



# COVID-19 HR Guidance and FAQs

October 7, 2020

---

*Dunk & Associates is offering this information as advice only, it is not legal or medical advice. It is based on our knowledge, skills and experience in the fields of health, safety and human resources.*

**Provided by Dunk & Associates/Systems 24-7**

[www.systems24-7.com](http://www.systems24-7.com)

Email: [info@systems24-7.com](mailto:info@systems24-7.com)

Tel: 1-866-754-8839

## Table of Contents

|   |                 |
|---|-----------------|
| <b><i>Human Resource Guidance.....</i></b>                            | <b><i>3</i></b> |
| <b><i>Sniffles .....</i></b>  | <b><i>3</i></b> |
| <b><i>Positive Case of COVID-19 .....</i></b>                         | <b><i>4</i></b> |
| <b><i>COVID-19 Temporary Recovery Benefits for Employees.....</i></b> | <b><i>5</i></b> |
| <b><i>Mental Health During COVID-19 Tip Sheet.....</i></b>            | <b><i>7</i></b> |
| <b><i>Mental Health Resources During COVID-19 .....</i></b>           | <b><i>9</i></b> |

## Human Resource Guidance

### Sniffles

**Question:** “I have an employee with the sniffles, and they are convinced it is just a slight cold, no other symptoms, what do I do?” The COVID-19 screening questions from the government indicates that having one symptom means an employee must stay home.

**Advice:** Have the employee take the self-assessment online (Canada.ca has the link to all provincial screening assessments) then call Public Health as directed by the assessment or speak with their Healthcare Practitioner and if they agree it's not COVID-19 and no test is needed, then the employee can go back to work. If they send the employee for a test, then they must wait for the test results before they come back to work. They need a negative test to come to work or must wait until the self-isolation period is over.

**Note:** In some provinces the test questions are set up to indicate that the symptoms are not related to previous or known conditions. In these cases, for example, if an employee has a runny nose but knows it's due to allergies, then they would answer “no” to the runny nose question. Please make sure you read the screening questions carefully and account for any of these details.

**Question:** What if one of my sniffing employees just received a negative COVID-19 test...but still has the sniffles? Are they to continue to stay home?

**Advice:** They can go back to work when they get the negative test results, unless otherwise directed to self-isolate by Public Health or their Healthcare Practitioner. If symptoms worsen then they go back to Public Health, or their Healthcare Practitioner and follow their direction.

**Question:** Is it simply....one symptom - stay home? Until when? When the symptom passes or when a negative COVID-19 test is received?

**Advice:** Follow what we recommended above, but once either a Health Practitioner or Public Health says they are okay to work then let them. Use the honour system and do not require them to produce a doctor's, just record the date and time that the employee tells you they can return and who they spoke to (Public Health or their Doctor/Nurse Practitioner etc.). Then let them come back to work. Keep up the daily screening and if symptoms worsen, they need to seek advice from Public Health or their Healthcare Practitioner.

**Question:** I have an employee who is always sniffing and sneezing, they have allergies, and my customers are complaining that this person should not be working. What do I do?

**Advice:** See if there is a place where they can work and not have so much exposure to the public. Ensure that this employee knows how to respond appropriately to customers who ask if they are sick. This is a difficult situation and as our numbers rise, people will become more agitated with those who sniffle or sneeze, cough etc. Stay calm and do your best. Perhaps post a sign: “To our Valued Customers! All of our Employees are screened daily for COVID-19 symptoms and are wearing their proper PPE; however, some do have allergies and as humans we all sniffle and sneeze, from time to time – be kind. Maintain your 2 meters of distance and please wear your mask!” - Dunk & Associates has provided a poster for you in this package.

