

The Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly Exposure Control Plan

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Introduction

It is the responsibility of all employers to ensure a healthy and safe workplace under the Safety Act and OHS Regulations. That responsibility has not changed.

Under the direction provided by the CPHO, employers must have an Exposure Control Plan in place before they return employees to the worksite to ensure they are able to operate safely. This plan assists to identify what risks and hazards you may face upon a return to the Legislative Assembly, and to define what hazard control measures that have been taken in order to ensure that everyone is safe.

It includes having:

- The Sergeant-At-Arms complete the COVID-19 [Risk Assessment and Worksite Precautions](#) form for the whole worksite; and
- Each returning essential staff, Member and Contractor complete the COVID-19 [Field Level Risk Assessment](#).

The Legislative Assembly will keep all safety plans up-to-date and be able to present it if asked to do so by WSCC Inspectors should they inspect our worksite.

The WSCC has a number of COVID-19 online resources available to assist employers with a safe return to the workplace. To access these resources click [here](#).

The Sergeant-At-Arms has been delegated the authority to ensure that all necessary hazard control measures are planned and implemented appropriately to ensure that our worksite is safe, and that everyone understand the identified hazards, are properly trained and educated on the hazard control measures, and are abiding by any changed protocols.

The purpose of the Legislative Assembly Exposure Control Plan is to:

- Determine Members, essential staff and contractor's risk of exposure to the virus;
- Inform Members, staff and contractors of their risk of exposure while at the Legislative Assembly building; and
- Outline how the Office of the Clerk will manage to eliminate or reduce those risks.

Measures to eliminate or control the risk of exposure at the Legislative Assembly

The threat of COVID-19 raises many health and safety concerns. To better prepare, the Legislative Assembly has conducted the following:

Risk assessment and controlling the risk of exposure

The Legislative Assembly has implemented the following measures to prevent employees, Members and Contractors from being exposed to COVID-19.

- Conducted a walk-through of the Legislative Assembly building, to identify specific conditions or tasks that may increase the risk of exposure to COVID-19.
- Determined what Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is necessary at this time and ensure there is an adequate supply within the Assembly.

Controls that the Legislative Assembly has developed to help eliminate or minimize the risk of exposure.

- Outlined mitigation measures the Assembly has put in place.
- Mitigation Measures have been shared with identified essential staff, Members and contractors.
- Conducted Field Level Risk Assessment for Workers (FLRA), and the Workplace General Precautions and Risk Assessment (WGPRRA) for all essential staff, Members and contractors.
- Put in mechanisms to determine the effectiveness of the mitigation measures and a mechanism if they need to be amended.

Communication with essential staff, Members, contractors and the general public

The Legislative Assembly wants to ensure information about COVID-19 is accessible to everyone. COVID-19 is a new virus that can affect your lungs and airways. It is important that everyone familiarizes themselves with this information:

- [What is coronavirus disease COVID-19;](#)
- [How COVID-19 spreads;](#)
- [About COVID-19 \(FAQ's\);](#)
- [Being Prepared \(FAQ's\).](#)

Additional signage will be posted around the Legislative Assembly to remind everyone about:

- Safe behaviour for coughing and sneezing;
- Handwashing and hand sanitizing practices;
- Social distancing (physical distancing) requirements; and
- Signs and symptoms of COVID-19.

Communication with the General Public

The Office of the Chief Public Health Officer is implementing a number of public health measures to curb community transmission in Yellowknife, Behchoko, Ndilq and Dettah. As a result, the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly, will be closed to the public until further notice beginning September 9, 2021. All public events and tours will be suspended during this time.

The upcoming public meetings held by Standing Committees will go forward. To watch them, tune in on the Legislative Assembly TV Network, ntassembly.ca, and the Assembly's Facebook, YouTube, or Twitter channels. For those interested in presenting to Committees on the topics of the meetings, this can be arranged by contacting the Committee Clerk. For a list of all upcoming public meetings, and their appropriate contacts, please refer to the Assembly's events page: ntassembly.ca/documents-proceedings/events

Controlling the number of people within the Legislative Assembly Building

Only essential staff will be permitted within the Legislative Assembly. When making this assessment we ask that you consider the following:

- What is your core business? Can you prioritize the work that needs to be done at the workplace?
- Do all worker(s) need to come to work? Can some or all work from home?
- Can you stagger shifts to reduce the number of workers present at one time?

The following 'essential staff' for the Legislative Assembly has been determined and includes:

- Office of the Clerk staff as identified by the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly.
- Members. Members will identify essential staff (Constituency Assistants and Ministerial Staff that are required to work within the building).
- Premiers Office. The Premier's office will determine essential staff who will be required to work out of the Legislative Assembly building.
- Contractors who enter the building will be approved in advance by the Sergeant-At-Arms.

