

COVID-19 safety plan

Category: Administration, Employees and Emergencies

Company Details

Business name: Canadian Association of Research Libraries (CARL)

Date completed: November 29, 2021

Revision date:

Date distributed:

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Others consulted: Susan Haigh, Board of Directors

References:

CARL COVID-19 Response in Workplace Procedure

CARL COVID-19 Vaccine Policy

[Ontario COVID-19 public health measures and advice](#)

[How to wear a non-medical mask or face covering properly](#)

[Ontario COVID-19 Screening Tool for Workplaces](#)

[COVID-19 Signage Questions for Businesses and Organizations](#)

[COVID-19 take self-assessment](#)

[Employer Protocol When A Staff Member Tests Positive for COVID-19](#)

[Cleaning and Disinfection for Public Settings](#)

[Outbreaks in Workplaces](#)

[COVID-19 Workplace Reporting Tool](#)

Purpose:

The purpose of this Safety Plan is to maintain a safe work environment for CARL's staff and reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission within CARL's office. This Safety Plan will be revised as needed to remain consistent with provincial and municipal regulations.

Note:

All team members assigned responsibilities in this plan are required to designate a backup to act on their behalf in the event of planned or unplanned absence. If they are unable to do so, the *Manager, Administration and Programs* or the *Executive Director* will ensure all required activities are re-assigned to another team member.

1. How will you ensure all workers know how and are able to keep themselves safe from exposure to COVID-19?

The following actions are assigned to team members to ensure we monitor government and public health sources for updates and new information to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the CARL office. Additional actions are also listed to address communication and training measures required during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Keeping everyone safe and up to date

- The *Administrative Officer and Event Coordinator* will check Ontario.ca and Ottawa Health Unit website twice a week for any updates on public health measures, advice, and restrictions.
- The *Administrative Officer and Event Coordinator* will maintain a current understanding of all relevant COVID-19 screening requirements, regulations, and local by-law requirements.
- All team members will flag any relevant information they see in the news by sharing with the *Administrative Officer and Event Coordinator*.
- The *Administrative Officer and Event Coordinator* will email this plan and any updates to all staff each time there is a revision.
- As needed, a message will be sent to all employees informing them of any new developments, protocols and giving reminders of how to keep safe at work.
- The updated safety plan will be stored in the Administration folder on Share Drive and Google Drive and a snapshot of it will be posted at the entrance to the office.

- The *Manager, Administration and Programs* will ensure all staff are trained on the following:
 - How to safely put on and take off their masks by watching this video: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/video/covid-19-wear-non-medical-mask-face-covering-properly.html>
 - Staff will be trained on the screening process that is required prior to entering the office every day.
 - Procedures and the schedule for [cleaning and disinfection](#) of individual work areas and the office, with special focus on increased cleaning for common areas and high traffic areas.
- Staff will be told not to come to work if they are sick and reminded of this expectation at staff meetings. They will be provided with information about what to do if they develop symptoms, where the online self-assessment tool can be found, and who their workplace contact is should they need to inform us. Staff are encouraged to use available COVID-19 tracking and exposure tools, such as the [Canadian COVID Alert app](#).

1. How will you screen for COVID-19?

Screening Staff

- As per recommendation of the Ottawa Public Health Unit and to maintain a safe work environment and reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission, CARL will implement workplace vaccination policy for all staff as of January 3, 2022.
- Fully vaccinated staff will provide the *Manager, Administration and Programs* with proof of vaccination.
- Individuals who are partially vaccinated or not vaccinated for medical reasons against COVID-19 will be required to undertake regular rapid antigen for COVID-19 testing and demonstrate a negative result, at least once every seven days.

If an Individual tests positive for COVID-19, they will not be permitted to enter CARL's office. The Individual will be required to isolate and undergo PCR (polymerase chain reaction) laboratory testing to confirm the results of the rapid antigen test within forty-eight (48) hours.

- All staff, prior to working at the office, will complete the [Ontario COVID-19 Screening Tool for Workplaces](#) each day before leaving home. They must email their completed assessment each day to the *Administrative Officer and Event Coordinator* prior to their shift.

- *The Administrative Officer and Event Coordinator* will check that these daily emails have been received and reviewed before staff can begin work each day. If staff do not send in the email, the *Manager, Administration and Programs* will ask them the screening questions before they will be permitted to enter the office. A simple chart will be used to confirm each day that each staff has been actively screened.
- Employees who appear to have symptoms when they arrive at work or who become sick during the day should immediately be separated from others, provided a face mask if they are not using one, and sent home with instructions and guidance on how to follow-up with their healthcare provider.

