

**DATE:** October 30, 2020

## Novel Coronavirus - Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

### General Questions

**1. Q: What is a coronavirus?**

**A:** Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that can cause illnesses in humans. While human coronaviruses are common, COVID-19 is a new disease that has not been previously identified in humans.

**2. Q: What are the symptoms associated with COVID-19?**

**A:** Common symptoms of COVID-19 include new or worsening symptoms or signs of:

- Cough that is new or worsening (continuous, more than usual)
- Fever
- Chills
- Difficulty breathing (shortness of breath)
- Sore throat
- Runny nose or nasal congestion (not related to seasonal allergies or known causes)
- Decrease sense or loss of smell or taste
- Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, or abdominal pain
- Extreme tiredness or sore muscles

**3. Q: How is COVID-19 spread?**

**A:** COVID-19 causes infections of the nose, throat, and lungs. The illness is commonly spread through respiratory droplets generated through coughs and sneezes, prolonged personal contact (such as touching or shaking hands), or through touching something with the virus on it and then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes before washing your hands.

**4. Q: How long is the incubation period for COVID-19?**

**A:** Most estimates of the incubation period for COVID-19 range from 1-14 days, most commonly around five days.

**5. Q: What precautions can you use to reduce your risk to COVID-19?**

**A:** The following precautions can be utilized to help reduce the risk of exposure to COVID-19:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your eyes, mouth, and nose as much as possible.
- Avoid contact with people who are ill and avoid touching their items.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue. If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve or elbows, not your hands. Wash your hands after coughing or sneezing.
- Avoid group interactions and public gatherings whenever possible and refrain from interaction with elderly people and those with chronic health conditions for 14 days after returning from travelling abroad.

- Change some of your daily behaviours such as avoiding hand-to-hand contact through the shaking of hands.
- If you are sick, limit contact with others and remain out of contact (2 meters) until no longer contagious.
- Clean your mobile devices and laptops with disinfectant wipes.
- Additional information on hand hygiene can be found on TRCA's blog post: <https://hub.trcastaff.ca/blog/safe-handwashing-tips-for-staff/>.

**6. Q: How is TRCA addressing the concerns of COVID-19?**

**A:** TRCA continues to follow the guidance of Public Health Units and the Government of Ontario and continues to take appropriate action on this front. Information for the Public Health Units and the Government of Ontario can be found below:

- [Durham Region](#) – 1-800-841-2729
- [York Region](#) – 1-877-464-9675
- [Peel Region](#) – 1-888-919-7800
- [City of Toronto](#) – 416-338-7600
- Government of Ontario: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/2019-novel-coronavirus>

As an organization, the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority is taking steps to ensure that there is a response to any pandemic influenza and other pandemic infectious illnesses. These steps include:

- Maintaining a constant pulse on changing legislative and recommended actions from all levels of government as well as Public Health.
- Communicating best practices and updates as recommended from Public Health Services.
- Actively monitoring the situation within our workplace; managing and tracking potential incidents.
- Developed and implemented a Pandemic Flu and Infectious Illness policy to set parameters for TRCA's response to pandemic influenza and other pandemic infectious illnesses.
- Development and execution TRCA's Pandemic Recovery Plan.
- Development of workplace procedures including daily tracking to help ensure employee safety while working at a TRCA office, facility or worksite.
- Providing flexible work arrangements where feasible.
- Establishing a number of specific health and safety practices, protocols and training, including:
  - The development of IMS procedures for Field Work, Site Visits, Operation of Golf Courses, Parks and Conservation Areas, Campgrounds, and Events
  - Development of mandatory protocols such as COVID-19 incident reporting and tracking, contact tracing, hygiene and physical distancing protocol, and mask usage information
  - Mandatory daily COVID-19 screening procedures
  - Mandatory COVID-19 health and safety training
  - Facilities specific procedures and layout changes
  - Wellness and mental health training and guidance
  - Employee's Guide to Remote Work during COVID-19

More information can be found at the following links:

- **World Health Organization:** <https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/q-a-coronaviruses>
- **Government of Canada:** <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/prevention-risks.html#r>
- **COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool:** <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/self-assessment/>

## Employee Illness and Self Isolation

### 7. Q: What do I do if I have COVID-19 symptoms?

**A:** If you have COVID-19 symptoms, you must contact your supervisor and not attend work. Contact public health or medical health professional. You are to follow the direction of public health or your medical professional. You are not to return to work until you have received clearance from public health or your medical professional. Please ensure that you continue to update your supervisor during this period.

### 8. Q: What do I do if I have contracted COVID-19?

**A:** If you have tested positive for COVID-19, you must inform your supervisor and follow any direction provided to you by public health and/or your medical professional. Your supervisor will inform Human Resources as soon as possible.

A member of the HR team will contact you to commence the review of contact tracing. This includes a review of dates and times, places, equipment, vehicles, and people that you may have come into contact with.

Human Resources will work with your supervisor to notify staff who may have had close contact with you and provide them with directions and guidance provided by public health.

### 9. Q: What should I do if a family member has contracted, or has been exposed to an infected individual, or start to feel symptoms of COVID-19?

**A:** If a family member has contracted COVID-19, been exposed to an infected family members or others, or have developed symptoms associated with COVID-19, you should seek clinical assessment over the phone (either through Telehealth Ontario (1-866-797-000), a Public Health Unit, or call your primary healthcare provider and follow their direction.

If you have been instructed by a local Public Health Unit or your primary healthcare provider to self-quarantine or self-isolate, contact your immediate supervisor and they will inform Human Resources and provide them with the related Public Health Unit/primary healthcare provider instructions and requirements. Do not return to work until you have medical clearance that permits you to do so.

