



**Yarmouth & Area**  
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

# **COVID-19 Risk Assessment Guide**

May 2020

**Yarmouth & Area Chamber of Commerce**

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**Please note that in no way is this a legal document and businesses are advised to seek legal or professional advice for their particular case.**

This document is an attempt to help provide some guidance in the form of a risk assessment for the members of the Yarmouth & Area Chamber of Commerce and other businesses.

Please note that the following document is not intended to represent every scenario or all possible responsibilities, obligations or actions that your business may have to take to comply with provincial regulations or health orders as re-opening happens.

We hope that this document helps get you thinking about how to best prepare and function in this new reality. While we hope to be able to update this as time goes on we also encourage to you stay informed.

The government has advised that they do not expect that a vaccine will be available for 12 to 18 months or more, meaning life will not return to normal any time soon. Physical distancing, health screenings, physical barriers (plexiglass), hand washing, surface cleaning, masks and face coverings will be the new normal.

Your Chamber of Commerce is here to support you through this, should you have questions or concerns please reach out.

The following information is built off of information provided by Health Canada.

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/guidance-documents/risk-informed-decision-making-workplaces-businesses-covid-19-pandemic.html>

## Rating Matrix

Review all of the questions in the following document and then come back to this page and complete the charts to determine risk rating. Complete the questions honestly. We also suggest having key staff or a third-party complete a copy to get another perspective. The lower your score the better.

Transfer the ratings from each part.  
Multiply your rating by the weight to get your total for the question.  
Add totals for all questions to get your total for each part.

Transfer your rating to the totals table and compare your scores against the highest and lowest possible scores.

Rating Totals			
	Lowest Rating Possible	Highest Rating Possible	Your Rating
Part A	21	210	
Part B	73	730	
<b>Total Score</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>940</b>	

PART A			
Question	Rating	Weight	Total
A - 1		5	
A - 2		3	
A - 3		5	
A - 4		5	
A - 5		3	
<b>Total Part A</b>			

PART B			
Question	Rating	Weight	Total
B - 1		5	
B - 2		5	
B - 3		5	
B - 4		5	
B - 5		3	
B - 6		3	
B - 7		3	
B - 8		5	
B - 9		5	
B - 10		3	
B - 11		3	
B - 12		5	
B - 13		1	
B - 14		3	
B - 15		3	
B - 16		5	
B - 17		3	
B - 18		3	
B - 19		5	
<b>Total Part B</b>			

## Part A. Population at Risk: Employees/Contractors/Clients

### Demographics of your workforce and clientele

1. Are you aware of employees/clients that are from demographic groups at greater risk of severe disease, such as older adults or people with underlying medical conditions?

This is of high importance.

Risk Rating										
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
We have low risk demographics									We have high risk demographics	

If you have a high risk rating, you should consider the following risk mitigation strategies as part of your operational plan.

- Communication about risk to staff/clients should be emphasized;
- Encourage the use of individual measures such as frequent hand hygiene, physical distancing, respiratory etiquette and staying home when ill;
- If physical distancing cannot be consistently maintained, employers should consider having employees and clients wear a non-medical mask or face covering.
- Provide options to the medically at risk to reduce social contacts at work, such as teleworking arrangements, if possible.

If you have a low risk rating or are unsure we still recommend that following the above risk mitigation strategies but the degree/measures you use to meet this strategies may not be as stringent.

Do you have a unique challenge related to this risk? Explain.

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What measures do you need to take to mitigate this risk?

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2. Are your clients at greater risk of spreading the disease (e.g., young children)?

**This risk is of medium importance**

Risk Rating											
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
No, they are not										Yes, they are	

If you answered **YES**, you should consider the following risk mitigation strategies as part of your operational plan.

- Consideration should be given to modifying service delivery (e.g., reducing number of clients using services at the same time, providing services outdoors) and promoting use of individual measures such as frequent hand hygiene, physical distancing, respiratory etiquette.
- Bear in mind that it may not be possible to mitigate risk for certain groups of individuals (e.g. children are unlikely to comply with physical distancing, hand or respiratory hygiene or wearing a non-medical mask or face covering).
- Consider need for increased frequency of cleaning especially of high touch services.

If you answered **NO**, we don't believe that you need to take any special considerations beyond that of question one, but be sure to be ready to adjust if new information were to come to light and how you would address it.

**Do you have a unique challenge related to this risk? Explain.**

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**What measures do you need to take to mitigate this risk?**

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3. Are your employees at greater risk of being infected due to recent international travel or attendance at an identified risk setting (e.g., conference where cases were known to be present)?  
**This is a risk of high importance.**

Risk Rating									
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
We don't travel at all					We travel extensively				

If you have a high risk rating, you should consider the following risk mitigation strategies as part of your operational plan.

