

# **CUPE·SCFP**

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## **2022-2023 COVID Protocols**

### **Introduction**

The framework outlined in this document has been updated by CUPE effective for 2022-2023. The details in this document have been derived considering input from all Directors and the staff unions. This document is intended to highlight the most important preventative measures CUPE will take to protect its employees and visitors who enter our offices.

### **Working from CUPE Offices**

As always, we will continue to work within the government restrictions, orders and recommendations of the Public Health Agency of Canada and will continue to monitor the situation in all regions.

With the uncertainty that COVID-19 has brought, CUPE implemented a phased approach for reopening the offices and returning of staff. Since August, we have fully reopened all offices. Staff, depending on the nature of their work, are continuing to work remotely, others have adopted a hybrid approach and/or attend the office regularly. CUPE is now hosting in-person events and recognize additional measures may need to be implemented to ensure our staff remain safe.

As outlined in our original COVID-19 framework, CUPE will:

- Provide clear information about the safety measures being implemented.
- Implement an ongoing assessment of control measures to address the identified hazards related to COVID-19 in the workplace and at events hosted by CUPE.

### **Implementing Specific Procedures to Help Ensure Safe Workplaces**

Each office will continue to exercise preventative measures in the following broad categories:

1. Employee Self-screening
2. Vaccination
3. Cleaning and Disinfecting
4. Ventilation
5. Workplace Hygiene
6. Physical Distancing
7. Protective Equipment
8. Work-related travel
9. Visitors

## 1. Self-screening

CUPE has an obligation to provide a safe and healthy workplace for its staff. All staff and members are encouraged to complete daily screening before attending any CUPE event or CUPE premises. All visitors and contractors are required to complete daily screening at the entrances of our premises. Access to our premises, for visitors and contractors, will only be granted upon completion and passing of the self- screening survey. Anyone who fails the survey will be denied access to our premises until such time that they are able to pass the survey. All staff who are not able to pass the self-screening survey should not attend in person at an office or attend an in-person event. Contact your immediate supervisor to inquire whether working remotely is an option.

## 2. Vaccination

As part of CUPE's responsibility to take every reasonable precaution to protect the health and safety of our workers, CUPE has developed a new vaccination policy. In addition to this COVID-19 Protocol, staff will comply with CUPE's Vaccination Policy, where CUPE:

- Expects all employees to be fully vaccinated. The Public Health Agency of Canada now recommends if it's been longer than 6 months since your last dose, we ask you to consider getting another dose.
- Asks all unvaccinated staff or those who have not disclosed their vaccination status to conduct a COVID-19 rapid test before entering our premises on that day or on a testing schedule prescribed by the employer.
- Asks all unvaccinated visitors/members or those who have not disclosed their vaccination status to conduct a COVID-19 rapid test before entering our premises on that day.

CUPE will provide staff with pertinent information related to COVID-19 vaccination and testing, as well as provide support to all staff to facilitate vaccination.

Refer to CUPE's Vaccination Policy for more details.

## 3. Cleaning and Disinfecting

CUPE will:

- Direct cleaning staff and contractors to clean and disinfect public spaces nightly using approved cleaning products.
- Ensure targeted cleaning of shared spaces where there is an actual case of COVID-19.

#### **4. Ventilation**

Given the infectious nature of the COVID-19 virus, CUPE has made all efforts to increase the exchange of air in buildings using functions and capabilities in our HVAC mechanical ventilation systems.

CUPE will:

- Supply as much outside air as reasonably necessary into the office to move any potential virus particles out of occupied spaces.
- Run ventilation systems 24/7 where possible.

#### **5. Workplace Hygiene**

Maintaining good work and hygiene practices continues to be of utmost importance in our plan to return to the office.

