

HOME SUPPORT WORKERS: SAFE RETURN TO WORK

See [Appendix A: Guidance for Home Support Workers' Supervisors](#); [Appendix B: Screening Tool for Health Professionals](#); [Appendix C: Supervisor's Guide to PPE](#); [Appendix D: How to Wear PPE Correctly](#)
See more information as computer links in the [Further Resources](#) section.

<p>Basic info about COVID-19 and how it spreads.</p>	<p>COVID-19 (Coronavirus Disease 2019) is caused by the SARS-CoV-2 Virus.</p> <p>The virus spreads by droplets when a person coughs, sneezes, or talks. The droplets can enter the body of another person through the eyes, nose or throat if within 6 feet (2 meters). The droplets do not remain in the air for very long but land on surfaces which others could touch and then touch their own eyes, mouth or face. This is why wearing mask and staying 2 meters apart is important.</p> <p>Performing hand hygiene is also important, ideally by washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use approved alcohol-based hand sanitizers.</p> <p>The virus is also passed to others when the infected person uses their hands to cover a sneeze or cough and then touches surfaces and objects, shakes hands or touches other people. This is why coughing and sneezing into your elbow is important.</p>
<p>Be aware of any COVID-19 symptoms before leaving home for work</p>	<p>An important way to protect your community and stop the spread of COVID-19 illness. Please check the BCCDC link: http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/about-covid-19/symptoms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fever, • chills, • cough, • shortness of breath, • sore throat and painful swallowing, • stuffy or runny nose, • new loss of smell, • headache, • muscle aches, or • tired and/or loss of appetite. <p>If you feel unwell with these symptoms, let your supervisor know immediately and stay home. Call 8-1-1.</p>

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Self-care/ care for others

Wash your hands:

Frequent handwashing is very important. See the computer link on [handwashing](#).

- Arriving at office
- Arriving at client's home
- Leaving a client's home or the office
- Before putting on personal protective equipment (PPE)
- After removing PPE
- Before and after taking a break
- After handling documents, packages, boxes, bags

At the office:

- It's important to always keep **6 feet (2 meters)** of physical distance between you and other people in order to contain or reduce the spread of the virus.
- There may be a limit to the number of staff in the office at one time.
- Open windows and doors to let in fresh air and sunlight.
- Wear a non-medical or cloth mask if you cannot always maintain 6 feet (2 meters) between yourself and co-workers.

<http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/prevention-risks/masks>

- Clean and disinfect all surfaces that you touch.

Screening before any home visit:

The community/employer are responsible for determining the pathway for pre screening of the client before the appointment. For screening questions to be asked prior to every visit, see Appendix B: Screening Tool for Health Care Providers
Clients should be:

- Screened for symptoms of COVID-19; and
- Aware that
 - you are coming,
 - you will be wearing PPE,
 - you may be doing tasks differently than you did before, and
 - others in the home should leave during your visit.

Physical Distancing:

The goal for each visit is to always keep **6 feet (2 meters)** of physical distance between you and the client whenever possible. Because personal care is a big part of your home visits, this is not always possible, so **eye protection and a procedure mask are worn for all home visits. Follow the BCCDC Mask link for most up to date**
<http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/prevention-risks/masks>

