Risk Reduction and Personal Protective Equipment in the Transportation System:
Federal/Provincial/Territorial Guiding Principles

Important Note

Risk reduction measures in the transportation system, including those involving face coverings and personal protective equipment (PPE) and those involving enhanced cleaning measures, should be interpreted in full respect of the **primary responsibility of public health agencies**. As such, provinces/territories maintain full flexibility and autonomy in the management of risk reduction and the use of PPE, as they deem appropriate, to address unique regional characteristics and operational realities.

It is important to note that the measures described in this document constitute **good practices** to support the safe and orderly restart of the transportation system, and help mitigate the risk of transmission of COVID-19. These measures are not to be considered obligations, nor standards, and should only be implemented in cooperation with public health authorities.

All those involved in the transportation system are encouraged to continue monitoring and abiding by public health authorities' Coronavirus (COVID-19) recommendations by consulting federal, provincial and territorial government websites (refer to Annex A for a listing of these websites).

Purpose

The COVID-19 pandemic has created an unprecedented global crisis that is having a significant impact on the Canadian transportation industry, travellers, and the economy.

Consistent with the First Ministers' statement on a shared public health approach to support restarting the economy, federal/provincial/territorial (FPT) governments recognize the importance of maintaining the strong collaboration that has taken place throughout the pandemic on transportation issues**.** This is particularly important in view of interconnected jurisdictional responsibilities, regional variables, and a wide range of operational environments across the country.

This document describes a set of consistent guiding principles with respect to a layered risk reduction system for transportation, including use of personal protective equipment (PPE), in accordance with guidance issued by public health authorities. This coordinated approach is intended to support governments' decision-making in order to:

- protect the health and safety of all those involved in the transportation system;
- facilitate the unimpeded flow of the goods and supplies that Canadians need to remain healthy; and
- support a safe, successful restart of the transportation system.

Background

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic and to reduce the risk of transmission, all governments in Canada and the transportation industry have implemented prevention measures to provide for greater physical distancing, such as increased space between passengers and agents, limiting touch points (e.g., exchanges of cash or documentation, food and/or beverage services), and allowing passengers to remain in their vehicles on ferries.

Despite these measures, there are still points in the transportation system that prevent people from maintaining a physical distance of two metres, raising the potential for transmission of the virus. Some examples of these instances include physical screening at aviation security checkpoints, exchange of identity documents, the close confines of an aircraft or bus, when securing marine cargo, and during the journey when passengers are given assistance (e.g., physical mobility assistance).

Where physical distancing cannot be maintained, engineering controls and administrative controls can be taken to reduce the risk of transmission. When these measures cannot be implemented due to operational realities or other reasons, proper use of PPE and non-medical masks/face coverings may act as an additional measure of protection in the hierarchy of controls for workers and users of the transportation system. PPE can include, but is not limited to, face shields/goggles, masks, gloves, and hand sanitizers.

The supply of PPE is increasing, but so too is the demand, especially when accounting for evolving regulations/guidance on the use of masks, and the ongoing reopening of non-essential businesses and loosened restrictions on travel. PPE must be used in full respect of all jurisdictional public health guidelines, and the diverse operational realities of the multi-modal transportation system in Canada.

Hierarchy of Controls

For greater clarity, the hierarchy of controls is a framework[1] proposed by the Johns Hopkins Education and Research Center for Occupational Safety and Health and WorkSafe BC, that aims to reduce transmission hazards. Because it is a generic model for broad consideration across different types of workplaces, each element of the transportation system will need to consider appropriate application of mitigation measures based on their own individual/operational circumstances, including potentially a combination of mitigation measures.
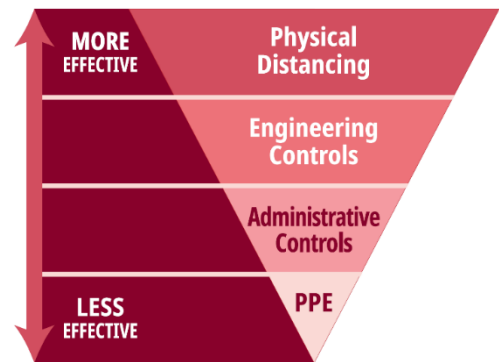
1. **Physical Distancing:** In the context of COVID-19, this administrative control involves maintaining a two metre distance from other persons at all times.
2. **Engineering controls:** These are physical changes in the workplace, such as installing protective barriers in a transit bus or at a ticketing counter.
3. **Administrative controls:** This involves altering work practices to minimize exposure, such as postponing, re-organizing, or planning work in such a way that workers are not exposed to any risk. This could also involve minimizing the numbers of passengers inside a conveyance, staggering work shifts, making virtual appointments, working from home etc.
4. **PPE and non-medical masks/face coverings:** This involves protective gear, such as masks and gloves, to prevent exposure to hazards.

