

# **CONTACT NORTH | CONTACT NORD COVID-19 OPERATIONAL CONTINUITY PLAN AND REOPENING PLAN**

As of Thursday, November 10, 2022 - 2:00 p.m.

- As of Thursday, November 10, 2022, Contact North | Contact Nord has reopened 70 online learning centres for in-person support.
- To respond to rising rates of COVID-19, influenza and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), Contact North | Contact Nord is implementing five measures to protect the health and safety of staff and clients using our online learning centres (see A. 1) below for full details).
- Contact North | Contact Nord reminds all online learning centre staff to stay home if you are sick and do not feel well. Advise your supervisor immediately if you need to take time off.
- Contact North | Contact Nord online learning centres are reopening where it is safe to do so and government, health authorities and our hosts allow.
- Contact North | Contact Nord employees must comply with any COVID-19 health and safety requirements established by hosts.

For more details, read Contact North | Contact Nord's COVID-19 Operational Continuity Plan and Reopening Plan below.

It is regularly updated on MyHub with notification to all staff of any changes. All staff have access to MyHub, either at their place of work or remotely.

Continue to regularly check MyHub for updates.

## **A. CURRENT STATUS**

1) Contact North | Contact Nord is implementing the following five measures to protect the health and safety of staff:

1. Prohibit any staff group face-to-face regional, department or corporate in-person meetings (i.e., a face-to-face meeting of multiple staff in a region).

Staff who normally work together in an online learning centre or the IT hub can continue to work face-to-face as required.

2. Strongly encourage staff to wear masks and use hand sanitizer at the online learning centres and when presenting in the community.
3. Strongly encourage the use of the plexiglass barriers in online learning centres where it is difficult to maintain physical distancing.

4. Encourage clients to wear masks and use hand sanitizer while at the online learning centres. A [poster](#) is available encouraging, but not requiring clients, to wear masks.
5. Require Directors, R&P, ETAs, and other staff, who make presentations to groups within the community, to follow all host or partner requirements for such meetings. Staff are strongly encouraged to wear a mask when not presenting, maintain six feet of physical distancing (where appropriate) and use hand sanitizer.

Staff are not required to make presentations to groups or undertake other community outreach activities if they do not feel safe doing so.

Staff are encouraged to conduct such meetings or presentations virtually where possible.

These five measures are in effect until further notice.

Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health and other local public health units are considering public health measures, including mask mandates, to address the rising rates of these three respiratory viruses.

We continue to monitor these developments and will adjust our measures as appropriate.

As we did in the past, Contact North | Contact Nord will not hesitate to implement additional measures, prior to any government or public health unit action, to protect the health and safety of our staff and clients.

- 2) Contact North | Contact Nord staff should test for COVID-19 if they have [COVID-19 symptoms](#) and if you test positive, Contact North | Contact Nord requires you work from home, if you are well enough to work, until you have a negative test result on a rapid antigen test or a PCR test. There is no need to provide a copy of the negative test result to Contact North | Contact Nord.

Staff members who are required to work from home consult with their supervisor to identify any equipment they may need to successfully work from home during this temporary occurrence

Free Rapid Antigen tests are available throughout Ontario - [find a retailer near you](#).

If you are unable to get a COVID-19 test, staff should work from home, if you are well enough to work, for a minimum of five days from the onset of any symptoms and should continue to work from home if symptoms persist after five days.

Staff must also follow these guidelines:

- If you have symptoms of any respiratory illness, stay home until symptoms have improved for at least 24 hours.
- If you have a fever, stay home until it's completely gone.
- If you have gastrointestinal symptoms, stay home until symptoms have improved for at least 48 hours.
- After isolating at home, wear a mask in public for 10 days since the onset of symptoms.
- If sick, avoid non-essential visits to vulnerable or older people for a full 10 days starting the day after symptoms appear, including visits to high-risk settings such as long-term care homes and hospitals.
- If you're in the same household as someone who is sick or tested positive for COVID-19, mask in public spaces, even if you feel better, and avoid vulnerable individuals and settings for 10 days after exposure. Isolate immediately if you develop symptoms.

Symptoms of COVID-19 and its variants range from mild — like the flu and other common respiratory infections — to severe. If you feel sick, it's important that you stay home or talk with a doctor if necessary.

Contact North | Contact Nord employees are reminded they must continue to comply with any COVID-19 health and safety requirements established by our local partners who host our online learning centres, local public health units and all Government of Ontario guidelines for masks, self-isolation and physical distancing.

## **B. TOP PRIORITY**

Contact North | Contact Nord's top priority is the health, safety and well-being of its employees and clients visiting its online learning centres.

## **C. BUSINESS TRAVEL PERMITTED**

### **Guidelines**

Contact North | Contact Nord staff may travel for necessary business-related purposes, that cannot be reasonably conducted virtually, including meetings with external stakeholders/partners and clients outside of the online learning centres.

The following guidelines apply based on the nature of the travel.

### **Meetings with Stakeholders/Partners**

Treat these requests carefully and only agree to meet in person if the meeting cannot reasonably be accommodated through a Zoom session or phone call.

Do not feel pressured to agree to meet face-to-face if you feel your personal health and safety may be at risk. Outline your specific concerns to your supervisor and discuss alternate options.

