



## Risk Control

# Hygiene Controls in the Workplace

## After a shutdown, hygiene controls matter.

During a disaster or other emergency event, businesses may elect – or be required – to shut down. Afterward, certain steps should be taken during re-entry to ensure a safe workplace for employees. This guide will help identify appropriate resources for cleaning, sanitizing and maintaining a safe, healthy work environment.

### Know the Hazards

From water and smoke damage to emerging biological hazards, businesses may face a variety of cleanup and maintenance challenges when it is time to reopen their doors. By understanding potential physical and health-related hazards, employers can take appropriate steps towards hygiene controls.

- Conditions and guidance may change as data and research evolves, so be sure to use the most recent information from reliable sources like the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC), U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), World Health Organization (WHO), and federal and provincial emergency management and public health agencies.
- Execute a formal hazard assessment process to help understand the scope of employees or property affected by the hazard, and focus recovery efforts on the areas of greatest need.

### Reentering Your Workplace

Following a shutdown, it's imperative to keep your safety and health program flexible. Depending on the hazard that closed your operations, a variety of cleaning, disinfecting and decontaminating actions may be warranted before re-entry.

- Cleanup efforts should begin at a time appropriate for the known hazards. Some hazards, such as viruses, typically die within a few days. Others, such as mold, may grow rapidly within days.
- Focus cleaning, disinfecting and decontaminating activities on high-touch, high-traffic areas.

- Review all labels to confirm the product utilized is the right choice for the right space.
- Always check safety data sheets when selecting cleaning supplies, and wear appropriate PPE based upon that guidance. Use of gloves when handling cleaning and sanitizing agents is recommended.
- Where possible, clean during non-occupied times and evaluate any new exposures related to the cleaning and disinfecting processes.
- Confirm that these cleaning and disinfecting processes do not create a greater occupational hazard for employees.

### Personal Hygiene/Protection Plan

Once doors have reopened for employees and visitors, the best way to limit re-exposure or new hazards is through proper personal hygiene and other personal protective measures.

- Basic handwashing can be an effective means of reducing the transmission of contaminants.
- In addition to PHAC, the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health & Safety (CCOHS) provides guidelines for how to protect employees from blood-borne pathogens and other infectious diseases.
- PPE is only effective if worn and utilized properly. Follow manufacturer guidance on use, maintenance and care, and train employees in these components.
- Respirator use comes with its own hazards. Take precautions and confirm the proper selection, use, type, care and maintenance of respirators.

### Important Reminders

After any natural disaster or wide-scale emerging hazard, businesses may look to specialized servicing companies to assist in cleanup and recovery efforts. It is important to watch for red flags, as emerging or unique hazards may not have established guidance and procedures. Some items to consider include:

- Beware of companies promising to completely remove the hazard. Organizations may be able to provide some level of cleaning or disinfecting, but should focus only on recognized methods.
- Recognized verification testing methods may be available to determine effectiveness of cleaning and disinfecting procedures. However, this is not always available, especially for emerging hazards. If the servicing company offers verification of their work, confirm that both pre- and post-testing will be completed, and which standards they'll be using for comparison.
- When purchasing and selecting personal protective equipment (PPE), confirm that all items have been labeled and approved by country-specific performance standards, such as CSA (Canadian Standards Association) or NIOSH in Canada.
- Health Canada provides a [list of authorized disinfectants](#) that are effective against emerging viral pathogens.

### Additional Workplace Hygiene Resources

[Respiratory Protection Resources \(CCOHS\)](#)

[Handwashing & Hand Sanitizer Tips \(PHAC\)](#)

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For more information, please contact your local CNA underwriter or visit [cna.ca](https://cna.ca).