

EMPLOYERS' GUIDE TO COVID-19 AND THE TEMPORARY FOREIGN WORKER

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR FOOD PROCESSORS

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ABOUT US

Food Processing Skills Canada (FPSC) is the food and beverage manufacturing industry's workforce development organization. As a non-profit, located in Ottawa with representatives across Canada, we support food and beverage manufacturing businesses from coast to coast in developing skilled and professional employees and workplace environments.

Our work directly and positively impacts industry talent attraction, workforce retention and employment culture. We care about assisting the industry in finding, training and retaining the very best people for the job. Through our partnerships with industry, associations, educators and all levels of governments in Canada, FPSC has developed exceptional resources for the sector including the **Food Skills Library™**, **Canadian Food Processors Institute™**, **FoodCert™** and Labour Market Information Reports.

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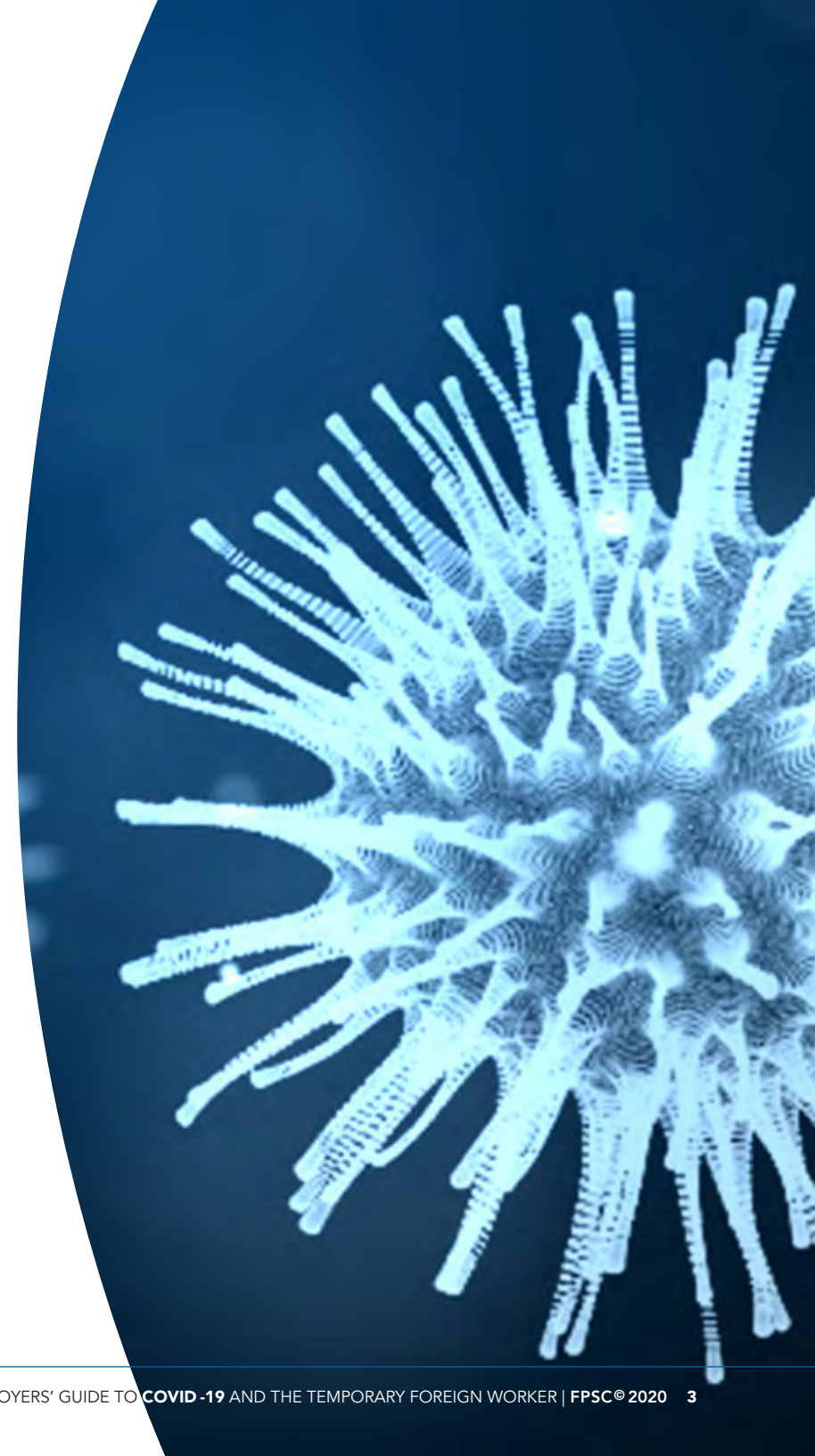
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WELCOME

The **COVID-19** pandemic is affecting people around the world, resulting in health care systems being overwhelmed, people being confined to their homes, restrictions on travel, and the closure of businesses and industries.