Screening other work-related visitors (e.g., guests, maintenance, cleaning, delivery, inspection)

- Effective January 3, 2022, all visitors and members must be fully vaccinated and disclose their vaccination status prior to entry to in-person meetings organized by CARL or to visit at CARL's office. Proof of vaccination (electronic or paper copy of a COVID-19 vaccine receipt) will be required upon arrival to the CARL's office.
- CARL will implement passive screening for visitors by posting [signs](#) at the entrance to CARL's office informing people to screen themselves for COVID-19 before entry.

2. How will you control the risk of transmission in your workplace?

To prevent transmission, all CARL staff, visitors, and members will need to follow [public health measures](#), including:

- wearing a mask in all common areas
- maintaining physical distance
- washing and/or sanitizing hands regularly

a) Use the space and ensure separation

- To maintain physical distancing protocols,
 - CARL all-staff meetings will be held online from each employee's office.
 - All staff will work in their offices.
 - Where possible, start times, breaks and lunches will be staggered to prevent congestion and support physical distancing.

b) Ensure masks and PPE are in use:

- All staff must wear a mask at all times when on the premises, except for when working in their office, or when physically distanced from others while eating or drinking in designated areas.
- *The Administrative Officer and Event Coordinator* will ensure that masks are available for anyone who needs one.

- The *Manager, Administration and Programs* or *Executive Director* will ensure that all staff are wearing masks at appropriate times.
- The *Administrative Officer and Event Coordinator* will communicate with the landlord should signage at the entrances of the buildings become outdated.
- The *Administrative Officer and Event Coordinator* will ensure there is up to date signage posted on the office door, clearly stating that all individuals must wear a face covering (non-medical mask, such as a cloth mask) when entering the office.

c) Care for our surroundings:

- All commonly touched surfaces and shared areas will be [cleaned](#) by staff at the start of each day. This includes tables, chairs, counters, and doorknobs.
- Any shared equipment (e.g. copier/printer, kettle, coffee maker) will be cleaned by staff between each use.
- All staff are asked to use their own office supplies. If they need to use an item from a co-worker, the item will be sanitized after each use.
- The *Administrative Officer and Event Coordinator* will ensure that all cleaning and disinfection products we use are Health Canada-approved as being effective against the COVID-19 virus.

d) Hand and respiratory hygiene

- The *Administrative Officer and Event Coordinator* will make sure that hand sanitizer is always available at the front entrance and the kitchen counter.
- The *Administrative Officer and Event Coordinator* will ensure that soap and paper towels are available at the sink.
- Public health posters on washing hands, and on cough and sneeze etiquette will be posted over the sink.
- Staff will wash their hands with soap and water or use hand sanitizer frequently.

e) Indoor air

- The *Administrative Officer and Event Coordinator* will verify with the landlord that the air-handling (HVAC) system is working properly and maintained frequently.
- The *Administrative Officer and Event Coordinator* will walk through the office every morning and open any windows and doors to allow for airflow, when weather permits, and it is safe to do so.

- The *Administrative Officer and Event Coordinator* will verify with the landlord that the ventilation system will be left on at all times to help exchange air in the building.
3. What will you do if there is a potential case, or suspected exposure to, COVID-19 at your workplace?

If someone becomes ill while at work

- Staff must notify the *Manager, Administration and Programs or Executive Director* if they start feeling sick.
- They should [take COVID-19 self-assessment](#) if they have COVID-19 symptoms.
- Call 911 if a person is experiencing severe and potentially life-threatening symptoms, such as difficulty breathing.
- If a staff member becomes ill, they must continue to wear a mask and stay in their office, and the rest of the staff should leave the office.
- They should go directly home, contact their doctor or Telehealth, and follow the instructions given.
- If first aid is needed, any staff member who must go closer than 2 metres must be wearing PPE (mask and face shield).
- Surfaces that may have been touched by the employee who tests positive for COVID-19 should be [cleaned and disinfected](#) as soon as possible.