Follow these three guidelines:

1. Ascertain the stakeholder/partner organization is:
  - a) Open to outside visitors
  - b) Accepting visitors and can provide a safe location to meet
2. Ensure there is a detailed plan for the visit, where you will go within the building, what the space will be like, and any location-specific rules you must observe to minimize risk.
3. Wash your hands upon entry to a location and on exit. If handwashing is not possible, bring personal hand sanitizer for use before entering and after leaving.

Wherever possible, schedule meetings with education and training providers and other stakeholders via audio, Zoom or other virtual means.

Address any questions to your supervisor.

### **Meetings with Clients/Students Outside an Online Learning Centre**

Due to the delayed reopening of some online learning centres, there may be requests from clients to meet face-to-face at other locations in the community to provide service.

Treat these requests carefully and only agree to meet if the request cannot reasonably be accommodated through a Zoom session, phone call or other virtual means.

Do not feel pressured to agree to meet face-to-face if you feel your personal health and safety may be at risk. Outline your specific concerns to your supervisor and discuss alternate options.

If you do meet face-to-face with a client, follow these five guidelines:

1. Meet in a public location that has the necessary protocols in place. Observe all of the location's protocols.
2. Do not meet in a client's home or your home.
3. Where feasible and practical, meet outdoors.

4. Do not meet with a client if you are not feeling well or have any respiratory symptoms.
5. Wash your hands or use hand sanitizer prior to and after the meeting.

Address any questions or concerns to your supervisor.

#### **D. TRAVEL OUTSIDE OF CANADA**

Visit the Government of Canada's [COVID-19 vaccinated travellers entering Canada website](#) for information on returning to Canada.

#### **E. WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW**

According to the Government of Canada, some people are at higher risk of more severe disease or outcomes from COVID-19 infection than others. However, there are a number of vaccines and treatments available.

The risk of getting COVID-19 varies between and within communities. Some settings and activities are also associated with higher risk of COVID-19 transmission.

The government continues to reassess the public health risk based on the best available evidence as the situation evolves.

Visit [COVID-19: Outbreak update - Canada.ca](#) for more information.

#### **F. PROTECTING YOURSELF**

The Ontario Ministry of Health lists the following steps to protect your health and reduce exposure to the COVID-19 virus:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Sneeze or cough into your sleeve, not your hand
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth
- Avoid contact with people who are sick
- Stay home if you are sick

#### **G. WHAT HAPPENS IF A STAFF MEMBER MUST GO INTO SELF-QUARANTINE AT HOME?**

Contact North | Contact Nord will support staff if they must remain at home:

- a) If the symptoms are mild, a staff member can continue to work from home and receive their regular pay.
- b) If the symptoms are debilitating and staff cannot perform work, full-time staff can draw from accumulated paid sick time. Once accumulated paid sick time is

exhausted, Contact North | Contact Nord can issue a Record of Employment (ROE) and the staff member can apply for sickness benefits through Employment Insurance. The Government of Canada recently announced changes to this benefit so employees do not have to wait the mandatory one-week waiting period and can be paid for the first week of their claim.

- c) For part-time staff who are ill and cannot work, Contact North | Contact Nord can issue a Record of Employment (ROE) and the staff member can apply for sick benefits through Employment Insurance.

Supervisors immediately advise HR Services of any staff members who must go into self-quarantine at home. The supervisor and HR Services identify any further actions that may be required, including notification to the local public health unit.

The Government of Canada is providing support to Canadians and businesses facing hardship as a result of COVID-19. Click [here](#) for information on accessing these supports.

## **H. RESPECT OTHER STAFF MEMBERS CONCERNS**

Everyone reacts differently to situations such as the closure of their workplace or the potential exposure to a virus such as COVID-19. Please be mindful and sensitive of this as you interact with your colleagues. Feel free to share any concerns you have with your supervisor or refer to the Employee Assistance Plan, which is available to full-time employees as part of the benefits package.

## **I. EXECUTIVE CONTINUITY**

In the event the President – Chief Executive Officer is unable to fulfill his responsibilities, the Director, IT, Finance & Organizational Planning has delegated authority to make all required corporate decisions.

In the event the Director, IT, Finance & Organizational Planning is unable to assume the President – Chief Executive Officer’s responsibilities, the Director, Human Resources Services has delegated authority to make all required corporate decisions.

## **J. RESOURCES**

Public Health Agency of Canada website (updated daily):

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection.html>

Public Health Agency of Canada Know the Facts Sheet:

<https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/phac->

[aspc/documents/services/publications/diseases-conditions/covid-19/coronavirus-factsheet-eng.pdf](https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/phac-aspc/documents/services/publications/diseases-conditions/covid-19/coronavirus-factsheet-eng.pdf)

Public Health Agency of Canada Be Prepared Fact Sheet:

<https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/phac-aspc/documents/services/publications/diseases-conditions/covid-19/covid-19-be-prepared-factsheet-eng.pdf>

Government of Ontario COVID-19 website:

<https://covid-19.ontario.ca/>

Telehealth Ontario at 1-866-797-0000

[Local public health units](#)

## **K. FOLLOW DIRECTIONS OF OFFICIALS**

Promptly follow any directions provided by your local public health unit, emergency responders or government officials.

Call your supervisor immediately upon receipt of such directions.

## **L. REQUESTS FROM THE MEDIA FOR COMMENT**

Do not respond. Refer any media inquiries to 1-800-561-2222 and ask to be transferred to the President – Chief Executive Officer.