**Caution to Employers, you are not the Employee’s doctor and you need to respect privacy rights regarding health information.**

### Positive Case of COVID-19

**Question: We have an employee with a COVID-19 positive test, do we tell our other Employees?**

**Advice:** Be cautious as you must maintain the privacy of your employees; this however does not mean that you do not inform your other employees. The right of employees to know of the hazards to which they are exposed to is paramount. If possible, describe the potential exposure in general terms. For Example: “We have an employee in the design department who has tested positive for COVID-19 and they used the washroom on floor one and the lunchroom in receiving only. We are performing a deep cleaning of these areas, as well as all other areas and contact points where transmission may occur; entry doors, timeclock and their workstation.”

This employee should not return to work until Public Health clears them to return. Call Public Health if you have a confirmed case and they will advise on if other employees need to be tested or need to self-isolate.

**Question: An employee’s family member, in the same household, has tested positive for COVID-19, what do we do at work?**

**Advice:** The screening questions in most provinces ask about close contact with a confirmed or probably case of COVID-19, and automatically prompt for the person to be self-isolated and tested if possible. The employee needs to be at home, in isolation and following the recommendations of Public Health, and they will likely need to get a COVID-19 test. In this case we would advise the Employer to contact Public Health on what they need to do for the workplace. Public Health will guide you as far as the need for testing other employees, isolation etc. What you want to immediately do is sanitize and clean. Dunk has seen the advice differ from region to region and it also depends on the severity of the diagnosed case, proximity of

*employees, etc. This employee should not return to work until Public Health clears them to return.*

**Question: An employee has been exposed to a positive case of COVID-19, but not in their home, do we allow them to work?**

**Advice:** *The screening questions in most provinces ask about close contact with a confirmed or probably case of COVID-19, and automatically prompt for the person to be self-isolated and tested if possible. This will become a tricky answer as more and more cases present themselves. The employee needs to self-isolate and be COVID-19 tested if possible but testing in some areas are limited to only those persons with symptoms. We advise to err on the side of caution and until that employee has a negative COVID-19 test they do not work. Or if a test is not possible, then they do not return until the self-isolation period is over. If uncertain, please call and speak with Public Health.*

**Caution to Employers, the law requires you to take all reasonable precaution, in the circumstances, for the protection of all workers. We suggest prior to having a positive case, you meet with your employees and dialogue about how they want a positive case handled. It seems like this is going to be a matter of “when” you have a case not an “if”. A good discussion and plan now will reduce anxiety and the stigma of reporting a COVID-19 positive case in the workplace. Employees also have an obligation to report to the workplace any hazards they know of and their testing positive for COVID-19 would be a known hazard to other workers.**

**Please note that information is changing quickly as the pandemic progresses and each provincial/territorial government has the ability to change their recommendations, so it is important that you always reference your provincial/territorial websites for the most up to date information. If you have had an employee test positive, please ensure you call your Local Public Health for recommendations for your workplace.**

## COVID-19 Temporary Recovery Benefits for Employees

On September 28, 2020, the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, introduced legislation to introduce three temporary recovery benefits to support Canadian workers who are unable to work due to COVID-19. Bill C-4, the COVID-19 Response Measures Act (the Act), received Royal Assent on October 2, 2020. The legislation allows the Government of Canada to support Canadian workers through the next phase of the recovery, and to avoid a gap in coverage after they have received their last Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) payments.

The Act creates three new temporary Canada Recovery Benefits to provide income support to Canadian workers while promoting economic recovery with measures that encourage people to return to work. These are briefly outlined below.