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	<p>Personal Protective Equipment: You will be provided with training and personal protective equipment (PPE) by your employer. These are items to protect both you and your client.</p>
<p>During the work day</p>	<p>There may be changes to your schedule or work days to ensure safety for you and your clients. The tasks you do in the home may also have changed since before COVID-19. Confirm with your supervisor what services you can provide.</p> <p>If you feel unwell with COVID-like symptoms while at work, immediately speak with your supervisor and call 811 for what to do next. If you are concerned about your client's health before or during a visit, immediately speak with your supervisor and if the client is able to, ask the client to call 811.</p>
<p>Prepare for the visit</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gather any personal protective equipment (PPE) for that day (see below for required equipment). • Wear only closed-toe shoes at work. • You may need to wear a mask for a long time, so you might want to have a large drink and snack at the start of your shift. <p>Any items taken into the home need to be disinfected or put in the garbage when you leave.</p> <p><i>To be discarded into the garbage after use</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bag for outerwear for each visit • Garbage bag for disposable PPE <p><i>To be removed from the home and disinfected</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eye protection • Medical equipment and supplies • If you take your cell phone and/or your keys into the house, ensure that they are kept in a resealable bag in case there is an emergency. <p>What <i>not</i> to take into the home:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not bring any personal or extra items into the home (e.g., cigarettes, wallet, purse, gum etc.).
<p>Starting the visit</p>	<p>Before entering the home: While standing at the door, 6 feet (2 meters) away, before you enter the client's home:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure that everyone in the home feels well. If someone does not feel well, speak with your supervisor before entering the home. • Ask others to leave the home or stay in a different room while you are there working.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remind your client that you must stay 6 feet or 2 meters apart when not providing direct care. • Ask your client to wear a homemade mask if they have one. • Although it is important to limit the time spent in close contact with your client, remember to move at your client's pace. • Be mindful/aware that increased stress and uncertainty during this time can reactivate past trauma for some individuals. Communication is key.
During the visit	<p>Preparing meals/washing the client's laundry</p> <p>See Fact Sheet: Homemaker Safe Return to Work on FNHA COVID-19 site: https://www.fnha.ca/Documents/FNHA-Home-Support-Workers-Safe-Return-to-Work.pdf</p>
<p>NO TO COVID-19 SYMPTOMS (when in direct contact with client less than 2 meters apart)</p>	<p>If you are going to a home where the client says NO to COVID-19 symptoms <i>within the home and is not self-isolating</i>, wear</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eye protection, and • Procedure Mask <p>Only wear gloves if the task requires them. Apply the eye protection and face covering unless they are already on from a previous visit.</p>
After leaving the house	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Clean and disinfect eye protection after wearing. Store in a clean sealed plastic bag or container. 2. You can drive with the mask on if it does not impair your vision. 3. Use a new mask when the old mask is wet, damaged or soiled or removed. <p>Perform hand hygiene after gloves are removed and placed in outside garbage.</p>
<p>YES TO COVID-19 SYMPTOMS</p> <p><i>Whenever possible, visits to clients who are symptomatic should be postponed by your supervisor.</i></p>	<p>If you are directed to visit a home where the client says YES to COVID-19 symptoms and/or is self-isolating, and your supervisor determines that the visit is essential, wear:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical grade gloves, • disposable gown, • eye protection and • procedure / surgical mask. <p>Prior to entering the client's home</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Remove your outerwear and place in a bag. 2. Perform hand hygiene. 3. Put on disposal gown, mask, eye protection, and gloves. <p>Gloves are put on last.</p>
After leaving the house	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Remove gloves and disposable gown and put into a garbage bag, taking care not to touch the outside of the bag with the gown and gloves.

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	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Perform hand hygiene. 3. Throw bag in client's outdoor trash. 4. Perform hand hygiene once more after disposal. 5. Remove eye protection, clean and wipe with disinfectant and allow to air dry. 6. Store in a clean re-sealable bag/container. 7. Perform hand hygiene.
<p>At the end of your day</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disinfect eye protection. If eye protection appears soiled, wash first with soap and warm water then wipe with disinfectant wipe and allow to air dry. • Store in a clean re-sealable bag/container. • Medical equipment and supplies are cleaned and stored for the end of the day. • Perform hand hygiene. • When you get home, remove your clothes immediately and wash separately from other laundry, using hot water and detergent. • Shower immediately with soap.