INTRODUCTION

In this guide, we will take a closer look at the impact the COVID-19 pandemic has on the temporary foreign workers in the food processing industry.

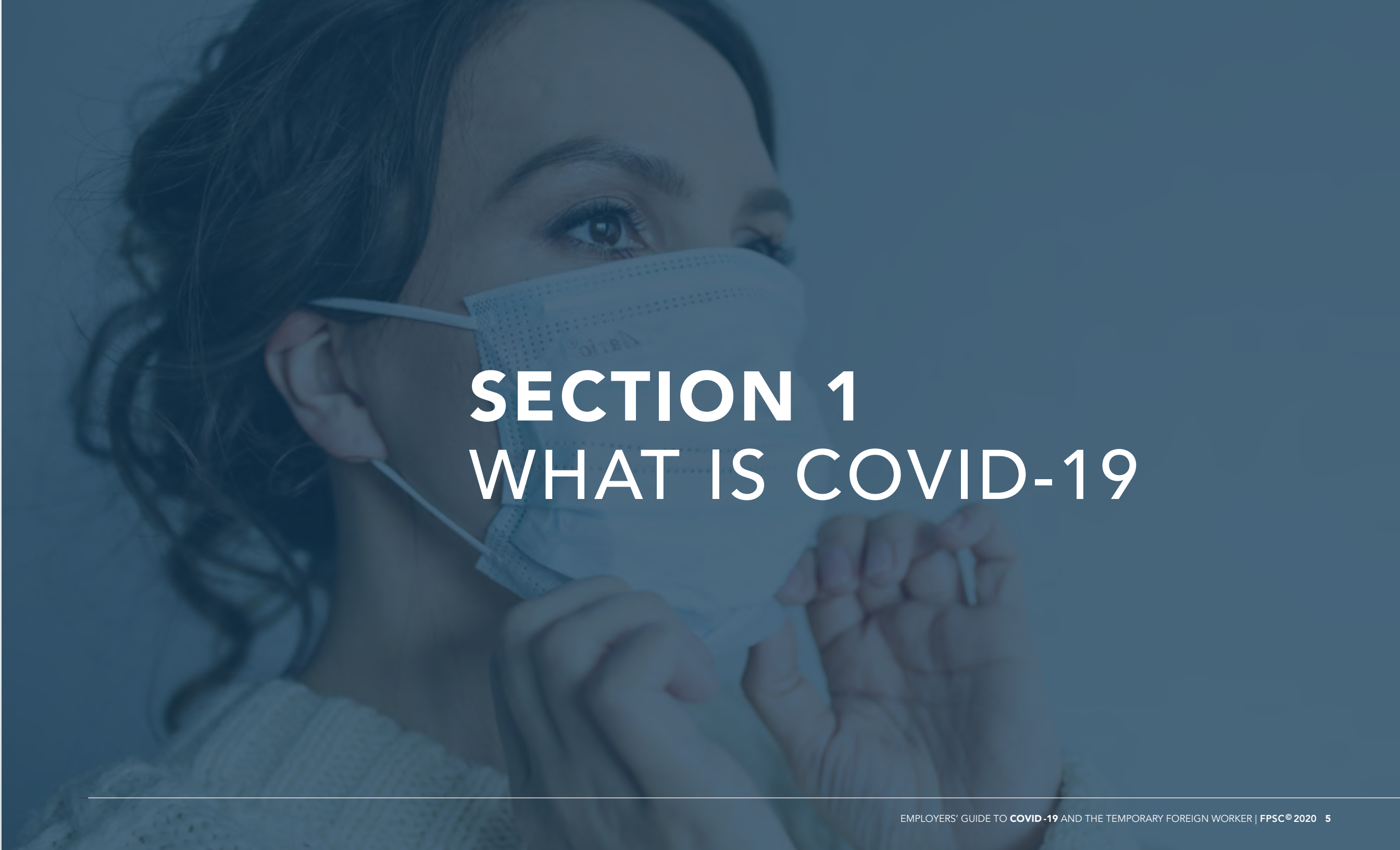
We will review how travel to Canada have been affected and how employers across the country are preparing their workplaces to combat the virus.

This guide aims to assist small to medium size employers in the food industry to understand the situation, and what they can do to protect their employees and protect their business.