In the event that you become aware that a visitor or program participant has been exposed to a pandemic flu or illness, immediately report it to your supervisor. Your supervisor will report the information to the Human Resources Business Partner.

**10. Q: What do I do if I am immunocompromised or have dependents that are immunocompromised?**

**A:** Please inform your supervisor if you are in this situation. Your supervisor will engage Human Resources to support you with the situation. In the event that you are immunocompromised, contact your healthcare professional for additional guidance to provide to your supervisor.

**11. Q: If I am quarantined due to COVID-19, am I able to work from home?**

**A:** You will need to speak to your direct supervisor regarding the feasibility to work from home.

**12. Q: If I have gone for testing and have received a negative COVID-19 test result. What should I do?**

**A:** If you have received a negative COVID-19 test result and do not have symptoms of illness, you do not need to self-isolate. Remember, your test results are only for that point in time. The test results do not tell you if you had had COVID-19 before and does not predict if you will get it in the future. Continue to follow good respiratory etiquette, good hand hygiene, practice physical distancing. If you still have symptoms after receiving a negative result, please continue to follow the guidance of your healthcare professional.

**13. Q: Will information related to COVID-19 that is provided be kept confidential?**

**A:** Information that is provided is kept confidential, but may be subject to Ministry of Health/Labour and/or Public Health requests.

**14. Q: Am I still required to self-isolate following travel?**

**A:** You are still required to self-isolate for fourteen (14) days following any out of country travel and are required to advise your supervisor of your travel plans prior to departure. At this time, you are not required to self-isolate if you are travelling within Canada.

## **Office and Facility Closures**

**15. Q: I would like to work out of one of the closed offices/facilities intermittently. What are my options?**

**A:** Offices and facilities that are currently closed to the public will remain closed to the public at this time. However, employees are able to utilize the spaces on a limited basis following all required health and safety procedures. You are required to contact your supervisor first if you intend to work out of one of the sites/offices.

In the event that you want to work out of an office or facility and have been approved by your supervisor to do so, you must complete the mandatory [COVID-19 Health and Safety training](#) if you have not done so and complete the COVID-19 Screening Form prior to entering a TRCA office, facility, or site, every time you attend a TRCA office, facility or site. The link can be found on the [Staff Hub](#). The completion of the screening is **mandatory**, and you are required to complete the screening process prior to attending a TRCA office, facility, or site.

**16. Q: Do I need to wear a mask in the office or at a TRCA facility?**

**A:** If the TRCA facility or office is open to the public it is required. For TRCA offices or facilities that are not open to the public at this time and we have physical distancing requirements in place, masks are not required when at a workstation but should be used when staff are moving through common areas such as hallways.

Each employee has been provided with two reusable masks and each office has been supplied with disposable masks which should be located at the front entrances. The use of masks or face coverings does not change our physical distancing requirements. Where physical distancing of 2-metres cannot be achieved, regardless of where you are performing work (unless PPE requires otherwise), you are required to wear a face mask or covering. For proper mask use, cleaning, and disposal, please review the following [link](#).

**17. Q: When will TRCA offices and facilities that are currently closed to the public reopen?**

**A:** At this time, TRCA offices and facilities that are currently closed will remain closed until January 4, 2021 at the earliest. During this time, employees are expected to continue either working remotely in accordance with an approved alternative workplan or at one of our facility, offices or worksites. For services that are deemed to fulfill essential and priority services, these operations will continue during the closure to the public.

Offices and facilities that are currently closed to the public will remain closed at this time, however, employees are able to utilize the spaces on a limited basis following the required health and safety procedures. Please contact your supervisor if you intend to work out of one of the offices or sites

**18. Q: If I contract COVID-19 will this information be shared with others?**

**A:** Information that is provided to your immediate supervisor and Human Resources is to be kept confidentiality and will not be shared. Please note that TRCA may be required to share your contact information with Public Health and/or the Ministry of Health/Labour if required to do so.

**19. Q: What TRCA tools are available to help reduce social interactions?**

**A:** Employees are still encouraged to utilize TRCA's online tools and programs to conduct meetings in order to reduce social interactions at this moment in time. In terms of TRCA's communication tools which can help in working offsite, ITRM suggests the following methods:

- **Voice Calls:** MiCollab and calls to cell phones/landlines are preferred for person to person communications, in addition to group calls with 5(five) or fewer participants.
- **Conference Calls with 6 (six) or more internal participants:** Microsoft Teams is the best option in this scenario.
- **Conference Calls with 6 (six) or more participants that include individuals who are external:** GoTo Meeting is the best option to utilize in this scenario.

The IT Service Desk can be contacted if you require further guidance on how to utilize these communication tools. Additional information has been shared with employees via email and can be found on the Staff Hub.

**20. Q: What happens if I am involved in an accident while working from home?**

**A:** If you are involved in an accident or incident while working from home, you would need to follow the same procedures as if you were involved in an accident or incident while at a TRCA workplace. Report the accident or incident to your supervisor and follow up with any questions that they may have.

## **Wellness and Mental Health**

**21. Q: Where would I be able to find mental health and wellness resources?**

**A:** Additional wellness materials can also be found on the Staff Hub on the Human Resources page. The resources can also be found below:

- [Webinar – Supporting Mental Health: Managing Anxiety as the World Reopens](#)
- [Guide – Mental Wellbeing: Managing the Impact of COVID-19](#)
- [Guide – Employees Remote Work Guide](#)
- [Strategies – TRCA Strategies for Employees During COVID-19](#)

We understand that you may feel overwhelmed during this time. Please be patient and remember, you have access to TRCA's [Employee Assistance Program](#) if you need it.