A defined listing of ‘essential staff’ will be provided to Security to ensure that no one enters the Building unless specifically identified on the approved listing and have completed the Risk Assessment. If anyone is attempting to access the building and they are not on the approved listing approval from the Sergeant-At-Arms is required.

All ‘essential staff’ will be provided with a copy of the Legislative Assembly’s Exposure Control plan to ensure they follow the steps the Assembly has taken to reduce their risk of COVID-19 exposure. Any updates to the plan will be communicated and everyone will be provided with a copy of the revised plan. If there are any concerns with the compliance of the mitigation measures outlined within the Exposure Plan they should be directed to the Sergeant-At-Arms.

It is understandable that staff may feel anxious or worried and the worksite they will be returning to will be different than the one they had previously known. Staff returning to the worksite are expected to carry out their duties, as assigned. However, it will be important that Supervisors are flexible in their approach and take the individual circumstances of their staff into consideration. It’s recommended that staff discuss the reason they may be unable to return to the worksite with their supervisor.

Identification and limitation of the control methods at the Legislative Assembly

Roles and responsibilities of returning to the Legislative Assembly building

The Exposure Control plan outlines your roles and responsibilities in returning to the Legislative Assembly building.

Following the completion of the Risk Assessment(s) the Exposure Control Plan will be distributed to ensure everyone understands the necessary protective measures that have been put in place when returning to the Legislative Assembly building.

Pre-screening prior to entry into the Legislative Building

Upon your physical re-entry to the Legislative Assembly, the Sergeant-At-Arms will review the completed Risk Assessment with you to identify if there has been any change to the information provided and if additional mitigation measures are necessary the Exposure Control Plan will be updated. **If you have not completed a Risk Assessment you will not be provided with entry into the building.**

Legislative Assembly Building Mitigation Measures

- Regularly and thoroughly clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand rub or wash them with soap and water.

- Maintain a distance of 2 metres (6 feet) between yourself and others.
- Do not touch your face.
- Follow good respiratory hygiene practices: cover your mouth and nose with your elbow or a tissue when you cough or sneeze, and throw the tissue away when done.
- Avoid using elevators or follow physical distancing restrictions, one person in the elevator at a time. One stairwell will be identified as the UP stairs and the other set as the DOWN stairs to ensure that staff is not required to pass each other while using the stairwells.
- Enhanced cleaning procedures and protocols for regular wiping/cleaning of high-touch surfaces has been implemented to ensure surfaces in common use areas as well as common tools are cleaned by employees after every use.
- Shared Spaces. Restrict access to shared or common spaces and ensure physical distancing when/if these spaces are used. Every space that is used as a shared space (i.e. boardrooms; kitchen areas) will be assessed to determine if it can be used safely and if so, the maximum capacity for each space will be identified. Information about the maximum capacity of each space will need to be posted in a highly visible location, and employees will need to be made aware of the limitations on the use of these spaces. Remove all excess chairs from boardrooms to reinforce the maximum capacity of the space.
- Shared Devices. Enhanced cleaning where devices must be shared (i.e. Faxes, printers, scanners, video conference). The cleaning protocol for these devices must be posted and cleaning supplies must be available.
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). When it's not possible to avoid the risk of COVID-19 by staying at least 2 metres away from people PPE should be worn. Following the completion of the Risk Assessments the Legislative Assembly will identify what PPE is necessary to protect Members and staff.
 - Use disposable gloves when handling items others have touched.
 - Non-Medical Masks/Facial Coverings. The Legislative Assembly has acquired masks that cover your mouth and nose to help stop germs from contacting your nose or mouth and stop you from passing germs on to others.
 - Hand sanitizer. Extra hand sanitizer has been purchased and will be available for Members and displayed throughout the building.
- Increasing space between Members and limiting access to the building to only essential staff and contractors so there are fewer people working or in the building at the same time.

Procedures to follow if someone is or believes they have been, exposed to COVID-19

Potential exposure to COVID-19 at the Legislative Assembly

We are requiring that anyone who enters the Legislative Assembly building follow [healthy respiratory practices](#) including washing your hands, cleaning and disinfecting any surface or objects you or others might have touched while sick, and coughing and sneezing into your elbow.

You should also skip greetings involving physical contact, stay up to date with the latest information about COVID-19 and practice safe sharing. The source of reliable information and

advice as it relates to COVID-19 in the NWT is the Department of Health and Social Services. Their website has accurate and up-to-date information about COVID-19. Any questions about symptoms, how to reduce the spread, and what to do if you think you are sick or think you may have been exposed to COVID-19 can be answered by referring to information on the Health and Social Services website at <https://www.hss.gov.nt.ca/covid-19>.