Process for a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the workplace

- Staff must contact the *Manager, Administration and Programs or Executive Director* if they are diagnosed with COVID-19 or test positive.
- The *Manager, Administration and Programs or Executive Director* will contact the local public health unit to let them know that there has been a case in the office and ask for further direction.
- The *Manager, Administration and Programs or Executive Director* will keep in touch with the sick staff member while they are off work. They will also keep in touch with any staff members who have to self-isolate and share information about support that may be available, including our flexible policies for safely returning to work.

- A staff member with COVID-19 will be allowed to come back to work after they have been isolated for at least 10 days, don't have a fever and their symptoms have been improving for 24 hours, or as otherwise instructed by public health or their doctor.
- A staff member who has been self-isolating because they were a close contact will be allowed to come back to work 14 days after their last contact with the ill person.

Outbreaks in the workplace

- The *Manager, Administration and Programs* or *Executive Director* must immediately notify Ottawa Public Health when they become aware of **two or more people** in their workplace who have tested positive for COVID-19 within a 14-day period.
- Employers must notify OPH by using the [COVID-19 Workplace Reporting Tool](#) if all three of these criteria apply to your business/organization:
 - You have a business or organization in the City of Ottawa
 - You are a person(s) responsible for a business or organization
 - Two or more people connected with your organization have tested positive for COVID-19 within a 14-day period (since January 4, 2021).

What Happens After Completing the Tool?

- Once OPH receives your submission, you will be contacted within 24 hours for follow up. Have the following information ready:
 - Names and dates of birth of each person who has tested positive (as they appear on the person's Health Card)
 - The date each person got tested
 - The reason each person got tested (e.g. did they have symptoms?)
 - If they have symptoms, when those symptoms started
 - Their record of attendance in the last two weeks, including the days and times of the shifts that they worked
 - The type of work they do
 - The type of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) they wear (e.g. cloth mask, medical mask, eye protection, etc.)
 - Who they might have been in contact with and who they would have spent time in the workplace.
4. How will you manage any new risks caused by changes to the way you operate your business?

New Risk: More exposure to cleaning chemicals, and workers using new chemicals.

- All staff will be trained on safe use of all cleaning supplies which we will be using, and the *Administrative Officer and Event Coordinator* will make sure that the safety data sheets are in the binder in the office.

New Risk: Increased stress for staff when dealing with new COVID-19 controls, risk of infection from public interactions and the ongoing changes and stress of the pandemic

- The *Manager, Administration and Programs* or *Executive Director* will have regular check-ins with staff to talk about how they are doing. We will provide all staff with access to additional mental health resources and support.

5. How will you make sure your plan is working?

- Staff will give feedback about the controls in place and if they are appropriate and/or causing concerns. All feedback will be provided to the *Administrative Officer and Event Coordinator*.
- The *Manager, Administration and Programs* and *Executive Director* will review the feedback to determine if the plan is working.
- Additional check-ins will be held if there are changes to guidance or a major issue identified.
- Any changes to the plan will be communicated to staff via email or in a COVID-specific training session, if required.

COVID-19 safety plan – snapshot

Business name: Canadian Association of Research Libraries (CARL)

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Measures we're taking

How we're ensuring CARL staff know how to keep themselves safe from exposure to COVID-19

- Health information and news issued by the province of Ontario and Ottawa Public are regularly checked to inform our protocols.
- Staff reminders emailed weekly regarding new health measures, changes to plan, and workplace safety reminders.

How we're screening for COVID-19

- All visitors and members entering CARL's office must provide proof of vaccination against COVID-19.
- In addition, everyone is screened before they enter the office.
- Screening questions are posted on the front door.

How we're controlling the risk of transmission in our workplace

- Everyone in the office is requested to be vaccinated.
- Everyone is required to wear a mask except when working in their offices
- We are following provincial and local health rules
- High touch surfaces are cleaned and disinfected regularly
- Hand soap, hand sanitizer and paper towels are available in the kitchen
- Signage is posted to remind everyone how to properly wash their hands.
- When it's possible, all doors and windows will be kept open.
- Engaging with property management to ensure the building ventilation system is being maintained and is working properly

What we will do if there is a potential case, or suspected exposure to, COVID-19 at our workplace

- Provide support to staff members who are sick or self-isolating.
- Follow public health direction and share information (from the log) about people who entered the office to help public health contact tracing if needed.
- Communicate with our staff

How we're managing any new risks caused by the changes made to the way we operate our business

- Additional mental health support and added training for hazardous materials.

How we're making sure our plan is working

- Seeking feedback from staff
- Review our plan frequently and make changes based on feedback from the staff