

HOMEMAKERS: SAFE RETURN TO WORK

See [Appendix A: Guidance for Homemakers' Supervisors](#); [Appendix B: Screening Tool for Homemakers' Supervisors](#); [Appendix C: Supervisor's Guide to PPE](#).

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 a face covering and staying 6 feet (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>COVID-19 symptoms can vary. For a complete list of symptoms, click the following BCCDC link: http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/about-covid-19/symptoms</p> <p>An important way to protect your community and stop the spread of COVID-19 illness is to stay at home if you have the following:</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 have these symptoms, let your supervisor know immediately. 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.
- 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 homemade mask if you cannot always maintain 6 feet (2 meters) between yourself and co-workers.
- Clean and disinfect all surfaces that you touch.

Screening before any home visit:

The community is 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 are asked to leave during your visit or remain in a separate room.

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. ***A homemade mask is worn for all home visits.***

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<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 or are concerned about your client's health before or during a visit, immediately speak with your supervisor and call 811 for what to do next.</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 in a resealable bag/container (remains in car) • supplies • If you take your cell phone or keys into the house, ensure they are kept in a resealable bag in case there is an emergency. Disinfect if they are removed from the bag. <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>Personal Protective Equipment (PPE): What do I need to know?</p> <p>You will be provided with training and personal protective equipment (PPE) by your employer as needed. PPE are items to protect both you and your client.</p> <p>PPE may include eye protection, gloves, clothing protection, and/or homemade masks (according to provincial recommendations: http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/prevention-risks/masks)</p>	

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The type of PPE you need to wear will depend on the tasks you are doing. Check with your supervisor. Remember, physical distancing of 6 feet (2 meters) and washing hands are the key to preventing spread of infection.

Starting the visit.

Before entering the home:

While standing 6 feet (2 meters) from the door, before you enter the client's home:

- 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.
- Remove outerwear and store in a disposable bag
- Put on appropriate PPE before entering home as shown by your supervisor
- Be mindful/aware that increased stress and uncertainty during this time can reactivate past trauma for some individuals. Communication is key.

Safe care in the home:

1. Practice physical distancing of 6 feet (2 meters) and avoid any physical contact with your client.
2. Wash hands often.
3. Ask your client and anyone else in the home to wear a mask if they have one according to provincial recommendations: Link. <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/prevention-risks/masks>

Cleaning the home.

Clean - remove dirt, crumbs and germs from soiled items using hot soapy water. This is done before disinfecting.

Disinfect - kills the virus using disinfectant solution after cleaning.

Things to remember when cleaning the home:

- Frequently clean and disinfect **commonly touched areas** such as:
 - ◊ kitchen tables and chairs,
 - ◊ windows (including the trim and latches),
 - ◊ light switches and door handles,
 - ◊ soap dispensers,
 - ◊ stair-rails and guardrails, step ladders,
 - ◊ fridge and microwave doors, handles and buttons,
 - ◊ cupboard handles and drawers, and
 - ◊ remote controls, and electronic devices.
- Clean and disinfect any **health equipment** such as walker, wheelchair, pole or commode. Remove any removable pieces to help better clean and disinfect
 - ◊ For a commode basin, use the toilet bowl brush to clean and disinfect.
- Disinfect the **washroom** from the top and move down.
 - ◊ Wear eye protection
 - ◊ Clean and disinfect sink and vanity, then shower and tub from the top

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down, including the shower curtain.

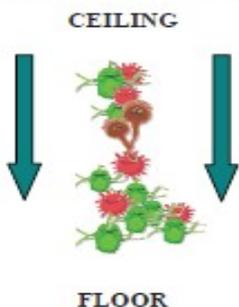
- ◆ Flush the toilet bowl with the lid down. When you put the cleaner in the bowl and scrub, allow cleaner to sit for 30 seconds before flushing.

Note: Not all homes will have cleaners that are capable of disinfecting. Speak with your supervisor about appropriate cleaning and disinfectant solutions that can be used. See computer link below.

