

## COVID-19 Risk Assessment

Reference: <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> (accessed 8 May 2020)

### Objective

Provide a framework for risk-informed decision making about public health actions for workplaces/businesses operating during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Introduction

This risk assessment is based on a tool developed by the Government of Canada for workplaces and businesses and is based on advice contained in the World Health Organization's guidance <sup>1, 2</sup> and in the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance <sup>3</sup>, and on [public health assumptions](#) that reflect the currently available scientific evidence and expert opinion. It is subject to change as new information on transmissibility and epidemiology becomes available.

The Diocese of Fredericton has conducted a risk assessment to determine the most appropriate public health actions for our working areas and worship spaces during the COVID-19 pandemic. The assessment considers the epidemiology of the disease, the workplace/worship settings, and our employees and parishioners to assess the level of associated risks. The mitigation of these risks will exist on a continuum from public health messaging and enhanced communication to employees and parishioners, through implementing various risk mitigation strategies, to closing workplaces and worship spaces.

### Risk Mitigation Strategies

Multiple risk mitigation strategies exist and may be used in combination to be effective. Closing work areas or worship areas

Refusing access to anyone feeling unwell or who are isolating or in quarantine.

If anyone starts experiencing symptoms while at work or worship, they should isolate themselves from others immediately, and notify their manager or Incumbent (as appropriate) and go home as soon as possible, taking measures to protect others around them.

Practicing frequent and thorough hand hygiene (washing hands for 20 seconds with soap and water, or using alcohol-based hand sanitizer).

Physical distancing (maintaining a 2 metre distance from others) or physical barriers between individuals.

Where physical distancing is not possible, consideration should be given to use of a [non-medical mask or face covering](#). Training on the appropriate use of PPE and the sequence for putting it on (donning) and taking it off (doffing) should be provided, as all PPE must be used correctly to prevent contamination; hand washing remains critical when using PPE.

**Population at Risk: Employees/Visitors/Parishioners**

Characteristics	Risk consideration	Public health rationale	Risk Level	Risk mitigation options	Selected mitigation strategies
Demographics	Greater risk of severe disease, in older adults or people with underlying medical conditions.	Older adults, people with immune compromising conditions and chronic diseases appear to be at greater risk of severe disease, so protecting them from possible exposure to COVID-19 cases is important.  The Church cannot assume they know the health status of their employees or worshippers. Health status may not be disclosed or known.	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication about this risk should be emphasized;</li> <li>• Encourage the use of individual measures such as frequent hand hygiene, physical distancing, respiratory etiquette and staying home when ill;</li> <li>• If physical distancing cannot be consistently maintained, consider having people wear a non-medical mask or face covering.</li> <li>• Provide options to the medically at risk to reduce social contacts at work, such as teleworking arrangements.</li> </ul>	<p>To encourage older adults or people at risk to avoid service until the risk is lower</p> <p>Church community be extra vigilant when older adults or people at risk are present</p> <p>Education</p> <p>Social distancing or wear a mask</p> <p>Frequent hand hygiene, physical distancing, respiratory etiquette and staying home when ill</p>
	People at greater risk of spreading the disease (e.g., young children)?	Young children may be at greater risk of amplifying disease transmission because they are generally less compliant with effective hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette practices and tend to socialize with others in a way that is likely to increase transmission. Preventing transmission from these populations indirectly protects the larger population	Med	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consideration should be given to modifying office procedures or worship services: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>reducing number of people in the office at the same time</li> <li>providing services or worship outdoors</li> <li>promoting use of individual measures such as frequent hand hygiene, physical distancing, respiratory etiquette</li> </ul> </li> <li>Consider need for increased frequency of cleaning especially of high touch services.</li> </ul>	<p>To encourage close supervision of children until the risk is lower</p> <p>Outdoor worship</p> <p>Virtual worship</p> <p>More services with fewer people</p> <p>Church community is extra vigilant when children are present</p> <p>Education</p>