Contact Information if experiencing ‘symptoms’

If you are experiencing milder symptoms such as fever, cough or flu-like, take the [NWT online COVID-19 self-assessment tool](#) or call:

- Yellowknife: 867-767-9120, or book online at www.nthssa.ca/appointments
- Inuvik: 867-490-2225
- Fort Smith: 867-621-2233 or 867-872-0562
- Hay River: 867-874-7201 (between 08:30-16.30). After hours call Emergency Department at 867-874-8050.
- Other Communities can call their local health centres, www.hss.gov.nt.ca/health-centres

Self-Isolate. When you are exposed to an illness, there is a time between the exposure and when you start to feel sick. This incubation period can be up to 14 days for COVID-19. Not everyone who is exposed will get sick, but it is important to wait the full 2 weeks to be sure you are not infected and spreading it to others without knowing.

There is a chance you can spread the germs before you feel sick, as many people have very mild symptoms at the start of their sickness or some may have no symptoms at all. This means that if you do start to feel sick or are infected without symptoms, by staying away from public places you lower the chance of spreading the virus to others.

Self-Monitor. Self-monitoring means that you should monitor or watch yourself for the [symptoms of COVID-19](#). If you develop symptoms or your symptoms get worse call a [health care provider](#), and they will give you further instructions. Do not go in without speaking to them by phone first.

Suspected case of COVID-19 within the Legislative Assembly

If someone becomes unwell in the workplace and there is reason to suspect they may have come into contact with COVID-19, the person will be removed to an area which is at least 2 metres away from other people where they can be isolated behind a closed door, such as a staff office. If possible they will be asked to open a window for ventilation. They should avoid touching people, surfaces and objects and should cover their mouth and nose with a disposable tissue when they cough or sneeze and put the tissue in a bag or pocket then throw the tissue in the bin. If they do not have any tissues available, they should cough and sneeze into the crook of their elbow.

Confirmed case of COVID-19 within the Legislative Assembly

If someone within the building is confirmed to have COVID-19, you will be notified of your possible exposure to COVID-19 in the workplace and confidentiality will be maintained. Anyone exposed to a confirmed case of COVID-19 will be provided with instructions on what to next (self-monitor and/or self-isolate) and the Legislative Assembly will work closely with the Department of Health and Social Services to ensure appropriate communication and measures are met.

Reporting and Investigation Procedures

The Legislative Assembly will ensure that “Exposure to COVID-19” incidents are reported and investigated. Any concerns should be brought forward to the Sergeant-At-Arms to undertake an investigation.

At a minimum, an investigation will:

- Protect the confidentiality of the exposed worker;
- Examine the route of exposure;
- Determine the circumstances in which the exposure occurred; and
- Recommend measures to prevent further infection and exposure at the worksite.

Monitoring the Controls

The Legislative Assembly’s Exposure Control Plan was developed in consultation with various stakeholders and will be shared with staff and Members. To ensure that the Legislative Assembly’s Plan is effective we will continue to:

- Conduct regular check-ins with staff, Members and contractors to ensure the methods and procedures are working.
- When the pandemic is declared over, evaluate what worked well and what could be done better if a future outbreak occurs.
- Conduct a review of the plan every two years, or more frequently if the worksite changes, to make sure that the Legislative Assembly is prepared for another outbreak situation.

Short-Term Monitoring

We encourage open communication to discuss issues and concerns about the protective measures the Assembly has put in place are working, and that there are no gaps.

We encourage Supervisors and Members to have frequent conversations with their staff to include:

- Do they understand the administrative processes and procedures?
- Are administrative procedures being followed? If not, why not?

- Are the current methods for separating workers from potential exposure working? If not, how can they be better?
- Is PPE functional, and does everyone understand how to use it correctly? If not, what is needed or what changes should be made?
- Do workers have any concerns? Have they identified new sources of exposure to the virus? What processes and procedures are working well?

We ask that Supervisors and Members make a note of both the gaps and difficulties that they or their workers have identified provide this to the Sergeant-At-Arms to update the Exposure Control Plan if necessary.

Long-Term Monitoring

When the pandemic is declared over by health officials, the Legislative Assembly will develop a 'Lessons Learned' document outlining:

- What worked well, and what did not?
- Where were there gaps in managing for safety during the pandemic?
- What equipment and processes must be ready for use during a pandemic?
- Is the contact information in the Exposure Control Plan current?

This information will be used to revise the Legislative Assembly's Exposure Control Plan so it is ready to use in a future pandemic. The Exposure Control Plan will be reviewed as necessary to reflect the pandemic situation as it evolves and at least once every two years, to ensure:

- Contact information is current;
- Controls are appropriate for the jobs and tasks performed at the worksite;
- Required PPE is on hand; and
- Training is relevant and available.

Contact Information

If you have any questions with respect to the Exposure Control Plan please contact:

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