



OFFICE SETTING CHECKLIST

SAFE RETURN TO BUSINESS



WINDSOR-ESSEX REGIONAL
Chamber of Commerce

For more detailed recommendations and links to additional helpful resources, please review the **“Safe Return to Business: A Public Health Toolkit for the Windsor-Essex Business Community”** document from the Windsor-Essex County Health Unit. *This checklist is meant to be a guide for businesses and should not take place of any legal advice or rules put in place by any governing body or legislation.*

COMMUNICATION TO STAFF AND CUSTOMERS

- Inform clients about your re-opening timeline and changes to how your business will operate. Use as many methods of communication as possible, such as subscribed email lists, direct customer phone calls for urgent matters, social media, and your website.
- Post signage at entrances and throughout the building that clearly communicate procedures for physical distancing for staff and clients. This include posters and floor markings such as instructional tape/stickers that direct the flow of people or clients waiting for services, including any outdoor waiting areas. Examples of signage can be found in Appendix B in the Toolkit or [WECHU's Resources & Downloadable Signs webpage](#).
- Post signage to communicate entry procedures such as **hand sanitizing, sneeze and cough etiquette**, wearing of cloth masks, and/or screening for symptoms.
- Ensure employees are aware of **common COVID-19 symptoms** and instruct them to complete a daily **COVID-19 self-assessment** before reporting to work.
- Ensure customers and staff know to stay home if they are sick.
- Provide training to employees on effective **hand hygiene practices** and if required, the **proper way to put on and remove PPE** such as masks, face shields, gowns, and gloves.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- Create policies and procedures that outline roles and responsibilities of the employer and the employee, including **cleaning and disinfection of the workplace**, how workers can report signs of illnesses, how to handle potentially high levels of employee absenteeism, staff return to work after COVID-19 illness, and how work will be scheduled.
- Create a response plan to handle an employee or customer who becomes ill while at work or in your business.
- Decide which staff will be returning to work and what job function they will be assigned to. Consider staggered staff return dates and times to minimize large groups arriving at once.

HEALTH AND SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

- Order an adequate supply of **approved** disinfecting solution or wipes, and an alcohol-based hand rub (hand sanitizer), liquid hand soap, and paper towels. These should be easily accessible to employees.
- Print and display **posters** describing proper methods of hand washing and hand sanitizing.
- If a building has been shut down for an extended period of time, it is important to perform a general building inspection that includes:
 - Security system checks.
 - First aid supply checks.
 - Ensuring all tools and equipment are in good working order.
 - Discarding any expired or spoiled inventory or food products.
 - Checking for evidence of pest/rodent infestation such as droppings.
 - Checking the HVAC system to ensure it is in good working order and replace filters if necessary.
 - Flushing all drinking water taps for at least 5 minutes.
 - Performing a deep cleaning and disinfection throughout the business.
- Complete any needed modifications in areas where there will be staff and/or customers, to assist with physical distancing and proper cleaning and disinfection. For example:
 - Install Plexiglas barriers at reception desks and/or between workers who must work in close proximity to each other.
 - Replacing shared/communal furniture that is fabric/plush with hard surfaces that can be easily cleaned and disinfected.
 - Providing additional garbage bins for safe disposal of used PPE, tissues, and paper towels.
- Choose your information sources wisely. Check the **WECHU** website regularly for updates and helpful resources and bookmark official municipal, provincial, and federal government websites.
- If required, order **supplies** including disposable masks for customers and disposable or reusable masks for staff. Medical masks should not be used as these are being conserved for health care workers. Print and display posters describing **proper usage**.

OTHER OPERATIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

- Adopt an appointment only policy, so that the number of people within the office space can be limited and controlled. This includes allowing employees to work from home if possible.
- Implement staggered shifts, or remote work arrangements if possible.
- Use contactless and/or virtual communication methods when possible. If in-person meetings can't be avoided, choose safe spaces (indoor or outdoor) where physical distancing can be ensured or have all meeting attendees **wear masks if physical distancing cannot be maintained**.
- Restrict the number of employees in shared spaces, such as kitchens, break rooms, and offices to maintain at least a 2 metre distance between people.
- Ensure that employees are trained to regularly clean and disinfect their workstations and equipment such as computer/laptop accessories and work phone. If sharing workspaces across shifts, ensure that cleaning is required between shifts and that signage is posted indicating that the workstation has been cleaned/sanitized.
- Sanitize the workplace thoroughly and often, with an emphasis on frequently touched objects and surfaces in common areas, such as door handles, entryways, touch pads/buttons, washrooms, kitchen surfaces and appliances, and other shared office equipment such as staplers and printers.
- Where reception area is small, eliminate the reception and waiting area. Clients can wait in cars or outside until their scheduled appointment time. They can call when they arrive and be called when it is their turn to enter the office.
- If your workplace typically handles cash, consider adopting a cashless no touch method of payment (e.g., visa or debit).
- Food and beverages should not be shared between individuals. No communal sharing of food, such as candy dishes, potlucks, etc. should be permitted at this time.
- Ensure staff understand the appropriate use of non-medical PPE if physical distancing can't be maintained.

RESOURCES

Public Services Health & Safety Association

[Health and Safety Guidance During COVID-19 For Employers of Office Settings](#)

Workplace Safety & Prevention Services

[Guidance on Health and Safety for Office Sector during COVID-19](#)

Workplace Safety & Prevention Services

[Guidance on Health and Safety for Office Administration and Secretarial Staff during COVID-19](#)