- Plan for absenteeism or alternative working arrangements (i.e., teleworking);
- For returning travellers who are asymptomatic and deemed essential workers considerations should be given to more stringent self-monitoring and other measures to reduce exposure and transmission to others (e.g., the use of a non-medical mask or face covering when physical distancing cannot be maintained).
- Employers should conduct a risk assessment (consider involving the local PHA) taking into account local epidemiology, response goal, critical infrastructure resources and potential positive and negative impacts of recommendations.

Although this risk should be under control at this point and be well known, we do recommend that you have a plan in place for dealing with this as we reopen should further spread happen.

**Should an employee be identified as being at risk of being infected, how would you handle the situation?**

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### Local Demographics and Epidemiology

4. Is the local community experiencing an increased rate of COVID-19 infection?

This is a risk of high importance.

Risk Rating										
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Low Rate									High Rate	

5. Is the local population at increased risk of severe disease if COVID-19 circulated?

This risk is of medium importance

Risk Rating										
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Low Risk Population									High Risk Population	

The answers to these questions will change with time. These are risks that you need to continue to monitor and should conditions change seek out information from public health officials and other known sources of information like your Chamber of Commerce to help guide you. We also recommend that within your operational plans that you identify this risk and, should conditions change, how your operational plan be adapted.

## Part B. Environment: Workplace/Setting

### Type of Service

1. What kind of service does your workplace/business provide (e.g., customer service, food service, manufacturing, hoteling, rideshare, etc.)?

This is a risk of high importance.

Risk Rating									
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Low Risk					High Risk				
Workplace					Workplace				

*Details: The risk of being exposed and/or acquiring the infection is greater if employees/clients interact more closely with one another or with numerous clients (e.g. personal care services). The number and duration of the exposures also have an impact on the risk of transmission. The more numerous or the longer the exposures, the higher the risk for transmission.*

Describe your Business: \_\_\_\_\_

Does your business require close interaction with large numbers of people or significant duration of exposure? If you answered YES, you need to consider how you can put into place the following mitigation strategies and others depending on your unique situation.

- Adjust workplace policies and procedures to reduce physical contact, such as teleworking arrangements, flexible hours, staggering start times, use of email and teleconferencing;
- Modify infrastructure to enhance physical distancing by 2 metres;
- Where possible consider going cashless. If this is not possible, encourage hand hygiene after exchange of money or items;
- Reinforce the importance of frequent hand hygiene, physical distancing, and respiratory etiquette
- Reinforce safe food handling practices.

Do you have a unique challenge related to this risk? Explain.

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What measures do you need to take to mitigate this risk?

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2. Will employees/clients be participating in activities that promote transmission?

**This is a risk of high importance.**

Risk Rating											
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
No they won't										Yes on a regular basis	

*Examples: Activities that could contribute to spread include, but are not limited to singing, cheering, close physical contact (less than 2 metre), and touching common objects (e.g., hand rails, utensils).*

**Identify what activities are common or unique to your business that may promote transmission.**

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Review the following risk mitigation strategies, be sure to note that there may be specific mitigation strategies that you need to utilize in your business because of the unique nature.

- Reinforce the importance of frequent hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette
- Reinforce physical distancing measures (e.g. avoid greetings like handshakes, maintain 2 metre distances between people wherever possible);
- If physical distancing cannot be consistently maintained, employers should consider having employees and clients wear a non-medical mask or face covering.
- Avoid sharing communal office equipment/supplies (e.g., tablets, electronic devices);
- Avoid potlucks, buffets, where serving utensils, plates, trays and other objects may be handled by multiple people.

**Identify what strategies and techniques you will utilize to reduce mitigate the risk?**

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3. Does your workplace/business provide essential services?

This is a risk of high importance.

<b>Risk Rating</b>									
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not Essential						Very Essential			

- Consider the societal impacts of altering, reducing or stopping services;
- Review and revise, as needed, your business continuity plans to prioritize key functions in the event of high workplace absenteeism.

Identify your key functions and the resources needed to operate them?

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**Setting/Location**

4. In what setting is your workplace/business located (i.e., a community-setting, large public space, office)?

*Details: A workplace/business located in a public space with high traffic is at an increased risk of being exposed/infected with COVID-19 due to the number of people coming in and out of the setting (i.e., high number of potential introductions of the virus).*

This is a risk of high importance.