WHO WOULD BENEFIT FROM THIS GUIDE?

- Small to mid-size enterprises in the food industry who are currently employing or intend on employing temporary foreign workers during COVID-19
- Manager and Supervisors who supervise temporary foreign workers in the food processing industry
- Human Resource Managers in the food industry
- Recruiters or Immigration Consultants who facilitate the hiring processes of temporary foreign workers in the food industry

The information contained in this guide is the best information available at the time of writing, as the situation is changing rapidly. Different areas and countries are responding to this pandemic in different ways. Be mindful of directives in your area and ensure you keep up to date with the frequent changes.

A woman with dark, curly hair is wearing a light blue surgical mask. She is looking upwards and to the right with a hopeful expression. Her hands are clasped together in front of her chest. The background is a soft, out-of-focus light blue.

SECTION 1

WHAT IS COVID-19

WHAT IS COVID-19?

THE EMERGENCE OF THE CORONAVIRUS

The Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus that emerged in China in December 2019.

To understand what is expected during the COVID-19 pandemic, it is important to first know more about this illness.



WHAT IS COVID-19?



SYMPTOMS

The disease can be passed on to person to person by droplets of fluid from an affected person. Your eyes, nose, and mouth are the easiest paths for the virus to enter the body. This can happen when:

- Someone sneezes
- By touching or shaking hands
- By touching something with the virus on it and then touching your mouth, nose or eyes

Symptoms of COVID -19 could appear 2-14 days after you have been exposed. It can be severe, and some cases have caused death.

Typical symptoms that you could experience include:

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing

Other symptoms reported could include:

- Muscle aches
- Unexplained loss of taste
- Unexplained loss of smell
- Diarrhea
- Headache

WHAT IS COVID-19?



PREVENTION

It is possible to carry the virus and have no symptoms and transmit and infect others with the virus.

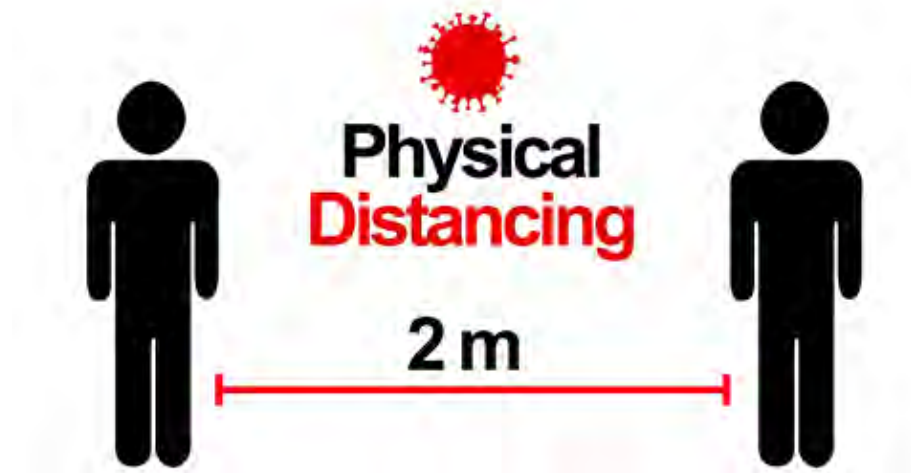
For this reason, Canada is encouraging everyone to practice “**physical distancing.**”

Physical distancing is proven to be one of the most effective ways to reduce the spread of illness during an outbreak.

WHAT IS PHYSICAL DISTANCING?

Physical distancing means keeping a distance of at least **2 arms lengths** (approximately 2 metres) from others as much as possible by:

- Avoiding crowded places and gatherings
- Avoiding common greetings such as handshakes
- Limiting contact with people at a higher risk such as older adults and those in poor health





SECTION 2

TEMPORARY FOREIGN WORKERS

TEMPORARY FOREIGN WORKERS



Preventative Measures

Temporary Foreign Workers are very important in alleviating critical labour shortages in Canada's Food Processing and Agriculture sectors.

The Canadian government has taken several preventative measures to mitigate the risk to Canadians, including new temporary immigration restrictions and new process at Canadian borders.

Immigration Restrictions

In light of COVID-19, a new temporary restriction is to stop all non-essential travel to Canada by foreign nationals with some exemptions.

Some people may still be able to cross borders if they're travelling to Canada for an essential purpose.

Coming to Canada to work as a temporary foreign worker in the food industry is considered essential travel and is permitted however to qualify, the foreign national must have received written notice of approval for a work permit and who has not yet been issued the permit.

As the temporary foreign worker prepares for travel to Canada, it is important that you prepare them for what to expect during their travel.