1. Work from the highest point in the room to the lowest point
2. Work from the outside edges of the room to the inside area of the room
3. Work from the cleanest objects/surfaces of the room to the dirtiest objects/surfaces of the room.
4. Wipe in one direction only with one- to two-inch overlap.

The Correct Cleaning Order

1. Work from **highest** point in the room to the **lowest** point in the room



2. Work from the **outside** edges of the room to the **inside** area of the room



3. Work from **cleanest** objects/surfaces in the room to the **dirtiest** objects/surfaces in the room



5. Use one side of the cloth for each major item. Do not re-dip dirty cloths back into the cleaning solution. Use clean cloths each time. This may require using a larger number of cloths than normal. If you use paper towels or disposable wipes, immediately throw away after use.
6. If you are using a spray bottle, spray directly onto the cloth and not onto the furniture, tub, and counter or into the air.
7. Use soap and hot water to clean.

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	<p>8. Use a bleach and water solution to disinfect. 9. Allow surface to air dry and do not use a cloth to dry it. 10. Change the solution in the bucket when it appears dirty.</p> <p><i>Use the figure 8 motion when mopping with one- to two-inch overlaps. The floor must look wet and air dry to kill the germs.</i></p>
<p>Making meals for the client.</p>	<p>Prepare the meals as before.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remember: Wash your hands - before starting, before preparing or handling food, after handling waste, after using the toilet, after blowing nose, sneezing and coughing, after eating, drinking or smoking, and after finishing your work. Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands when you are preparing the food. Discard any foods that may have been contaminated from coughs or sneezes. Wash used dishes as you normally would, in hot soapy water. <p>Disinfect the counter and surfaces you touched: fridge handle, buttons and handles on stove and microwave after your meal preparation is completed.</p>
<p>Doing the client's laundry.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wear appropriate personal protective equipment when handling dirty laundry and discard after each use. Ensure the dirty items only touch your gloved hands. Wash hands immediately after gloves are removed. Do <u>not</u> shake dirty laundry. Disinfect clothes hamper after clothes are washed. Consider using a washable liner in the hamper if it is difficult to clean. <p>Use the warmest possible water settings for washing the clothes and ensure that all items are thoroughly dried – hang to dry or use dryer.</p>
<p>Driving clients to appointments</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only drive client if visit is essential and passenger is without symptoms Only one passenger at one time in the vehicle and sit in the back seat Drivers and passenger wears mask. Homemade mask is okay if sitting greater than 6 feet (2 meters) away Clean car as per supervisor instructions
<p>After leaving the house to go to your next client.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Clean and disinfect eye protection after wearing. Store in a sealed plastic bag or container. You can drive with mask on if it does not impair your vision. Use a new mask if the old one is wet, damaged or soiled or removed. After taking out and putting on your outerwear from the bag it was stored in, throw the bag in the client's outside garbage. <p>Remember, perform hand hygiene after gloves are removed and placed in outside garbage.</p>

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<p>At the end of your day.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You need to disinfect your eye protection – if it appears soiled, wash first with soap and warm water then wipe with disinfectant wipe and allow to air dry. • Store in a clean resealable bag/container. • Perform hand hygiene. • When you are home, remove your clothes immediately and wash separately from other laundry, using hot water and detergent. • Shower immediately with soap.
<p>Concerns before or during a visit.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you are concerned before or during a visit, discuss with your supervisor and/or nurse right away. • Know the symptoms of COVID-19. Report to your nurse if your client feels ill and has symptoms.

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?juwfpisadmin=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>
- (6) Homemade face masks:
 - <https://www.fnha.ca/Documents/FNHA-Homemade-Face-Masks.pdf>

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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>
- (11) Infection Prevention & Control – Measures for Client Transportation
<https://www.fnha.ca/Documents/FNHA-Infection-Prevention-and-Control-Measures-for-Client-Transportation.pdf>