<b>Risk Rating</b>									
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
No Traffic Controlled Space						High Traffic			

5. Is the majority of the work/service carried out indoors, outdoors or both?

*Details: Work/services offered outdoors (i.e. higher ventilation) are likely to be lower risk than those held indoors (e.g., construction work vs. administrative work in an office).*

This is a risk of medium importance.

<b>Risk Rating</b>									
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Outdoors								Very confined workplace	

6. Is your workplace/business in a geographically remote area or in close proximity to a densely populated area?

*Details: A workplace/business located in a more densely populated area (e.g., metropolitan), may have higher exposure/infection risks. Proximity of a workplace/business to a densely population area could result in a more rapid dissemination of disease.*

**This is a risk of medium importance.**

Risk Rating									
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Remote									Densely Populated

7. How do clients/customers/contractors primarily access your workplace/business (e.g., public transit, personal car)?

*Details: Workplaces/businesses accessible primarily via public transit may be at an increased risk of transmission due contact of potentially contaminated surfaces/objects and proximity with other individuals (especially at peak times) for a long period of time.*

**This is a risk of medium importance.**

Risk Rating									
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Private Transportation									Public Transit

Depending on your unique situation with regards to questions 4 – 7, you may need to consider the following risk mitigation strategies.

- Workplaces/businesses that operate in public spaces and/or urban centres can consider modifying service delivery/hours or closing to reduce spread;
- Encourage employees/clients to take public transit at non-peak times or to use a personal vehicle if possible to limit contact with others.
- Reinforce the importance of frequent hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette, and physical distancing.
- If physical distancing cannot be consistently maintained, employers should consider having employees and clients wear a non-medical mask or face covering. Employers/businesses with more than one location are encouraged to adopt a tailored approach on workplace measures based on local context.

**Identify what considerations you need to take to address questions 4 – 7.**

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**Setting/Location**

8. Does your workplace/business have a robust business continuity plan addressing issues like critical operations, prioritization of work/services, surge capacity planning, cross-training of employees.

This is a risk of high importance.

Risk Rating									
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Complete and Tested Plan									No Plan in Place

We know that many businesses have not done continuity planning, but that does not mean you cannot quickly put a basic plan together now.

- Review and revise, as needed, your business continuity plans to prioritize key functions in the event of high workplace absenteeism;
- Update emergency contact information of employees/contractors.

What key issues do you need to address in your continuity plan? Do you have updated contact information for all key people?

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9. How will staff absenteeism impact your operations?

This is a risk of high importance.

Risk Rating									
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
No Impact								Large Impact	

Dealing with absenteeism moving forward will continue to be an issue, these mitigation techniques might help.

- Prepare to institute flexible workplace and leave policies for employees who are sick, in self-isolation, or caring for family members.
- Prepare to have employees cross-trained
- Rapid on-boarding processes for new employees

Determine how staff absenteeism might affect your business. What do you have in place to address this and what could you put in place quickly?

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10. Do you have a risk communication plan to share information with your employees, contractors, clients, vendors and the public or other stakeholders?

**This is of medium importance.**

Risk Rating										
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Detailed Comms Plan									No Comms Plan	

Workplaces and businesses with a risk communication plan are more likely to be able to ease employees'/clients' fear, anxiety, rumors, and misinformation. This will contribute to a more productive workforce in uncertain times.

Good communications channels are key to reinforce public health measures in the workplaces such as hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette, and staying home when ill in order to limit transmission. It may also help with compliance with public health advice.

**How do you currently communicate with your key stakeholders? Is this sufficient? What further steps or communication methods do you need to put in place? Identify the key spokesperson(s) for your organization and who you might access for assistance.**

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11. Does your workplace/business employ a small or large number of employees?

This is of medium importance.

Risk Rating									
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Small Number					Large Number				
Less than 5					More than 250				

If you employ a larger number of employees these you may want to consider the following.

- Consider staggering work hours to reduce crowding and close contact;
- Consider retaining employees with critical functions only to reduce crowding and close contact.
- Consider cancelling non-essential activities in the workplace
- Reinforce the importance of frequent hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette, and physical distancing.
- If physical distancing cannot be consistently maintained, employers should consider having employees and clients wear a non-medical mask or face covering.

Even if you don't have a large number of employees some of these suggestions may be useful in your situation.

Identify if your business should put into place any of the above suggestions based on employee counts.

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**Policies and practices**

12. Can your workplace/business support flexible workplace policies (i.e., teleworking arrangements, staggered hours)?

This is of high importance.

