



# FEDERAL SAFETY GUIDANCE TO PROTECT DRIVERS AND LIMIT THE SPREAD OF COVID-19 IN COMMERCIAL VEHICLE OPERATIONS

**April 1, 2020**

## **Purpose:**

The Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) is the lead federal agency responsible for coordinating efforts to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. Transport Canada has collaborated with PHAC and Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) to develop guidance to protect drivers and employees working in commercial vehicle operations. Building on guidance developed by the Government of Canada and other recognized public health authorities and organizations, this document has been prepared to summarize recommendations made to date to limit the spread of COVID-19 in the context of commercial vehicle operations.

The recommendations and guidance in this document are subject to change, based on the evolution of transmission of COVID-19, as well as risk-assessments and advice from local and national public health officials.

## **For Fleet Managers:**

- Minimise the number of vehicles shared by employees to limit the spread of the virus between different users of the same vehicles where possible.
- Ensure that drivers have access to appropriate disinfectants, hand sanitizer, personal protective equipment, and other material needed to clean high-touch surfaces in their trucks and implement recommendations made in these guidelines.

## **General Advice to Protect Commercial Vehicle Drivers:**

- Commercial Vehicle Operators who are federally regulated for Occupational Health and Safety should ensure that their Hazard Prevention Program is current to address the hazards of COVID-19 in their workplaces, including the truck cabs. This should include developing preventive measures with the participation of their Workplace Health and Safety Committee or Representative. The employees must be provided training on these measures. The Labour Program has posted general information to assist stakeholders in these responsibilities. Additional resources that may be of assistance include: the Government of Canada's Risk-informed decision making guidelines for workplaces and businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic and the Trucking HR Canada - COVID-19 Resource Guide for Trucking and Logistics Employers (see links below).

- Commercial vehicle drivers must diligently self-monitor. Drivers with mild cough or low-grade fever (37.3 C or more) should self-isolate and stay home.
- Commercial Vehicle Operators should communicate public health recommendations and updates to drivers in a timely manner.
- Based on available information, it is estimated that coronaviruses can survive on hard surfaces from 24 hours to several days. Coronaviruses can be spread by touching an infected area, then touching the mouth, nose or eyes before washing hands. Hand washing and respiratory hygiene are important ways of interrupting this transmission.
- Wash hands regularly and whenever they become soiled:
  - Hand washing with plain soap and water is the preferred method of hand hygiene, since the mechanical action is effective at removing visible soil and microbes.
  - Hands should be washed using soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds. When drying hands, disposable paper towels are preferred.
  - If soap and water are not available, an alcohol-based hand sanitizer (ABHS) can be used as a temporary measure until hand washing can be done. ABHS containing 60-90% alcohol concentration (optimally over 70%) are the most rapidly active of all agents used in hand disinfection. However, ABHS may not be effective when there is organic material on your hands (e.g. after using the toilet). For this reason, ABHS alone should not be used on visibly soiled hands. Use wipes to remove soil, followed by ABHS.
  - Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- When coughing or sneezing drivers should:
  - cough or sneeze into a tissue or the bend in the arm, not into hands; and
  - dispose of any tissues that have been used as soon as possible in a lined waste basket and wash/sanitize hands for 20 seconds afterwards.
- Face-to-face meetings should be kept to a minimum and respect social distancing requirements. To the extent possible, face-to-face meetings should be replaced with conference calls or video conferencing. Interactions with clients should also be kept as short as possible keeping in mind social distancing requirements.

