etc.
• Hazard Assessment is available for review with all employees.
• A supply of disinfectant wipe containers have been distributed to the operational yards. We are in the process of securing additional sanitizing agents to ensure staff have a continuous supply. Staff will be issued with two wipes per ask.

• Disinfection of Equipment and Vehicles and Office Areas
  Reference: Disinfection Procedure
  Reference: AHS - Cleaning

• To ensure proper physical distancing employees are provided with the following procedure.

**Physical Distancing when reporting to work**

1) Field Leaders please ensure you are dispatching crews by interacting with the leader of the crew and sending straight to work (please do not have several people waiting in the lunch rooms or office, aim to go out to the field as soon as possible)

2) Safety Meetings - they are normally held weekly with the crews all together, going forward please conduct those safety meetings through email or alternate means. Please email the applicable crew leaders, and it is the responsibility of the crew leader to communicate the safety items to the crews.

3) Meeting Notes - will be posted at the work area for visual review. Sign off can be achieved with the use of individual pens.

4) Safety Toolbox talks - please look to use technology to conduct toolbox talks. Ex: radios, Google Hangouts, Conference calls.

5) Please ensure you are following the disinfection procedure while at the office and while entering your equipment.

**Physical Distancing in equipment**

1) One truck per person or piece of equipment

2) Follow NEW disinfection procedures if the truck is driven by someone else in the shift.

3) Wear leather or nitrile gloves when operating equipment. Remove nitrile gloves using the following procedure - Here. Nitrile gloves are not to be worn for an extended period of time. Wash hands often with soap.

4) Ensure appropriate gloves for the task are worn when in the field.

5) When the employee is done with the truck for the day, place disinfection sticker on the driver's door. This sticker must include Name, Date and Time. If the previous sticker can't be removed, place on top of the existing sticker.

**Physical Distancing for meetings and breaks**

1) Employees must remain two metres apart from each other

2) Employees must wipe down surfaces prior to use and after use.

3) When possible, virtual meetings occur. If not possible, the above points to be followed.
Physical Distancing while on work site (in field)

1) Employees to maintain two metres physical distancing when possible
2) If not possible, employees ensure they are frequently using hand sanitizer and washing hands where required. All precautions to be taken, to avoid touching your face.
3) FLHA's are to be written by one person only, please do not share unless gloves are being worn. Sign off using your own pen while wearing gloves.
4) Timecards can be filled out by one person. Gloves can be worn to complete this task.
5) Clerical staff entering safety inspections or time cards can wear nitrile gloves and periodically wipe down areas as needed.

Other considerations

1) No sharing food, utensils, plates, water jugs, etc
2) No sharing pens and other office supplies

Q. What if I’m allergic to the cleaning products used to sanitize my facility?
Please notify your supervisor right away and make sure the information is documented on your worksite hazard assessment, communicated with staff and that appropriate measures are put in place. If this situation is encountered, alternative cleaning products should be examined for suitability for use in consultation with staff, supervision and support from corporate procurement and workforce safety.

Q: Are additional cleaning practices in place for our City of Edmonton facilities to help with COVID-19?

City owned Buildings

When COVID-19 was increasing in Canada, Custodial Services started enhancing cleaning activities and protocols within all City workplaces. This includes the use of the latest technology in disinfection, more daytime cleaners focusing on increased high risk services like door handles, light switches, restrooms, telephones and keyboards/mouse. These efforts help to ensure the risk of potential transmission at the worksites for employees is minimized.

Edmonton Tower

As Edmonton Tower is a leased facility and City of Edmonton is a tenant, all Custodial Services are conducted through a contracted service. Service levels have also been enhanced in high traffic areas such as elevators, elevator lobbies, and stairwells. These efforts help to ensure the risk of potential transmission at the worksites for employees is minimized. Additional cleaning of some floors has been requested and provided by the contracted service. Effective April 1, 2020 contracted cleaning activities in Edmonton Tower will be occurring during the day on floors where there is reduced occupancy due to staff working from home.
Q: If an employee has an underlying health (eg. pulmonary) concern which would place them at higher risk for infection should they be self-isolating?

Employees should seek medical advice in regards to recommendations for self-isolation through medical professionals, calling Alberta Health Services (AHS) Health Link 811, or completing the AHS Self-Assessment Online Tool. The City's Disability Management Consultants are available to provide advice to supervisors on work accommodations should it be required given the employees circumstances, but are not able to assess employees personal medical and health histories to provide medical based recommendations regarding their heightened risk for COVID-19 transmission. Where appropriate, additional options may include work from home, alternative work arrangements, or redeployment after the employee has consulted and received advice or instruction from the correct medical professional to support accommodations.

Q. If someone attended our facility or a close worker has a confirmed case of COVID-19, how will this be communicated to staff member(s) who may have come in direct contact with the individual?

It is the responsibility of AHS to follow up with anyone who may have been in close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19, including any co-workers who may also have been exposed to COVID-19 in the workplace. If AHS does not contact other employees in the workplace, they are not considered to be at risk of developing COVID-19. To ensure the privacy, confidentiality and respect of employees who test positive for COVID-19, AHS will be in contact only with persons deemed necessary for their contact investigation. Personal information about employees who have tested positive for COVID-19 will not be shared with others in the workplace, or by Supervisors who are aware of the employee's COVID-19 status.

Additional supports and resources are available here.