| <b>Temporary Recovery Benefits</b>        |   |
|---|---|
| Canada Recovery Sickness Benefit (CRSB)   | <p>The Canada Recovery Sickness Benefit (CRSB) gives income support to employed and self-employed individuals who are unable to work because they're sick or need to self-isolate due to COVID-19, or have an underlying health condition that puts them at greater risk of getting COVID-19. The CRSB is administered by the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA).</p> <p>If eligible for the CRSB, employees can receive \$500 (\$450 after taxes withheld) for a 1-week period.</p> <p>If the situation continues past 1 week, the employee will need to apply again. Employees may apply up to a total of 2 weeks between September 27, 2020 and September 25, 2021.</p>   |
| Canada Recovery Caregiving Benefit (CRCB) | <p>The Canada Recovery Caregiving Benefit (CRCB) gives income support to employed and self-employed individuals who are unable to work because they must care for their child under 12 years old or a family member who needs supervised care. This applies if their school, regular program, or facility is closed or unavailable to them due to COVID-19, or because they're sick, self-isolating, or at risk of serious health complications due to COVID-19. The CRCB is administered by the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA).</p> <p>If eligible for the CRCB, employees can receive \$500 (\$450 after taxes withheld) for a 1-week period.</p> <p>If the situation continues past 1 week, the employee will need to apply again. Employees may apply up to a total of 26 weeks between September 27, 2020 and September 25, 2021.</p> |
| Canada Recovery Benefit (CRB)             | <p>The Canada Recovery Benefit (CRB) gives income support to employed and self-employed individuals who are directly affected by COVID-19 and are not entitled to Employment Insurance (EI) benefits. The CRB is administered by the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA).</p>   |

|  |  |
|--|--|
|  | <p>If you are eligible for the CRB, you can receive \$1,000 (\$900 after taxes withheld) for a 2-week period.</p> <p>If the situation continues past 2 weeks, the employee will need to apply again. Employees may apply up to a total of 13 eligibility periods (26 weeks) between September 27, 2020 and September 25, 2021.</p> |
|--|--|

To read more about the new benefits click this link: <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/news/2020/10/backgrounder.html>

## Mental Health During COVID-19 Tip Sheet

The COVID-19 pandemic is not only taking a toll on our physical health, but also our mental health. Fear and anxiety are normal responses to an abnormal event such as a pandemic.

Fear and anxiety might be new to some people, while for others, it might be heightened and worsened. Especially for those essential employees still leaving the house every day to help make sure the rest of us can stay safe at home. They can be worried about their own health, the health of their family and friends and the future of their livelihoods.

Communication as always is key and now more than ever it is so important to regularly talk to our employees to find out how they are doing and provide them with information to help calm their fears and anxieties.

Let's help protect not only our physical health, but our mental health as well. Here are some tips and resources to help, or at the very least, start the discussion of mental health in your workplace.

| Communication  |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have weekly meetings to discuss the controls you have in place at the workplace to keep employees safe and for employees to raise questions or provide feedback. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Barriers, hand sanitizer, increased cleaning schedules, physical distancing, PPE, screening procedures etc.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• During your meetings, give an opportunity for employees to discuss how they, their families and loved ones are doing. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How are they keeping busy at home?</li> <li>• How are they keeping safe at home?</li> <li>• How are they doing themselves? Are they struggling?</li> <li>• Do they need any more resources or help from you to cope?</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |

- Let employees know of any company efforts you are making to help others during this pandemic.
  - Is your company donating to an organization in need right now, or switching gears to help other essential workers get the protection or services they need?
  - It's great for employees of all levels to know how your company is helping to make a difference.
- Make sure all communications of facts and information are from reputable sources such as Public Health, the World Health Organization or Provincial/Federal Governments of Canada.

### Personal Supports

- Remind employees of your existing Employee Assistance Programs (EAP) and resources.
- Hand out or post in your workplace our Mental Health Resources document (included in this package).
- If financial concerns are evident refer to the government programs or to Senior Management/Ownership for direction.

### Leadership

- Keep an open-door policy, remind employees they can talk to their managers or supervisors if they are struggling or just need to talk.
- Care for yourself! **“Don’t light yourself on fire to keep others warm.”**
  - You cannot help your employees if you are running on fumes. Recognize your own fears and anxieties and how you cope. Not only will this help you care for yourself, but it will help you relate to your employees who are also struggling
- Involve your employees. Ask for their input, thoughts and ideas and encourage their feedback. Now is the time to come together to get creative.
- Lead by example! Make sure you are taking the appropriate precautions for yourself!