CUPE will:

- Remind and promote the importance of regular and thorough handwashing by employees and other individuals present in the workplace.
- Ensure all staff and visitors have access to soap and water or alcohol-based sanitizer, put hand sanitizer dispensers at points of entry and other prominent places around the workplace, ensuring these dispensers are regularly refilled.
- Provide disinfecting wipes in common areas such as kitchens, meeting rooms, wellness rooms, workrooms, photocopy areas, etc. to enable staff to clean and disinfect touch points in these areas as needed during the day.
- Encourage respiratory etiquette (e.g., coughing or sneezing into a bent elbow, using tissues, and promptly disposing them in the trash) is followed. Hands must be washed or sanitized afterwards.
- Place informational posters throughout the workplace that remind staff and visitors to practice respiratory etiquette and hand hygiene in areas where they are easily seen (e.g., entrances, washrooms, and break rooms).

#### **6. Physical Distancing**

Physical distancing is limiting close contact with other people. We ask you to maintain at least six feet distance. In light of the recommendation from Canada's Chief Public Health Officer to maintain indoor masking, we ask you to mask where you are not able to achieve six feet of distance between seated parties. Efforts to limit staff working in small spaces and working in less frequented areas of the office should be maintained.

To ensure adequate physical distancing in each office CUPE will:

- Put markings on the floor in reception areas, near elevators, etc. to ensure awareness of keeping a proper distance between people.
- Install plexiglass in reception areas where it is not possible for a proper physical distance from the receptionist to be maintained.
- Increase the panel height where workstations are adjacent.
- Post signs, to prevent bottlenecks in high traffic areas, smaller spaces such as areas around workstations, appliances, machines, and photocopiers, etc. to indicate appropriate two-meter spacing.
- Open lunchrooms and kitchens but staff should continue to be cautious in these small areas and ensure all COVID protocols are always maintained. If the lunchroom is full, another location should be chosen.
- Any planned social events at the office need to be approved by your Director in advance.

## **7. Protective Equipment**

Available public health information continues to assert that masks are one of the best ways to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. As of November 10<sup>th</sup>, Canada's Chief Public Health Officer asked that Canadians continue to mask indoors. CUPE's position is that masking is still an important preventative measure.

CUPE will:

Require all staff, members, and other visitors to wear the best available mask (surgical mask, N95, or KN95) when in any common area such as a washroom, elevator, meeting room, photocopy area, workroom, lunchroom, hallway, etc. Surgical masks will be made available to CUPE staff and visitors at our offices. Masks should be well fitted.

- The following applies:
  - Lunchroom: masks may be removed while eating or drinking.
  - Meeting rooms: masks may be removed if you are sitting six feet apart. If you are seated closer than six feet apart, we ask you to continue to mask as recommended by the Public Health Agency of Canada.
  - Private office: masks will not need to be worn when working alone in a private office.
  - Workstations: CUPE will be enhancing the height of workstation panels for adjacent workstations as an added barrier. However, we recommend masks be worn when working in any open workstation.

## **8. Work-Related Travel**

CUPE recognizes that work travel is essential as members are looking forward to face-to-face contact and travel between regions. Although travel restrictions in most regions are lifted, CUPE reserves the right to implement measures above what Public Health recommends ensuring the safety of its staff.

CUPE will:

- Require physical distancing prevention measures to be implemented in CUPE fleet vehicles. In most cases this will require a limit of one person per vehicle, but where this is not possible, mask should be worn by every individual in the vehicle.
- Ask staff to contemplate whether Microsoft Teams is an effective method for holding a meeting.

All work-related travel must adhere to any federal guidelines for travel. When travelling between provinces, staff should ensure they are aware of all restrictions in the province they will be entering. Staff will continue to require Director approval before booking any air travel.

## **9. CUPE Hosted Events**

Events such as Union Education, branch meetings in hotels, national conferences, national committee meetings in hotels, etc.

- The CUPE Vaccination Policy will be followed for CUPE hosted events. This applies to all participants including member facilitators/member organizers doing in person work for CUPE.
- Every effort will be made to ensure physical distance standards are upheld at all CUPE sponsored events.
- We will continue to require indoor masking at all CUPE Hosted Events.
- For all attendees, we ask that you conduct Rapid Antigen Testing, before attending each day as part of self-screening regardless of vaccination status. If you develop symptoms consistent with COVID-19 and/or test positive, you are asked not to attend the event. Contact your immediate supervisor for next steps and follow the instructions for “Dealing with an actual or suspected case of COVID-19”.