Not all practices and tips are intended to be implemented at once or at all times, and implementation of these measures may be gradual as passengers return and trips increase.

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[1] Source: Koehler, K, Rule A. Can a mask protect me? Putting homemade masks in the hierarchy of controls. [Internet] 2020 April 2. Johns Hopkins Education and Research Center for Occupational Safety and Health; WorkSafe BC

Guiding Principles

To support governments in making decisions related to a safe and orderly restart of the transportation system, the following guiding principles apply:

- Risk reduction measures (e.g. physical distancing) should align with principles established by First Ministers and guidelines issued by public health authorities, and be tailored to the multi-modal operational realities of the transportation system;
- Workplace preventative measures should align with applicable federal, provincial and territorial occupational health and safety guidelines and resources;
- Businesses and employers bear primary responsibility for addressing the occupational health and safety needs of their employees (e.g. access to PPE), consistent with responsibilities under applicable federal, provincial and territorial labour codes;
- Governments will apply these measures in full respect of jurisdictional roles, authorities and regional variables (e.g. scope and scale of transit operations), while supporting a collaborative approach in developing recommendations through the Policy and Planning Support Committee (PPSC) and other FPT entities as appropriate (e.g. Canadian Council of Motor Transport Administrators) to inform decisions of the governments; and
- Governments will be responsible to their residents and commit to the continued environment of respect, collaboration and sharing of important information regarding unique challenges and/or opportunities.

Conclusion

It is critical that proper precautions continue to be taken to minimize health risks for those using, interacting with, or working within the transportation system. FPT collaboration will be key to mitigating the impacts of COVID-19 on all those involved in the transportation system across all modes, and to identifying gaps that may need to be addressed.

This guidance document recognizes that not all practices and tips are intended to be implemented at once or at all times, and that implementation of these measures may be gradual as ridership increases.

To that end, FPT governments will continue working together with industry and key partners to identify shared approaches and best practices to support a successful re-opening of the economy, helping to ensure that passengers and users of the transportation system understand the safety and security requirements when travelling, and that workers are properly protected in the course of their duties.

ANNEX A: FEDERAL, PROVINCIAL AND TERRITORIAL WEBSITES RELATED TO COVID-19

All those involved in the transportation system are encouraged to continue monitoring and abiding by public health authorities' Coronavirus (COVID-19) recommendations by consulting federal, provincial and territorial government websites.

Government of Canada	https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/coronavirus-disease-covid-19.html
Ontario	https://covid-19.ontario.ca/index.html
Quebec	https://www.quebec.ca/en/health/health-issues/a-z/2019-coronavirus/
Newfoundland and Labrador	https://www.gov.nl.ca/covid-19/
Nova Scotia	https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/
New Brunswick	https://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/corporate/promo/covid-19.html
Prince Edward Island	https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/en/topic/covid-19
Nunavut	https://www.gov.nu.ca/health/information/covid-19-novel-coronavirus
Northwest Territories	https://www.gov.nt.ca/covid-19/
Yukon Territory	https://yukon.ca/covid-19
British Columbia	http://covid-19.bccdc.ca/
Alberta	https://www.alberta.ca/coronavirus-info-for-albertans.aspx
Saskatchewan	https://www.saskatchewan.ca/government/health-care-administration-and-provider-resources/treatment-procedures-and-guidelines/emerging-public-health-issues/2019-novel-coronavirus
Manitoba	https://www.gov.mb.ca/covid19/index.html