### Physical Controls for Mental Health

- Increased frequency of workplace inspections can help identify new hazards and allow you to put controls in place. Employees physically seeing managers or the safety committee/rep completing inspections can give them a sense of security that management is still looking for ways to protect their employees.
- Put up physical distance signs to remind employees and other personnel in your workplace of physical distances requirements.
- Barriers such as plexiglass screens at cashier stations, or reception stations give a physical barrier between employees and the public and can give employees a better sense of protection.
- Supply Personal Protective Equipment, hand sanitizer, cleaning supplies at workstations gives employees control over how they can protect themselves.
- Working from home if possible, to allow your employees to stay safe at home.

### Positive Messaging

- Ensure we aren't conveying only negative facts or messages. Something as simple as saying we are safe at home, vs. stuck at home have a very different impact in a positive way.
- Put up posters on how employees can protect their mental health.
- Change out your imagery from scary looking bacteria and personnel in PPE to animals, flowers, sunshine, smiling faces etc. Promoting positivity makes positivity contagious.



- Think of creative activities to get employees engaged and communicating again (at a safe distance), such as:
  - Sending encouraging notes or meme to co-workers.
  - Employee recognition programs.
- Start each day with a positive message to help brighten employee spirits. It doesn't have to be COVID-19 related, give them a break and an opportunity to think about something else for a few minutes.

#### Physical Distancing Socializing

- We may not be able to get together in person to have a work lunch anymore, but virtual lunch meetings can help bring everyone together. Order in lunch and have everyone eat on a video chat. Nothing brings people together like food!
- You can have rotating breaks. Assign employees to a coffee break partner for the day so they can get to know different employee they might not see all the time or work with.

## Mental Health Resources During COVID-19

Below is a list of websites and resources that are available to all Canadians to help with mental health and wellness during these challenging times.

Remember to use information from reputable sources.

| Websites   |
|--|
| <b>Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction:</b> <a href="https://www.ccsa.ca/">https://www.ccsa.ca/</a>   |
| <b>Wellness Together Canada - Mental Health and Substance Use Support:</b><br><a href="https://ca.portal.gs/">https://ca.portal.gs/</a> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wellness Together Canada offers the following at no cost to Canadians:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Wellness self-assessment and tracking.</li> <li>2. Self-guided courses, apps, and other resources.</li> <li>3. Group coaching and peer support.</li> <li>4. Counselling by text or phone.</li> </ol> </li> </ul> |
| <b>Mental Health Commission of Canada:</b><br><a href="https://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/English/covid19">https://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/English/covid19</a>  |
| <b>Bell Let's Talk:</b> <a href="https://letstalk.bell.ca/en/covid-19">https://letstalk.bell.ca/en/covid-19</a>  |
| <b>Canadian Mental Health Association:</b> <a href="https://cmha.ca/news/covid-19-and-mental-health">https://cmha.ca/news/covid-19-and-mental-health</a>   |
| <b>Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:</b> <a href="https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/managing-stress-anxiety.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fprepare%2Fmanaging-stress-anxiety.html">https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/managing-stress-anxiety.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fprepare%2Fmanaging-stress-anxiety.html</a>   |
| <b>Government of Canada:</b> <a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/diseases-conditions/taking-care-mental-health.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/diseases-conditions/taking-care-mental-health.html</a>   |

**Provincial and Territory COVID-19 Mental Health Resources:**<https://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/English/provincial-and-territorial-covid-19-resources>**Canadian Centre for Occupational Health & Safety:**[https://www.ccohs.ca/newsletters/hsreport/issues/current.html?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=HSReport\\_Apr2020\\_English&utm\\_source=Envoke-HS-REPORT\\_ENGLISH&utm\\_term=Health-and-Safety-Report-|-Vol - hsreport-ontopic](https://www.ccohs.ca/newsletters/hsreport/issues/current.html?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=HSReport_Apr2020_English&utm_source=Envoke-HS-REPORT_ENGLISH&utm_term=Health-and-Safety-Report-|-Vol - hsreport-ontopic)**COVID-19 Resource: As of October 7<sup>th</sup>, 2020**

This document is intended to help adopt and implement best practices into your workplace during the COVID-19 pandemic.