Risk Rating									
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Supports								No supports	
Frequently								are available	
Offered									

Consider relaxing sick leave policies that support employees in isolation at home when ill, or in quarantine (self-isolation) due to exposure to a case or return from international travel (e.g., suspending the need for medical notes to return to work).

What policies can you alter that may make your business able to function safer and offer the flexibility needed during these times.

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**Mental health**

13. Does your workplace/business offer mental health support to your employees?

This is of low importance.

Risk Rating									
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Supports Frequently Offered									No supports are available

Consider the following risk mitigation strategies, especially if your in a high contact or essential service.

- Tailor plans for minimizing stress based on the employee/client situation;
- Provide mental health support services.

Identify the mental health supports available to your staff and how you are communicating that information to them.

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**Infrastructure**

14. Can your workplace/business infrastructure be easily altered/modified to implement public health and infection prevention and control measures (e.g., additional hand cleaning stations, spatial separation of 2-metre between workstations)?

This is of medium importance.

Risk Rating									
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Easy to Modify									Not able to Modify

15. Are there restricted points of entrance and exit that force people to be in close proximity and/or pass through high-touch areas (e.g. turnstiles, fingerprint entry, doors and elevators)?

This is of medium importance.

Risk Rating									
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Easy to Separate People									Always in Close Proximity

Consider the following risk mitigation strategies to assist with infrastructure risks.

- Reinforce the importance of frequent hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette, and physical distancing;
- Provide access to handwashing facilities and place hand sanitizing dispensers in prominent locations throughout the workplace/business, if possible;
- Provide additional respiratory etiquette supplies such as tissues, lined waste container, and hand hygiene products/supplies;
- Consider increasing the spatial separation between desks and workstations as well as individuals (e.g., employees, customers) from each other, ideally a 2 metre separation or use a physical barrier (e.g., cubicle, Plexiglas window), if possible;
- If physical distancing cannot be consistently maintained, employers should consider having employees and clients wear a non-medical mask or face covering.
- Enhance your environmental cleaning procedures and protocols with a special attention to high-touch surfaces and object.

Identify the actions you should take to alter your physical locations to reduce risk to your staff and customers.

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**Occupational Health and Safety - Including use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

18. How will symptomatic individuals in the workplace/business setting be handled? How will contacts be handled?

**This is of medium importance.**

Risk Rating									
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
We are ready and have a detailed plan							We have no plan for sickness in the workplace		

In order to be prepared for this possibility the following mitigation techniques should be considered, especially considering that COVID-19 will be in our communities for a long time to come.

- Plan for rapid isolation of a symptomatic employee;
- Identify an area where employees/clients can be isolated if they become ill at the workplace;
- Ensure that health care professionals onsite are using appropriate PPE and infection prevention and control (IPC) measures

**What are your key considerations should a symptomatic individual be in the workplace and how might you handle those that came into contact with the individual?**

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19. Have you or a Labour and Advanced Education Officer assessed risk associated with employee interactions with the public?

**This is of high importance.**

Risk Rating									
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
We have assessed/little risk								No assessment /high risk	

All businesses no matter the risk level should be considering the following mitigation techniques;

- A risk assessment that considers both the risk associated with a specific task/activity as well as the characteristics of the source of the infection (e.g. a sick person or a contaminated environment) should be undertaken to determine the most appropriate interventions.

- Employees who interact in person with the public (within 2 m), with objects handled by the public, or with spaces occupied by the public, should perform hand hygiene often and between every interaction with members of the public.
- Tools and technologies to minimize contact with the public should be used, such as having customers scan and pack their own purchases when possible.
- If feasible, barriers, such as clear Plexiglas screens, to protect employees who must interact within 2 metres of the public should be considered.
- If physical distancing cannot be consistently maintained, employers should consider having employees and clients wear a non-medical mask or face covering.
- Employees should be reminded not to touch their faces or the non-medical mask/face covering while using it.
- If workers (that are not health care providers) must perform tasks within 2 metres of people diagnosed with COVID-19, that have symptoms of COVID-19, or their environment, should consult their occupational health and safety department to discuss the need for additional PPE such as medical mask, gloves, eye/face protection and gown (droplet precautions).
- If PPE is recommended, it must be selected based on the results of a risk assessment and used correctly; training on its use including putting it on (donning) and taking it off (doffing) should be provided. Gloves are recommended when workers will be in direct contact with an ill person, or a contaminated object or environment.
- Misuse of gloves and other PPE increases risk of infection due to improper handling of potentially contaminated gloves and equipment. If they must be worn because the staff may come in contact with contaminated material they must be applied correctly.

**What are you going to do to reduce the associated risk with employee and customer interactions?**

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