		and may reduce demand on the health care system.		<p>Consider restricting presence of unsupervised children</p> <p>Note: children are less likely to comply with physical distancing, hand or respiratory hygiene or wearing a non-medical mask or face covering.</p>	<p>Social distancing</p> <p>Frequent hand hygiene, physical distancing, respiratory etiquette and staying home when ill</p>
Demographics	People who have recently travelled international or inter-provincially or attended events where the virus was known to be present are at greater risk of being a source of infection.	Returning international travelers and people who potentially had contact with a case self-isolate at home for 14 days.	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan for absenteeism or working from home;</li> <li>• Reduce exposure and transmission to others by more stringent self-monitoring and the use of a non-medical mask or face covering when physical distancing cannot be maintained.</li> <li>• Encouraging self-isolation for people at high risk of contact with COVID-19</li> </ul>	<p>Encouraging self-isolation for people at high risk of contact with COVID-19</p> <p>Plan for staff to work from home if at risk, where possible</p>
Local demographics and the course of transmission	Is the local community experiencing an increased rate of COVID-19 infection?	The risk of exposure to staff/clients may be higher in the workplace if there is ongoing local community transmission.	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider closing offices and halting public worship.</li> </ul>	Respond to NB Public Health directives
	Are employees/visitors and parishioners at increased risk of severe disease if COVID-19 circulated?	Parishes interact with a high number of elderly residents may want to reduce or modify their activities to limit exposures within the parish.	Med	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider closing offices and halting public worship.</li> </ul>	<p>Respond to NB Public Health directives</p> <p>Follow The direction from the Bishop on worship</p>

**Environment: Workplace/Mission/Worship Space Setting**

Characteristics	Risk consideration	Public health rationale	Risk Level	Risk mitigation options	Selected mitigation strategies
Type of service	What kind of activities does the parish provide (e.g., customer service in an office, food service, worship, etc.)	The risk of being exposed and/or acquiring the virus is greater when people interact more closely and are in close contact with one another or in close contact with numerous people (e.g. the incumbent). The number and duration of the exposures have an impact on the risk of transmission. The more numerous or the longer the exposures, the higher the risk for transmission. Given that COVID-19 can survive on surfaces and objects for hours to days, activities that are transactional in nature may represent a higher risk of exposure (e.g., communion, exchange of money, or transfer of items).	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adjust workplace policies and procedures to reduce physical contact, such as teleworking arrangements, flexible hours, staggering start times, use of email and teleconferencing;</li> <li>• Modify infrastructure to enhance physical distancing by 2 metres;</li> <li>• Where possible, consider going cashless. If this is not possible, encourage hand hygiene after exchange of money or items;</li> <li>• Reinforce the importance of frequent hand hygiene, physical distancing, and respiratory etiquette</li> <li>• Reinforce safe food handling practices.</li> </ul>	<p>Develop an Operational Plan in accordance with NB government direction for implementing public health measures</p> <p>Follow the direction from the Bishop on worship</p>
	Will people be participating in activities that promote transmission?	Activities that could contribute to spread include, but are not limited to, singing, close physical contact (less than 2 metre), and touching common objects (e.g., hand rails, communion rails, chalice).	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reinforce the importance of frequent hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette</li> <li>• Reinforce physical distancing measures (e.g. avoid greetings like handshakes, maintain 2 metre distances between people wherever possible);</li> </ul>	<p>Develop an Operational Plan in accordance with NB government direction for implementing public health measures</p> <p>Follow the direction from the Bishop on worship</p>

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If physical distancing cannot be consistently maintained consider requiring the wearing of a non-medical mask or face covering.</li> <li>• Avoid sharing communal office and worship equipment and supplies (e.g., tablets, electronic devices, microphones, collection plates);</li> <li>• Avoid potlucks, buffets, where serving utensils, multiple people may handle plates, trays and other objects.</li> </ul>	
Setting or Location	Parish offices are public spaces and worship areas are large community areas.	Public spaces with high traffic are at an increased risk of being exposed or infected with COVID-19 due to the number of people coming in and out of the setting.	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Modifying service delivery or office hours or closing to reduce spread of the virus;</li> <li>• Encourage everyone to use a personal vehicle if possible and to limit contact with others.</li> <li>• Reinforce the importance of frequent hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette, and physical distancing.</li> <li>• If physical distancing cannot be consistently maintained, consider requiring the wear of a non-medical mask or face covering. Parishes with more than one location are encouraged to adopt a tailored approach on workplace measures based on local context to reduce the spread of the virus.</li> <li>• Restrictions on Intinction</li> </ul>	<p>Develop an Operational Plan in accordance with NB government direction for implementing public health measures</p> <p>Follow Episcopal Directive 3.4 on the administration of Holy Communion</p> <p>Follow the direction from the Bishop on worship</p> <p>Provide training to Altar/Chancel Guild on hygiene and cleaning and sanitizing procedures required by the province in response to COVID-19 (ref)</p>
	Where events are occurring: indoors, outdoors, or both?	Events outdoors have better ventilation and are likely to be lower risk than those held indoors (e.g., administrative work in an office, worship inside).	Med		
	Whether the parish is in a geographically remote area or in close proximity to a densely populated area.	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.	Med		

