

COVID-19 - Physical Distancing FAQs

Edmonton

June 3, 2020, 5 p.m.

As of November 24, new mandatory public health measures are in effect across Alberta to protect the health system and slow the spread of COVID-19. For the most up to date information, refer to the [Employee Guide](#) or visit the [COVID-19 onecity page](#) for updates.

Physical Distancing Measures FAQs

Change in Terminology

We are shifting from using the term social distancing to the term physical distancing. This is to recognize that we are still being social, but we need to do so from a distance, emphasizing the importance of maintaining physical spacing of at least two metres from persons in day-to-day interaction. People should continue to engage in acceptable forms of social contact, such as phone calls and video conferencing.

What is meant by “physical distancing?”

Physical distancing refers to measures you can take to reduce the likelihood of you, your family or your co-workers coming into contact with a communicable disease. It’s a matter of minimizing controllable risks, focusing on safety and being practical.

How do I apply physical distancing measures in my workplace?

Here are a number of recommendations for our staff to consider while following physical distancing protocols:

- When interacting one on one, keep a distance of at least two arm lengths (approximately two metres) from others.
- Only take the elevator if you are the only occupant, or take the stairs when possible.
- Ensure your working space is two arm lengths away from your closest co-worker.
- Transition all face to face meetings and interactions to a virtual platform.
- Employees should separate themselves or travel in different vehicles, whenever possible.
- In instances where the two metre rule could not be followed, refer to the Infection Prevention Control Guidelines in the [Employee Guide to COVID-19](#).

What is the City recommending when it comes to physical distancing?

The City has come up with a number of measures we are asking staff to follow to encourage physical distancing. These include:

- Transitioning from face-to-face internal meetings to virtual meetings and conference calls.

- Work areas should also review nonessential internal meetings and reduce them as appropriate.
- Interviews will be conducted virtually online or by telephone.
- Significant site specific physical distancing measures have been identified and implemented and can be reviewed in the COVID-19 hazard assessment for that work area.

What about staff get togethers and training?

- Work areas should postpone all in-person and non-essential group events including training sessions, team building and information sessions. In some circumstances, essential in-person training may need to continue within operational areas to ensure you are able to meet your work requirements in a safe and effective manner. If this is the case, your supervisor will take measures to ensure that your physical training environment is safe, AHS directives are being followed, and physical distancing measures are in place.
- All in-person training offered by Employee Services is postponed until further notice.

What about one-on-one interactions?

- Keep a distance of at least two arm lengths (approximately two metres) from others, as much as possible.
- Do not shake hands, hug or fist bump. Instead, greetings can include a wave, a nod or a bow.

What about getting in building elevators with other people?

When possible, employees should take the stairs rather than the elevators.

What about sharing a City vehicle with another person?

All employees are to keep a distance of at least two arm lengths (approximately two metres) from others, as much as possible. This means that employees should separate themselves or travel in different vehicles, whenever possible. However, there are many circumstances where work will require that employees be within 2 metres of one another, such as travel in a city vehicle. In these instances, employees should refer to the Infection Prevention Control Guidelines in the [Employee Guide to COVID-19](#). Wash your hands with soap and water before getting in the vehicle and regularly clean and disinfect frequently-touched surfaces inside and outside of vehicles such as door handles, controls, steering wheels, dashes, and shifters.

What about working from home as a way to maintain physical distancing?

A COVID-19 [Temporary Work From Home Arrangement](#) has been developed, and should be applied to eligible employees to enhance physical distancing whenever possible. Discuss this with your supervisor.

What about City-led public events or engagement events?

As of March 12, 2020, following the guidance of Alberta Health Services, all City of Edmonton in person public engagement sessions and meetings, regardless of the number of attendees, are to be postponed or conducted by teleconference or other virtual formats.

I have been asked to work at my physical work location. How do I apply physical distancing measures?

Ensure your workspace is at least two arm lengths (approximately two metres) away from other work areas that are populated. If your work area does not fit that criteria, speak with your supervisor about assigning a temporary alternative work space that provides the distancing required. Where physical distancing can't be achieved, employees may be required to wear a mask. Refer to the COVID-19 hazard assessment for the work area for more information.

I work with external contractors. Should I continue meeting with them?

All Albertans should follow physical distancing. For projects that are continuing, there are legislative obligations that need to be met. Both employees and contractors are to continue meeting while still practicing good preventative measures.

Where do I go to learn about physical distancing measures while I am not at work?

The Province has stipulated several physical distancing protocols, please refer to this [site](#) to keep current.

When do we stop applying physical distancing measures?

These measures are in effect until further notice.