## **10. Staff Attending Meetings or Events Outside the Jurisdiction of CUPE National**

- CUPE strongly recommends that all CUPE chartered organizations follow CUPE’s Vaccination Policy and COVID-19 Protocols to ensure safety of members and staff.
- Where adequate COVID safety policies do not exist, and/or where the workplace is perceived to be unsafe, staff should contact their Director to discuss their concerns. No staff will be required to physically work in a location where no COVID safety protocols are in place.

## 11. Visitors to CUPE Offices

In all phases of this framework, members and other visitors will be allowed to enter CUPE offices on certain conditions:

- Be fully vaccinated or have conducted a COVID-19 PCR or rapid antigen test prior to entering our premises.
- They have a pre-arranged appointment with a staff member who works from that office.
- They are feeling well and pass the daily self-screening survey.
- They follow all instructions posted throughout the office including putting on the mask that will be provided to them at the entrance.
- They are encouraged to maintain proper physical distance.
- All meetings with visitors must be held in a common area such as a meeting room and masks must be worn.
- Meetings with visitors will not be permitted in individual offices unless it is clear the proper physical distancing measures can be maintained.
- Access to member spaces normally available for members to hold meetings will again be available on evenings and weekends as they were before COVID. In offices where members were allowed access without a staff member being present, this practice can be resumed.
- Signage will be posted at all entrances to require individuals to self-screen before entering.
- Any visitor who is not fully vaccinated or has not conducted a COVID-19 test and does not pass the self-screening questionnaire should not come into the office.

### Dealing with an Actual or Suspected Case of COVID-19

#### Dealing with an actual case of COVID-19:

- In the office:  
If a CUPE employee is at their place of work and is not feeling well with COVID-19 related symptoms, they should immediately notify their Director and leave the workplace. It is recommended the employee be tested for COVID-19 either with a Rapid Antigen Test or PCR. If the employee tests positive for COVID-19 they must not attend the workplace for a minimum of 10 days and until no longer experiencing symptoms, or until they have had two negative rapid tests 24-48 hours apart, whichever is earlier. In no instance should symptomatic individuals attend the office.  
For employees who have symptoms and test negative, we ask that you do not attend the workplace until your symptoms are resolved as described above.  
Retest on Day 4 and if negative and no longer experiencing symptoms you may

return to the workplace.

- At home:

If a CUPE employee is at their home and tests positive for COVID-19, they should notify their Director, work remotely if feeling well enough to do so. We ask you not return to the office for a minimum of 10 days after testing positive and until no longer experiencing symptoms, or until you have had two negative rapid tests 24-48 hours apart, whichever is earlier. In no instance should symptomatic individuals attend the office.

In any case, whether an actual or suspected case of COVID-19, proper sick leave should be taken if an employee is too sick to work from home.

In the event there has been a confirmed case of COVID-19 of an employee or visitor who has been in the workplace, CUPE will:

- [Ask employees to complete the COVID-19 Occupational Illness](#)
- Advise all employees and visitors who may have been exposed and require them to follow the appropriate public health protocol.
- Protect the confidentiality of the employee who has contracted COVID in all necessary communications that result.

## **Evaluating Processes and Preventative Measures**

The recommendations and preventive measures contained in this plan are in effect until April 14, 2023, and will be examined on an ongoing basis, adjusted to make improvements where they are not working well, modified if they are creating other problems, and evaluated to ensure staff are doing what they have been asked to do to ensure a safe and healthy workplace environment for all.

## **Future Plans**

CUPE management will continue to monitor the pandemic situation and adjust accordingly and continue to base decisions on COVID protocols around the advice of public health, government authorities, and the Public Health Agency of Canada.

If staff encounter a situation that is not covered within this protocol, staff should consult with their Director if they have any questions.

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