Further Resources:

- (1) Direct individuals with symptoms to the BC COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tools:
 - <https://bc.thrive.health/>
 - <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/about-covid-19/symptoms>
- (2) Information and posters for self-monitoring and self-isolation:
 - <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/self-isolation>
- (3) Information and posters for handwashing, use of hand sanitizers:
 - <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/prevention-risks/hand-washing>
 - <https://ncceh.ca/content/blog/when-hand-washing-not-handly-cautions-hand-sanitizer-use>
- (4) Information and posters for respiratory/cough practice:
 - https://sharedhealthmb.ca/wp-admin/admin-ajax.php?juwpcfisadmin=false&action=wpfd&task=file.download&wpfd_category_id=319&wpfd_file_id=5102&token=72d47328146eb82ea5d49ab8e02c6635&preview=1
- (5) Information/pictures on putting on and taking off personal protective equipment (PPE):
 - Steps to don (put on) PPE: http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Professionals-Site/Documents/COVID19_MOH_BCCDC_Donning.pdf
 - Steps to doff (remove) PPE: http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Professionals-Site/Documents/COVID19_MOH_BCCDC_Doffing.pdf
 - How to wear and not wear PPE: <https://sharedhealthmb.ca/files/covid-19-ppe-wearing-it-right.pdf>

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- (6) Homemade face masks:

<https://www.fnha.ca/Documents/FNHA-Homemade-Face-Masks.pdf>

Instructions on how to wear a mask if the design of the straps is similar to medical masks:

http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Professionals-Site/Documents/COVID19_SurgicalMaskPoster.pdf

- (7) Place signage on front doors telling staff NOT to enter the premises if they are feeling ill:

<https://www.fnha.ca/Documents/FNHA-COVID-19-Do-Not-Enter-Home-Sign.pdf>

- (8) Instructions on safe extended use and safe re-use of equipment see: [Provincial PPE guidelines](#).

- (9) Reference for cleaning and disinfecting:

<http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/prevention-risks/cleaning-and-disinfecting>

- (10) Instructions on cleaning your cellphone:

<https://www.fnha.ca/Documents/FNHA-Prevent-COVID-19-by-Cleaning-Your-Phone.pdf>

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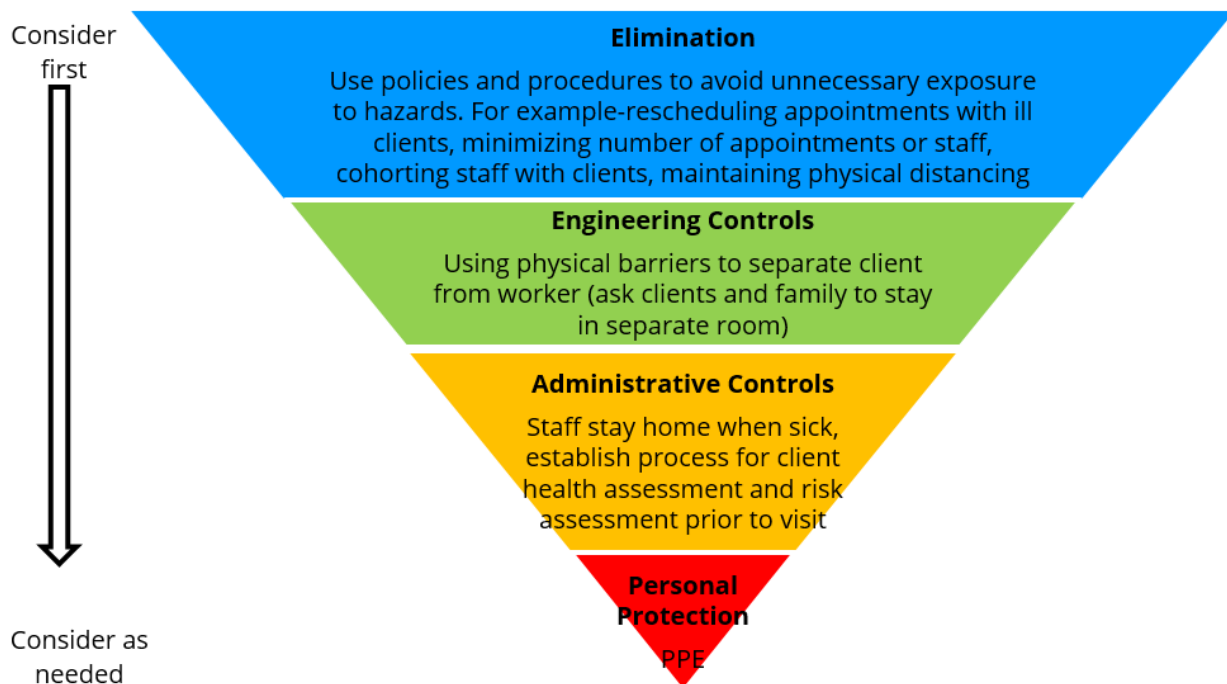
Appendix A: Guidance for Home Support Workers' Supervisors