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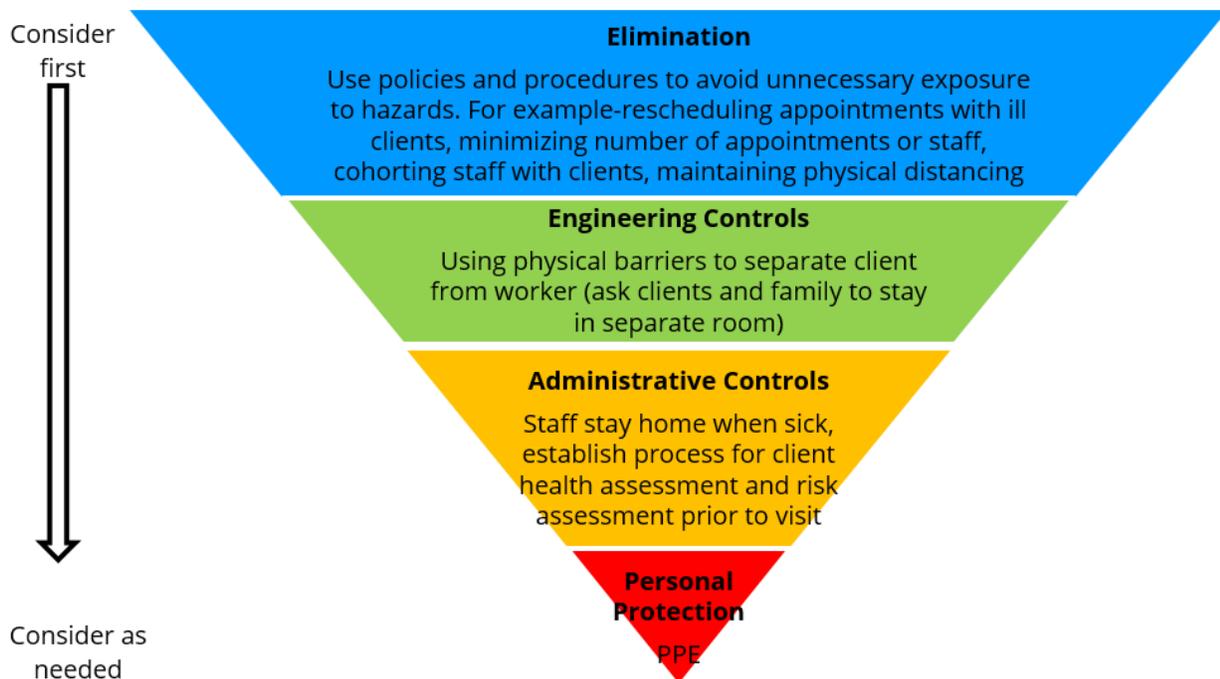
Appendix A: Guidance for Homemakers' Supervisor

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 Homemakers' Supervisor (continued)

The homemaker'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 homemaker 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 homemaker 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 Homemaker 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. ⁽⁹⁾

When transporting clients:

<https://www.fnha.ca/Documents/FNHA-Infection-Prevention-and-Control-Measures-for-Client-Transportation.pdf>

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 Provider

SCREENING QUESTIONS TO BE ASKED BY THE SUPERVISOR PRIOR TO EVERY HOME 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

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. Postpone homemaker visits to prevent spread to homemaker and other clients.

If NO, homemaker wears Home Visit PPE (for activities within 6 feet/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. A homemade mask is acceptable and should be washed in hot soapy water at the end of each shift if it is wet, damaged or soiled.

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

Putting on Contact and Droplet PPE:

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

Taking off PPE

- **If possible, after exiting the home** remove gown, and then gloves 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.
- Remove eye protection only if driving to next client.
- Perform hand hygiene.
- Mask – leave on if able, otherwise remove
- 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 homemaker'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.)
- Homemade masks (to protect the client)
- Procedure/medical/surgical masks (exposure to chemicals, irritants, etc.)
- N95 respirators (protection during aerosol generating activities) – not required for homemakers
- Eye protection (exposure to cleaners/disinfectants/detergents)
- Disposable gown (exposure to cleaners/disinfectants/detergents/contaminants/infectious organisms/infectious body fluids, etc.)

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. See links for pictures and directions on putting on and taking off PPE ([Further Resources](#)).⁽⁵⁾

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](#)

[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