

HEALTH AND SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS FOR VOLUNTEERING

DURING A PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY



If you are thinking about volunteering....

- Get fully informed about the most up to date information regarding COVID-19, the risks, and public health directives where you live.
- Determine whether or not it is safe for you and those in your household for you to volunteer in-person, based on public health information and advice of your own health professionals. If not, explore virtual volunteer opportunities.
- If you are able and willing to take the risks associated with in-person volunteering, find out about the practices in place in the organization to keep you safe and minimize the risk to the extent possible.

The COVID-19 pandemic has required changes to routines and practices to keep volunteers, clients and staff safe and healthy during volunteering. The following are general guidelines before, during and after volunteering. Practices and protocols to protect volunteers may vary based on the organization's mission, clients, and geography. Check with the volunteer manager at the organization where you are volunteering and get their specific guidelines.

Note: Taking public transportation or living with others who serve the public can increase your exposure to COVID-19. Some organizations may have policies regarding engaging individuals in these situations.

Make sure you are **WELL ENOUGH** to volunteer:

- ❑ If you are feeling unwell (particularly if you have trouble breathing, fever or cough), self-isolate and please refrain from volunteering and stay home for at least 14 days or as otherwise advised by public health authorities.
- ❑ If you have you recently returned from outside Canada, follow Public Health Agency of Canada [instructions](#) as well as your local and provincial health authorities.
- ❑ If you are you an older adult or have underlying health concerns, avoid volunteering that involves personal interaction. Join online volunteering programs from home if possible.

IN PREPARATION for volunteering:

- ❑ Wash your hands consistently both before volunteering and during.
- ❑ Avoid using public transportation to volunteering, if possible.
- ❑ If possible, come equipped with a personal bottle of hand sanitizer, personal protective mask (e.g. surgical mask N95 or as otherwise advised by public health authorities), protective gloves or other personal protective equipment that may be advised by public health authorities).
- ❑ Bring a personal supply of food and drink, if needed, to avoid sharing dishes / food with others.
- ❑ Make sure you have fully completed any training for your current volunteer position required by the organization.

DURING volunteering:

- ❑ The organization may do some health screening when you arrive.
- ❑ Follow [Public Health Agency of Canada](#) guidance:
 - ❑ [Wash your hands](#) often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
 - ❑ If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

HEALTH AND SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS FOR VOLUNTEERING

DURING A PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY

Protecting YOUR health protects EVERYONE'S health.

Information is changing rapidly as more data is gathered about COVID-19. To encourage accurate information sharing, please refer to trusted sources including the [Public Health Agency of Canada](#) and the [World Health Organization](#) to find updated facts and guidance.



Wash hands
for at least
20 seconds

+ soap

Physical Distancing

2 meters (6.6 feet) apart



- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Cough or sneeze into the bend of your arm. Dispose of any tissues you have used as soon as possible in a lined waste basket and wash your hands afterwards.
- Avoid touching surfaces people touch often.
- Use any necessary personal protective equipment, as directed.
- Follow recommendations and directives from public health authorities regarding restrictions on gatherings. Avoid shaking hands or any other physical contact.
- Be sure to keep a distance of at least 2 meters (6.6 feet) between yourself and others.
- If you come across a client who is not feeling well, inform your supervisor immediately.
- Avoid direct physical contact with client(s) as much as possible. You should leave packages / food or any other provisions at doorsteps.
- If at any point while volunteering, you feel uncomfortable, contact your supervisor immediately and make arrangements to leave.

AFTER volunteering:

- Inform your supervisor when departing your volunteer session: let them know how everything went, and share anything worth noting.
- If you feel distressed or need to talk please contact your supervisor immediately.
- Take care to rest and refresh. Take on only the tasks that you believe you can handle.
- If you are not feeling well after volunteering contact your local [Public Health Authority](#) and follow their advice.