The Hierarchy of Controls provides a way of thinking about how to re-start programs and services in a way that balances Community and individual service needs while minimizing risk from COVID-19 and other hazards.

Hierarchy of Controls

The framework ranks different ways of minimizing the risk of exposure to hazards (e.g., chemical, mechanical, biological, etc.).

It shows levels of control efforts: elimination, engineering controls, administrative controls, and personal protection, in the order of their effectiveness. For example, minimizing face-to-face contact whenever possible is one of the most effective ways to prevent exposure to COVID-19. Please see the diagram below for additional examples. By implementing a combination of measures at each level, the risk of COVID-19 is substantially reduced.



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Appendix A: Guidance for Home Support Workers' Supervisors (continued)

The home support worker's supervisor screens the clients and plans the steps to reduce exposure to infectious disease. Prior to visits, the supervisor contacts the clients so that:

- Clients are aware that the home support worker is coming.
- There is confirmation that everyone in the home is well (no one with symptoms of or suspected, presumed, confirmed COVID-19, no one on public health required self-isolation, or any other infectious disease, etc.).
- There is confirmation that there are no other known hazard (e.g., chemical fumes, aggressive pets, bed bugs, etc.).
- Clients are aware that the home support worker will be wearing PPE and that the home support worker may be doing tasks differently from before.
- Clients are aware that they are not able to ask the worker to do anything other than what supervisor has approved. Encourage the client to call the supervisor if there is another task that is needed to be completed.
- Others in the home know to leave while the home support worker visits.

If the Home Support Worker believes that they have COVID-19-like symptoms, they should stay home and call their supervisor. The supervisor will:

1. Use the BC COVID-19 self-assessment tool to determine if the worker should get a COVID-19 test: <https://bc.thrive.health/>.
2. Instruct the worker to call 8-1-1.
3. Instruct and support the worker to self-isolate and not return to work until a doctor or nurse says it is safe to do so (usually 14 days after the start of symptoms).
4. Review with the worker the computer links for information on assessment of symptoms and self-care and care for others: [self-assessment of symptoms](#), [self-monitoring and self-isolation](#), [cough practice](#).

When cleaning the home

An approved cleaner and disinfectant product with a Drug Identification Number (DIN) from Health Canada should be considered when the worker is cleaning the home of someone reporting yes to COVID-19 symptoms or self-isolating.

Poster

Some clients may want to post a sign on their front door advising non-family members with possible COVID-19 symptoms not to enter. See computer link for the [poster](#).

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Appendix B: Screening Tool for Health Care Providers

SCREENING QUESTIONS TO BE ASKED BY THE SUPERVISOR PRIOR TO EVERY VISIT:

1. Are you or anyone in the home on self-isolation for COVID-19?
2. In the past 14 days have you or someone in your household:
 - Returned from travel, including outside British Columbia (includes the rest of Canada, United States and international); OR
 - Had **exposure** to a confirmed case of COVID-19; OR
 - Had been **tested** for COVID-19 due to being symptomatic; OR
 - Had **laboratory exposure** working directly with biological specimens that contain COVID-19.