TEMPORARY FOREIGN WORKERS



Travelling to Canada

For the safety of all passengers, health checks are now being conducted by airlines before boarding flights.

Airline representatives may be conducting temperature checks and will be asking passengers to answer a series of questions to determine if they are well and may travel to Canada.

It is likely that it will be mandatory that passengers wear a non-medical mask or home-made mask to cover their mouth and nose during their travel.

Anyone who shows symptoms of COVID-19 will not be permitted to board a flight.

AIRLINE HEALTH CHECK

1. Do you have a fever and a cough?
2. Have you been refused boarding in the past 14 days due to a medical reason related to COVID-19?
3. Do you have a fever and breathing difficulty?
4. Are you currently under mandatory quarantine, as a result of recent travel or by orders from the provincial, territorial or local public health authorities? If YES, has a federal, provincial or territorial health authority given you explicit permission to continue your onward journey by air to reach your self-isolation location?

TEMPORARY FOREIGN WORKERS

Arriving in Canada

When a foreign national arrives, Canada Border Services Officers will also screen for symptoms of COVID-19.

They will visually inspect travellers for signs of illness by checking for a cough, fever or if a traveller is having difficulty breathing.

If they are symptom free, they will be permitted to travel onwards to their final-destination.

If a temporary foreign worker enters Canada and has symptoms consistent with COVID-19, they will not be allowed to enter Canada and may be placed in quarantine at the port of entry or if required, may be sent to the hospital.

Once they have recovered, their admissibility to Canada will be assessed and, if applicable, they may be permitted to travel onwards to their final-destination.

Once a temporary foreign worker reaches their final-destination in Canada, it is mandatory that they Self-Isolate immediately and travellers must give Canada Border Services Officers a Self-Isolation Plan which is a detailed account of how they will self-Isolate.

It is recommended that you connect with the temporary foreign worker prior to their travel to Canada to review their self-isolation plan.



TEMPORARY FOREIGN WORKERS



Employer Obligations

Employer obligations to employ and house temporary foreign workers has changed due to COVID-19. It is important to know the new rules to ensure you and the temporary foreign worker are compliant.

The temporary foreign worker's period of employment begins upon their arrival to Canada and includes the initial mandatory self-isolation period. The employer must comply with all laws and policies regarding the employer-employee relationship during that period.

Specifically, the employer must pay the temporary worker a minimum of 30 hours per week at a rate of pay that is substantially the same as the hourly rate of pay specified on the Labour Market Impact Assessment and/or offer of employment throughout the 14-day self-isolation period and provide access to medical benefits.

This requirement also applies to workers in the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program (SAWP) and the 14-day period of paid quarantine will be in addition to the minimum 240 hours of pay as specified in the contract.

**ONE OF THE EMPLOYER'S TOP PRIORITIES
MUST BE TO COMPLY WITH ALL LAWS AND
POLICIES REGARDING THE EMPLOYER-
EMPLOYEE RELATIONSHIP.**

TEMPORARY FOREIGN WORKERS



Employer Obligations (Cont'd)

The employer can withhold standard contract deductions (for example Employment Insurance, housing, transportation, etc.) as per applicable Program stream requirements. The employer is not allowed to deduct any additional amounts due to the quarantine period, unless agreed to by the worker (such as for food).

Employer Penalties

Proof of wages paid should be kept as you could be subject to a random compliance inspection.

Penalties for non-compliance include administrative monetary penalties, revocation of existing LMIA's/work permits, bans on new LMIA's/work permits and publication on a list of non-compliant employers.

**THE EMPLOYER CAN WITHHOLD STANDARD
CONTRACT DEDUCTIONS (FOR EXAMPLE
EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE, HOUSING,
TRANSPORTATION, ETC.) AS PER APPLICABLE
PROGRAM STREAM REQUIREMENTS.**



SECTION 3

PRE-ARRIVAL

PRE-ARRIVAL

Preparation Prior to Arrival

Preparing temporary foreign workers prior to arriving in Canada is critical. Ensuring they are prepared for new travel procedures and trained on important procedures in your workplace will ensure a smooth transition to life in Canada and at work.

Pre-Arrival Best Practices

The employer should provide information to the temporary foreign worker on COVID-19 either on or before their first day of self-isolation.

The information should be provided in a language the worker understands, and that consideration be given to providing this information in writing, online or orally by phone.

Connecting

Schedule a time to connect via video conference with the temporary foreign worker prior to their scheduled travel date. Meeting with them online face-to-face rather than in an email, will help create a lasting connection.