## Before Each Trip

- Commercial vehicle drivers should monitor their health prior to starting a trip. If a driver is experiencing symptoms, even if they are mild cough and fever, they should stay home and advise their employer so steps can be taken to protect co-workers.
- Make sure vehicle interiors are clean and hygienic by wiping surfaces with disinfectant.
- The following equipment should be available for cleaning:
  - Personal protective equipment (as required by the operator's health and safety protocol);
  - Disposable cloths;
  - Paper towels and absorbent materials;
  - Waste disposal bags, labels and tape;
  - Cleaning agents; and
  - Disinfectants.
- Cleaning is a critical first step for disinfecting affected surfaces. In general, when cleaning vehicle interiors:
  - Put on disposable, water-proof gloves. Avoid hand contact with the face, especially the nose and eyes. Direct contact with contaminated areas should be avoided.
  - For routine cleaning and disinfection, and for areas potentially contaminated with COVID-19, a hard-surface disinfectant authorized by Health Canada is recommended. For a list of hard-surface disinfectants for use against coronavirus (COVID-19), please see [Health Canada's website](#).
  - Follow the manufacturer's instructions for the recommended dilution rates, contact times and conditions specific to the surface.
  - Avoid bleach except on simple plastics.
  - Don't use solvents.
  - Wipe off what you wipe on; don't leave chemicals to linger.
- High touch surfaces in trucks that should be regularly cleaned include but are not limited to:
  - Keys or FOBs;
  - Starter button on vehicles with FOBs;
  - Inside and outside door handles; Inside door grab handles, pads and armrests;
  - Steering wheel;

- Shift lever and console;
  - Dashboard;
  - Power window and power door lock switches;
  - Radio and climate control buttons;
  - Turn signal and wiper stalks;
  - Seat and Seat adjuster;
  - Touch screen; and
  - Any other parts that are commonly used and that may have been touched (glove compartment, hood, trunk, van panel door handles, pick-up tailgate handle, sleeping areas, for example).
- Dispose of soiled cleaning clothes, disinfection cloths, disposable gloves and any other items in contact with respiratory tract secretions in a waste disposal bag.
  - Wash hands when finished using proper hand washing techniques.

### **During the Trip**

- Commercial vehicle drivers should wash their hands frequently under warm, running water with soap for at least 20 seconds, and avoid touching their faces with unwashed hands. This is especially important after coming in contact with other people or surfaces that may carry the virus. When soap and water is not available, a 60% alcohol based hand sanitizer is recommended.
- Commercial vehicle drivers should take precautions such as covering their hands when pumping gas, touching the service station door handles, or handling any automotive products that may be required when performing vehicle maintenance, such as filling windshield washer fluid and adding motor oil, if this is possible. If it is not possible, commercial vehicle drivers should wash their hands or apply hand sanitizer immediately thereafter, if available.
- As much as possible, social distancing practices should be observed, staying at least two metres (or six feet) away from other people. Commercial vehicle drivers should keep appropriate distances between themselves and others and avoid direct physical contact (including handshaking). This includes contact with customers, receiving personnel and those at rest stops.

## **At the End of the Trip**

- Repeat a thorough cleaning of high-touch surfaces with appropriate disinfectants as described above.
- Drivers who start to experience symptoms after completing a trip should stay home, self-isolate, and advise their employer so that additional steps can be taken to protect co-workers and other drivers using the truck.
- While commercial vehicle drivers are exempt from the 14-day quarantine requirements for business purposes, when off-duty, they should abide by recommendations of local and national public health authorities, including recommendations relating to social distancing.

## **Additional Resources:**

[World Health Organization: Getting your workplace ready for COVID-19](#)

[Government of Canada: Resources for Canadian Businesses](#)

[Government of Canada: Risk-informed decision-making guidelines for workplaces and businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic](#)

[Government of Canada: Preventing COVID-19 in the workplace: Employers, employees and essential service workers](#)

[Canada Post: Practicing social distancing can keep you and other employees safe – March 18 2020](#)

[Trucking HR Canada - COVID-19 Resource Guide for Trucking and Logistics Employers](#)

[CUTA COVID-19: Guidance for the Public Transit Industry](#)

[International Association of Public Transport \(UTIP\): Management of COVID-19 – Guidelines for Public Transport Operators](#)

[Mental Health Commission of Canada: Choosing sources of information carefully is critical to COVID-19 mental well-being](#)