	How parishioners, employees, and contractors primarily access your workplace or worship (e.g., public transit, personal car)?	People using 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.	Med	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer designated entry and exit options for offices and worship areas to manage traffic flow.</li> <li>• Place tape on the floor for social distancing guidance</li> <li>• Providing guidance on physical distancing for seating for worship</li> </ul>	
Planning	We do not generally have pandemic preparedness plans.	The Diocese and parishes are less likely to be able to adapt their operations and activities quickly to public health advice.	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prioritize key functions in the event of restricted operations;</li> <li>• Update emergency contact information of employees and parishioners.</li> </ul>	Develop an Operational Plan in accordance with NB government direction for implementing public health measures
	We do not generally have a robust business continuity plan addressing issues like critical operations, prioritization of work/services, surge capacity planning, cross training of employees.	The Diocese and parishes are less likely to be able to adapt their operations and activities quickly to public health advice.	High		
	Limited office support may impact parish operations. Limited parishioner attendance at worship and other events may impact parish mission and financial health.	Many employees/clients could be ill or be a caregiver to an ill person (e.g., elderly parent, child), therefore would be unable to attend work for a number of days or weeks. Are employees cross-trained to assume other functions within your workplace/business? Determine how you will operate if	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Institute flexible workplace and leave policies for employees who are sick, in self-isolation, or caring for family members.</li> <li>• Work from home</li> <li>• Virtual or on-line worship, bible study, or meetings</li> <li>• E-offering</li> </ul>	

		absenteeism spikes from increases in sick employees, those who stay home to care for sick family members, and those who must stay home to watch their children if dismissed from school.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Communications plan to address changed or reduced office hours and different worship opportunities</li> </ul>	
	We do not normally have a formal risk communication plan to share information with employees, contractors, and parishioners.	Risk communication plans can identify communication activities to ease fear, anxiety, rumours, and misinformation. Good communications channels are key to reinforce public health measures in the parish 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.	Med	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a plan to ensure effective and efficient communication with employees, contractors, and parishioners.</li> </ul>	Develop an Operational Plan in accordance with NB government direction for implementing public health measures
	Most of our parishes employ a small number of employees, but regularly meet together in significant numbers	The larger the number of people gathering, the greater the likelihood a case or a contact of COVID-19 is among them. Large numbers of people may also create greater likelihood of crowding (e.g., worship, bible study, Sunday school). Small parish offices are less able to manage when employees are absent.	Med	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider staggering service times to reduce crowding and close contact;</li> <li>• Consider only retaining employees with critical functions to reduce crowding and close contact.</li> <li>• Consider cancelling non-essential office activities in the parish</li> <li>• Consider cancelling worship services</li> <li>• Reinforce the importance of frequent hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette, and physical distancing.</li> </ul>	<p>Develop an Operational Plan in accordance with NB government direction for implementing public health measures</p> <p>Follow the direction from the Bishop on worship</p>

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If physical distancing cannot be consistently maintained, consider requiring the wearing of a non-medical mask or face covering.</li> </ul>	
Infrastructure	<p>Infrastructure that cannot be easily altered or modified to implement public health and infection prevention and control measures (for example, hand cleaning stations, 2-metre separation in parish offices and hallways).</p>	<p>Respiratory droplets tend to fall within 2 metres of their source, so maintaining a 2-metre distance from others is a precaution to prevent spread.</p> <p>If infrastructure cannot be modified the to maintain spatial separation (ideally 2 metres), the risk of transmission is greater (e.g., spacing out workstations in offices, leaving a couple of empty seats between worshippers).</p> <p>Hand hygiene should be performed more frequently. Alcohol-based hand rub (60% alcohol or greater) or hand washing sinks with soap and disposable towels should be made readily available.</p>	Med	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reinforce the importance of frequent hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette, and physical distancing;</li> <li>• Provide access to hand washing facilities and place hand sanitizing dispensers in prominent locations throughout the parish common areas, if possible;</li> <li>• Provide additional respiratory etiquette supplies such as tissues, lined waste container, and hand hygiene products/supplies;</li> <li>• Consider increasing the spatial separation between individuals from each other, ideally a 2-metre separation. Consider using a physical barrier (e.g., cubicle, Plexiglas window)</li> <li>• If physical distancing cannot be consistently maintained, should consider requiring the wearing of a non-medical mask or face covering.</li> </ul>	<p>Develop an Operational Plan in accordance with NB government direction for implementing public health measures</p> <p>Follow the direction from the Bishop on worship</p>
	<p>Restricted points of entrance and exit that force people to be in close proximity and/or pass through high-touch areas (e.g. doors and elevators).</p>	<p>Crowding and lines at bottlenecks can put employees/clients at increased risk of exposure to respiratory droplets. High-touch surfaces can also be contaminated and increase the risk of transmission. Use <a href="#">approved hard surface disinfectants</a>.</p>	Med	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance environmental cleaning procedures and protocols with a special attention to high-touch surfaces and object.</li> </ul>	<p>Develop an Operational Plan in accordance with NB government direction for implementing public health measures</p> <p>Follow the direction from the Bishop on worship</p>