This will also give you an opportunity to answer any questions they have on their travel to Canada, their accommodations and their Self-Isolation Plan.



PRE-ARRIVAL

Self-Isolation Plan

All persons entering Canada must present a Self-Isolation Plan upon entry. This is an account of how you plan to follow the mandatory self-isolation rules put in place by the Government of Canada.

If a traveller does not present a Self-Isolation plan or does not have a location for self-isolation, provincial accommodation may be made available or they will not be permitted to enter Canada.

It is important that you work with the temporary foreign worker to create a Self-Isolation Plan prior to their travel to Canada.

The plan must include the following:

- Location of where they will self-isolate
- How they will travel to the isolation location from the airport
- The employers name and primary contact details
- The position the foreign national is coming to fill in Canada
- A support for items that they may need such as food deliveries, prescriptions, or cleaning supplies during their 14-day isolation period



SELF-ISOLATION

Essential Items

As you prepare temporary foreign workers for travel to Canada it is important that you guide them on items to bring with them such as:

- non-medical mask
- Hand sanitizer or sanitizing wipes
- Two-week supply of toiletries
- Thirty 30-day supply of medicationl

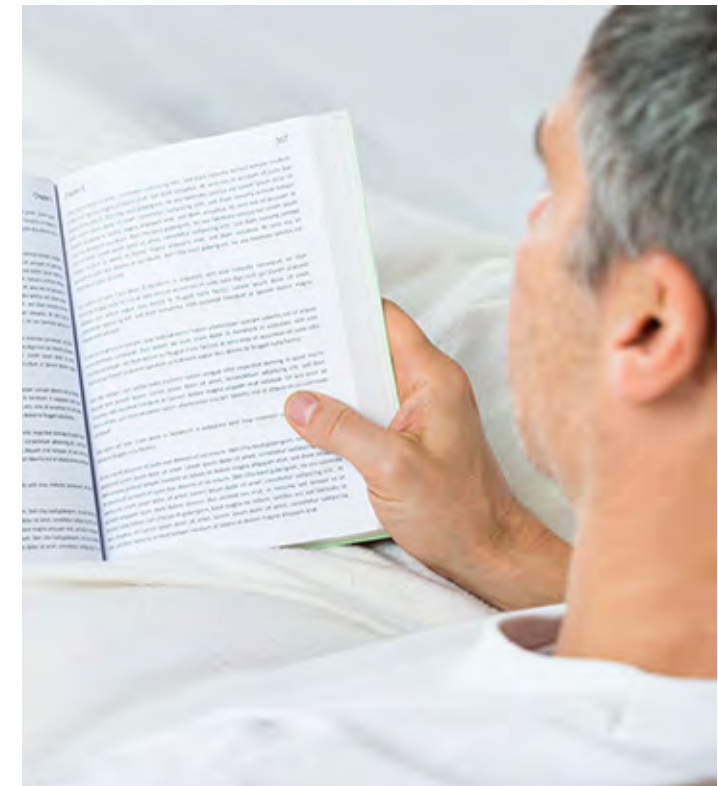


SELF-ISOLATION

Non-Essential Items

Suggestions of non-essential items may include:

- A book or other small items to keep them entertained during the self-isolation period
- Sufficient clothing for a week in the event they do not have laundering facilities in their accommodations



PRE-ARRIVAL

Preparing Workers

It is recommended to prepare temporary foreign workers with on-line training prior to their arrival in courses such as:

- Sanitation Practices
- Good Manufacturing Practices
- Food Safety Programs
- Temporary Foreign Worker during COVID-19

Use the following link to see a full list of available courses:

<https://foodprocessorsinstitute.com/>



A dark blue silhouette of a person sitting and looking out a window, with their arm resting on their knee. The background is a lighter blue gradient.

SECTION 4

SELF-ISOLATION

SELF-ISOLATION



On Entering Canada

It is mandatory that all persons entering Canada self-Isolate for 14 days.

Self-Isolation means the temporary foreign worker must go directly to their place of isolation and must stay inside the residence and not go out into the general public.

Temporary foreign workers will not be permitted to work until after their self-isolation is complete and they are not experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19.

Transportation to Self-Isolation

It is recommended that you arrange transportation from the airport to the place of self-isolation for the temporary foreign worker.

They may take public transportation however; they must not stop on the way to pick up supplies and they must always practice physical distancing.