Ask if the client or anyone in the household has new onset of any of these symptoms: fever, chills, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat and painful swallowing, stuffy or runny nose, new loss of smell, headache, muscle aches, or tired and/or loss of appetite. If someone screens YES, have them call 8-1-1.

If NO, HSW wears Home Visit PPE (for activities within 6 feet or 2 meters of client): eye protection and mask. **This is worn for all home visits.** Gloves are used when the **task** requires them. Closed-toe shoes are worn.

Masks should be worn for every client visit throughout the shift and can be worn while driving. Wash a face covering if it is wet, damaged or soiled in hot soapy water at the end of each shift.

Eye protection should be worn for every client visit throughout the shift and for multiple shifts with appropriate cleaning and disinfection. Remove and disinfect eye protection at breaks, before driving, and at end of shift. Store in a sealed plastic bag.

Gloves must be changed between each task that requires gloves. Select appropriate gloves for the task (e.g., nitrile gloves for personal care, janitorial gloves for cleaning). Perform hand hygiene before gloves are put on and after removing them.

If YES, HSW wears Contact and Droplet PPE: gloves, disposable gown, eye protection and procedure mask. Closed-toed shoes are worn.

Putting on Contact and Droplet PPE:

- **Prior** to entering the client home, perform hand hygiene hands then put on isolation gown, procedure mask, eye protection (if not already worn), and gloves.

Taking off PPE

- **If possible, after exiting the home** remove gloves and gown, and discard into trash bag, preferably one that is easy to open.
- Perform hand hygiene.
- If outerwear is worn, remove from bag and discard bag then put outerwear on.
- Perform hand hygiene.

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Appendix C: Supervisor's Guide to PPE

The highest priority is to make sure workers or other clients are not exposed to a hazard. However, if the supervisor has determined that to postpone service will be detrimental to the health and safety of a client, the use of PPE along with other IPC measures are to be emphasized.

Based on the home support worker's work tasks and associated hazards, personal protective equipment may include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Gloves (exposure to client's bodily fluids, exposure to cleaning chemicals, etc.)
- Handmade Masks, face coverings (to protect the client)
- Surgical / Medical / Procedural Masks (exposure to chemicals, irritants, etc.)
- N95 Respirator (aerosol generating activities)
- Eye protection (exposure to cleaners/disinfectants/detergents).
- Disposable gown (exposure to cleaners/disinfectants/detergents/contaminants/infectious organisms/infectious body fluids, etc.).

See links for pictures ([Appendix D: How to Wear PPE Correctly](#)) and directions for putting on and taking off PPE ([Further Resources](#)).

Masks should be worn for every client visit throughout the shift, and can provide some protection when physical distancing cannot always be maintained, helping to protect the client and the client's environment from droplets coming from the mouth and nose of a worker who is carrying the virus but not showing any symptoms. Once a mask is removed it cannot be put on again if there is exposure i.e. used in close proximity of clients (less than 6 feet/2 meters). Refer to the document, [COVID-19: Emergency Prioritization in a Pandemic Personal Protective Equipment \(PPE\) Allocation Framework](#)

BCCDC link to masks

<http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/prevention-risks/masks>

[How to wear a face mask.](#)

Eye protection should be worn for every client visit throughout the shift and for multiple shifts with appropriate cleaning and disinfection. If there is obvious dirt on the eye protection, it should be cleaned with soap and water before using disinfecting wipes. For eye protection that is not visibly dirty, use disinfectant wipes only and water if there is film created by disinfectant wipe. BCCDC cleaning document http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Professionals-Site/Documents/COVID19_EyeFacialProtectionDisinfection.pdf

Full contact and droplet precautions can be put on outside the client's home to reduce risk or contamination within the client's home where there is greater risk for contamination. Can follow BCCDC donning of PPE steps.

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Appendix D: How to Wear PPE Correctly

Putting on and taking off PPE

This is a critical skill that, if done incorrectly, will put the worker and clients at risk. Training and practice is essential.

PPE - Wearing it RIGHT!

✓ The RIGHT way



✗ The WRONG way

