

Development Of Your Safety Plan



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BC is now in Phase 2, the gradual resumption of business and contact based activities. To prevent the spread of COVID-19 Phase 2 continues to require practices that help keep both employees and the public safe. A variety of safety measures are required of businesses during Phase 2 and with success in Phase 2, British Columbia will move on to Phase 3, getting closer to “normal”. WorkSafeBC has provided industry specific guidelines and requires businesses to develop a COVID-19 Safety Plan.

The idea of developing a Safety Plan can be daunting for businesses but with the guidance provided by WorkSafeBC can be accomplished through discussions with members of your workplace. The Safety Plan does not need to be submitted or filed with WorkSafeBC but if an inspection occurs you will need to have it on hand. There is no specific format that your Safety Plan must take but it needs to be in writing and it needs to include these six elements:

1. assessing the risk in the workplace – identification of areas where there is a risk of transmission;
2. implementation of measures to minimize the risk of transmission including provisions

for maintaining social distancing, protections where physical distancing is not possible and enhanced cleaning and hygiene;

3. development of policies to manage the workplace given the changed circumstances of COVID-19;
4. development of communication plans and training to ensure that everyone in your workplace including visitors knows the procedures put in place to keep workers safe during COVID-19;
5. monitoring the workplace and updating plans as needed – ongoing need to identify risks and respond to those risks and provision of a space for workers to raise safety concerns; and
6. assessing and addressing risks from re-summing operations.

The Safety Plan needs to be prepared before you reopen your workplace or bring workers back on site. The Safety Plan requires you to understand the risk of transmission of COVID-19, the manner in which COVID-19 spreads and the way that your specific business operations present risks of that spread with

resumption of operations. It requires businesses to remain vigilant and aware and as employers to educate and inform workers on the steps that are necessary to control the risks of COVID-19.

Workers have the right to refuse work if they believe it presents an undue hazard and you may have workers reluctant to return to the workplace due to fears around the spread of COVID-19. An adequate Safety Plan should be responsive to any concerns

expressed by workers and should provide workers with the confidence that the risks are being mitigate in your workplace.

If you would like more information on issues discussed in this article or advice about how to safely return your workers to the workplace, please contact **Rose Keith, QC** or **Scott Marcinkow**.

Rose is Associate Counsel with the Harper Grey. Her practice focuses on Workplace Law helping both employers and employees find solutions to workplace issues. The guiding principle for Rose is finding the right legal solution for her clients and in doing so nothing is more important than being respectful, compassionate and responsive.

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