SELF-ISOLATION



Self-Isolation Rules

During self-isolation, temporary foreign workers **MUST**:

- Go directly to their place of self-isolation, without delay
- Not go to work or other public areas
- Have someone pick up essentials like groceries or medications
- Not have visitors throughout the 14-day self-isolation period
- Stay in a private place like a yard or balcony if they go outside
- Monitor their health for symptoms of COVID-19
- Keep a distance of at least 2 metres (approximately 2 arm lengths) from others in their place of isolation and practice physical distancing at all times
- Stay in a separate room and use a separate bathroom from others in the home, if possible

SELF-ISOLATION



Employer Expectations

The employer cannot authorize the worker to work during the self-isolation period, even if requested by the worker, this includes performing tasks such as building repairs or administrative tasks.

The employer should communicate with the employee daily to check in on their well being.

The employer is asked to monitor the health of workers who are in self-isolation, as well as any employee who becomes sick after the self-isolation period. If a worker becomes symptomatic at any time, the employer should contact local public health officials.

The employer is asked to report a violation to the Quarantine Act on the part of a worker in self-isolation to local law enforcement. This includes workers that do not respect the mandatory self-isolation period.

It is very important that temporary foreign workers fully understands self-isolation rules as **violations carry a sentence of 6 months in prison and/or a \$750,000 fine.**

SELF-ISOLATION



Self-Isolation Accommodations

The employer must provide a safe and properly cleaned place for the temporary foreign worker to self-isolate in accommodations that are separate from those not subject to quarantine.

The employer may house workers who are subject to quarantine together, but the housing must always enable them to be 2 metres apart from each other. For example, beds must be at least 2 metres apart.

It is mandatory that the employer provide cleaning supplies in accommodations so the temporary foreign worker may keep their space sanitized.

Shared facilities (for example bathroom, kitchen, living space) are allowed, provided that there is sufficient space in the accommodations for workers to respect the quarantine requirements.

When possible, private housing with no physical contact with others or with the ability to stay in a separate room and use a separate bathroom is best.

It is recommended that date-stamped photos be taken of the facilities, including the bedroom, to demonstrate compliance.

SELF-ISOLATION

Self-Isolation Accommodations (Cont'd)

If temporary foreign workers are housed for quarantine in the same accommodations as others who are in quarantine, the clock resets to the day the most recent worker arrived. This is to account for the potential exposure of the new person from outside of the country to those already here.

The employer should provide workers with the tools needed to practice good hygiene. This includes access to facilities that enable them to wash their hands often with soap and warm water, providing soap, and providing an alcohol-based sanitizer if soap and water are not available.

The employer should ensure that surfaces in the accommodations are cleaned and disinfected regularly. It is suggested that surfaces in bathrooms, kitchens and common areas be cleaned and disinfected daily and that a log be maintained.



SELF-ISOLATION

Self-Isolation Accommodations (Cont'd)

Throughout the 14-day self-isolation period the temporary foreign worker should have access to:

- Food and grocery delivery
- Cleaning supplies
- Medical supplies if needed
- Phone and internet availability
- Medical emergency contact information
- Company contact information



SELF-ISOLATION

Permanent Accommodations

If the place of the 14-day self-isolation is not the temporary foreign worker's permanent accommodations, they may move only after the 14 self-isolation period has ended if they do not show any signs of illness.

If a worker becomes symptomatic at any time, the employer is required **to immediately provide accommodations that enable the worker to be isolated from others**, including a private bedroom and private bathroom





SECTION 5

PREPARING YOUR WORKPLACE

PREPARING YOUR WORKPLACE

You are Essential

As an employer in the food industry it will be necessary for you to continue operations as an essential service during the pandemic.

It will be important to prepare your workplace to keep your employees safe during this time.

Preparing your Workplace

As you think about preparing your workplace for COVID-19, the following actions may assist you with your preparations:.

1. Evaluate your workplace for risks
2. Explore new procedures to protect the workplace
3. Educate your employees on new procedures
4. Establish a communication strategy

Evaluate Your Workplace

Evaluate your workplace for possible work-related exposure to the virus and determine ways to reduce these risks.

Look for areas where people have frequent contact with each other and shared objects such as:

- Cafeterias
- Employee Entrances
- Washrooms
- Assembly lines



PREPARING YOUR WORKPLACE

Explore New Procedures

Explore the flexibility of current practices and consider what can be altered to mitigate risks. Some ideas to consider are:

- Increasing the distance between work- spaces by alternating seats on a production line or alternating crop rows when working in a field
- Zone off walk areas in hall-ways or path-ways to encourage physical distancing
- Alternate shift start times and stagger breaks and lunch periods for ease of physical distancing
- Enhance existing sanitation schedules to disinfect work areas and frequently touched surfaces continually
- Organizing employee health checks at the beginning of each shift, including taking employees temperatures and asking them a series of health questions
- Wearing a non-medical mask, gloves or other personal protective equipment Add extra hand washing stations and hand sanitizer stations throughout the workplace