Environmental cleaning	Lack of environmental cleaning procedures and protocols. Protocols that do not align with public health advice.	Routine cleaning of frequently used surfaces and objects helps prevent the transmission of COVID-19. The virus that causes COVID-19 has the potential to survive in the environment for up to several days. Cleaning of frequently touched surfaces and objects can kill the virus, reducing the likelihood of infection.	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhance environmental cleaning procedures and protocols with a special attention to high-touch surfaces and objects like phones, elevator buttons, computers, desks, lunch tables, kitchens, washrooms, seating areas, and counters.</li> </ul>	Develop an Operational Plan in accordance with NB government direction for implementing public health measures
	High-touch surfaces and the frequency of cleaning and disinfecting.	<p>The virus that causes COVID-19 may live on surfaces for a few hours or up to a few days. <u>High-touch surfaces can be contaminated and increase the risk of transmission. Use approved hard surface disinfectants.</u></p> <p>The frequency (i.e., one contact versus multiple contacts) and duration (i.e., transient contact versus prolonged contact) of exposure to high-touch surfaces and objects could potentially increase the risk of contamination.</p>	Med		
Health and Safety - Including use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)	Do your employees have access to Occupational Health and Safety services on site? How will symptomatic individuals in the workplace or at worship be handled?	Although screening may not identify all individuals infected with COVID-19 in the parish, occupational health and safety professionals may be able to quickly and safely identify and isolate symptomatic individuals in the parish.	Med	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plan for rapid isolation of a symptomatic employee;</li> <li>Identify an area where employees or parishioners can be isolated if they become ill;</li> <li>Ensure that any first responders from the congregation have appropriate PPE and take infection prevention and control measures.</li> </ul>	<p>This risk cannot always be mitigated on the parish premises.</p> <p>Education</p> <p>Parishes have PPE available for first responders from the worship community</p>

					Active verbal screening for symptoms of COVID-19 before entering the building.
	We have not had Occupational Health and Safety assess the risk associated with employee interactions with the public or worshipper interaction during services.	<p>Employees whose duties require them to interact face to face with the public may be at increased risk due to their proximity to people whose health status is not known.</p> <p>Worshippers may be at increased risk during worship if normal worship behaviour occurs with people whose health status is not known.</p>	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consideration of the likelihood and consequences of infection from a specific task or activity (e.g. visiting a sick person or a contaminated environment) to determine the most appropriate interventions.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Tools and technologies to minimize contact with the public should be used.</li> <li>• If feasible, barriers, such as clear Plexiglas screens, to protect employees who must interact within 2 metres of the public should be considered.</li> <li>• If physical distancing cannot be consistently maintained, employers should consider having employees and clients wear a non-medical mask or face covering.</li> <li>• Employees should be reminded not to touch their faces or the non-medical mask/face covering while using it.</li> </ul>	<p>Develop an Operational Plan in accordance with NB government direction for implementing public health measures</p> <p>Follow the direction from the Bishop on worship</p>

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Gloves are recommended when in direct contact with an ill person, or a contaminated object or environment.</li> <li>• Misuse of gloves and other PPE increases risk of infection due to improper handling of potentially contaminated gloves and equipment. If PPE must be worn PPE must be worn correctly.</li> </ul>	
	The risk of employees and parishioners interacting directly with public spaces, like worship spaces?	Anyone in direct contact with spaces occupied by the general public may be at increased risk due to contact with objects that could be contaminated.	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mitigation as above</li> </ul>	<p>Develop an Operational Plan in accordance with NB government direction for implementing public health measures</p> <p>Follow the direction from the Bishop on worship</p>