PREPARING YOUR WORKPLACE



Educate Employees

Educate employees on safe work practices established by the company and ensure their adherence. Consider the following:

- Training employees on new work-safe procedures
- Reminder employees on the importance of good hygiene and handwashing
- The importance of using Personal Protective Equipment
- How to detect signs and symptoms of acute respiratory illness

**ANY EDUCATION/TRAINING PROVIDED
SHOULD BE SIGNED-OFF ON BY THE
EMPLOYEE AND A COPY KEPT IN THEIR
EMPLOYEE FILE AS PROOF OF TRAINING.**

PREPARING YOUR WORKPLACE



Establish Communication Practices

Establish a process for ongoing communication with employees to increase awareness about COVID-19 and to keep them up to date.

It's a good practice to use several methods to ensure the best possible outcome. Some examples could include:

- Email or text messages
- Employee memos or company newsletters
- Phone calls or intercom announcements
- Posters or pictures to illustrate safe practices

Be sure to also consider:

- Drafting communication in easy to understand language and translate documents if required
- Establish an Open-Door Policy. This ensures employees have a place to go to ask questions and report any witnessed infractions to the safe work practices
- Post pictures and reminders of important health procedures like physical distancing, handwashing and coughing etiquette

PREPARING YOUR WORKPLACE

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Where hazards related to COVID-19 cannot be eliminated through administrative and engineering controls, employers may consider the use of PPE in the workplace. PPE, which controls the hazard at the employee level, includes measures such as face masks, gloves and eye protection. Provincial governments have advised that PPE should only be used when all other mitigation measures have been implemented.

Employees must be trained on how to use PPE correctly, including fit, use, putting it on and taking it off, maintenance, cleaning, and disposal, as well as training on the limitations of PPE.



PREPARING YOUR WORKPLACE

Symptomatic Employee

Employees who appear to have symptoms upon arrival at work or who become sick during the day should immediately be separated from other employees and sent home. If the employee is able to be tested, the employee should not be allowed to return to the workplace until the employee tests negative for COVID-19 and has completed any self-isolation period mandated by public health authorities. If the employee is unable to be tested, the employee should not return to the workplace until the employee has completed a self-isolation period and is free of symptoms.

Employers should develop procedures for responding when an employee in the workplace becomes ill with symptoms of COVID-19, which could include:

- Procedures for isolating and transporting the individual home if they begin showing symptoms at the workplace
- Steps to take if an employee or other individual tests positive for COVID-19 shortly after attending the workplace
- Employers should also be aware that they may have an obligation to report COVID-19 transmission in the workplace to their provincial health authorities



The background of the page features a photograph of two men in a professional office environment. The man on the left, with short brown hair and a beard, is wearing a light blue button-down shirt and is smiling while looking towards the other man. The man on the right, with dark curly hair, is wearing a dark suit jacket over a light blue shirt and is looking back at the first man. The overall image has a blue color overlay.

SECTION 6

SUPPORTING EMPLOYEES

SUPPORTING EMPLOYEES

Providing Support in Uncertain Times

The COVID-19 pandemic is new and unexpected. This situation can be unsettling and it's normal for people and communities to feel sad, stressed, confused, scared or worried.

People will react in many ways. It's a good practice that employers support and promote employee Mental Health.



SUPPORTING EMPLOYEES



Providing Support in Uncertain Times (Cont'd)

Some common feelings of employees during COVID-19 may include:

- Fear of becoming ill or infected with COVID-19, or infecting others
- A sense of being socially excluded or judged by others
- Fear from being separated from loved ones due to isolation or physical distancing
- Feelings of helplessness, boredom, loneliness and depression as a result of isolation or physical distancing
- Fear of losing their job or not being able to work and struggling financially
- Concern about their children's education and wellbeing

If feelings are not addressed, this could significantly impact employees job performance.

SUPPORTING EMPLOYEES

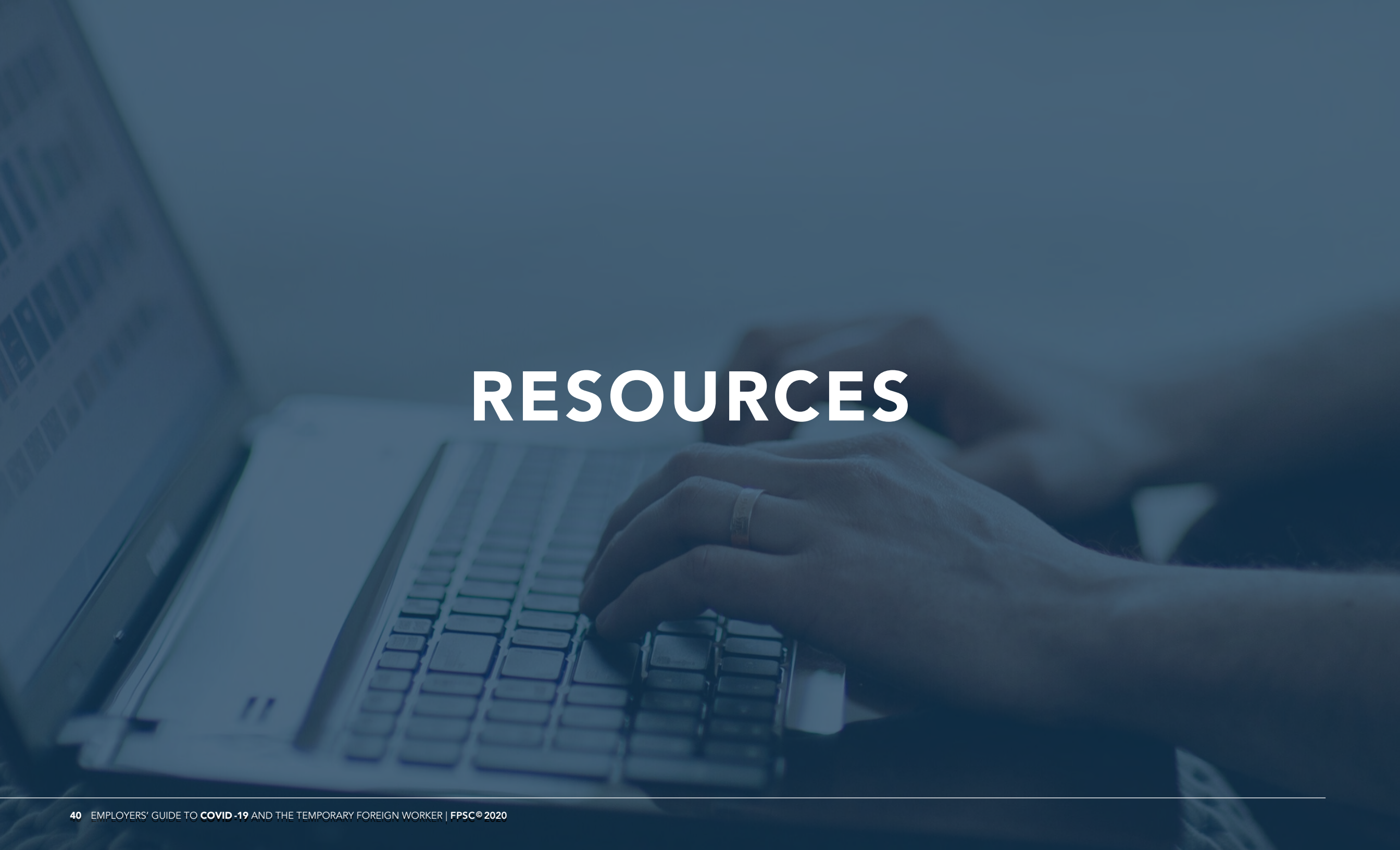
Mental Health Strategies

As an employer, you can greatly influence the impact of these feelings by promoting Mental Health Strategies.

Some suggestions include:

- Encouraging employees to stay informed but take breaks from social media, watching, reading, or listening to news stories
- Promote physical distancing, but also promote staying connected
- Promote mindfulness by encouraging employees to take deep breaths and stretch throughout the workday
- Support eating healthy meals and promote regular exercise by walking during lunch breaks
- Reminding them to be kind and compassionate to others





RESOURCES

RESOURCES

Up-to-Date Information

The COVID-19 outbreak has had an unprecedented impact on employers and employees that is changing in real-time. Consequently, the contents of this guide may become outdated quickly. We recommend that employers seek current, up-to-date information to be prepared to adapt to any changes.

Public Health Resources

For the latest public health information on Corona virus, visit www.canada.ca/coronavirus

Contact the coronavirus information line at 1-833-784-4397.

More information on symptoms and treatment (CDC):

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>

Quarantine Act

<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/q-1.1/index.html>

Emergency Act

<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/e-4.5/page-1.html>

Canadian Immigration Resources

Canadian Immigration regulation updates (IRCC)

https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/coronavirus-covid19.html?utm_source=slash-ircc-covid19-ircc&utm_medium=short-url&utm_campaign=covid19





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