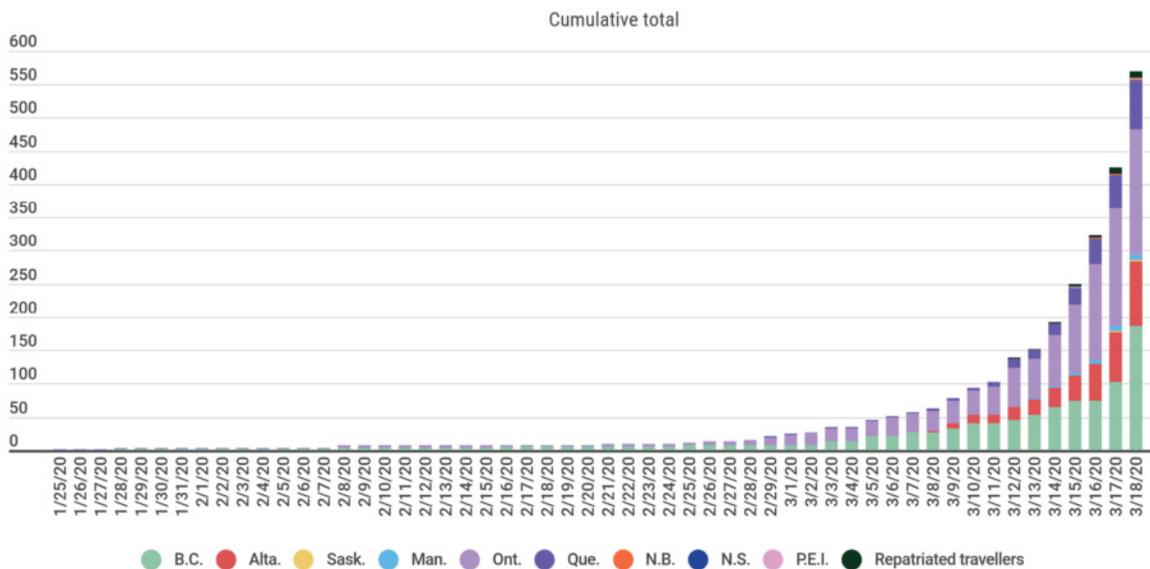


COVID-19 AND THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

The COVID-19 pandemic is a rapidly evolving situation that requires immediate action by all of us. The graph below (from Maclean's magazine) shows that the number of confirmed cases in Canada is now rising rapidly. Epidemiologists and governmental public health agencies are predicting that it will continue to rise exponentially if we do not take action.

Confirmed COVID-19 cases in Canada



Source: Canadian federal coronavirus update page and Internet Archive Wayback Machine for that page

Source: <https://www.macleans.ca/society/health/coronavirus-in-canada-these-charts-show-how-our-fight-to-flatten-the-curve-is-going/>

According to Manitoba Health a new coronavirus is causing an outbreak of respiratory infections. It is vital for all employers' to provide information to their employees, how to protect themselves and their family and what to do if they suspect they may feel ill or sick.

As of March 20, there are 17 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Manitoba and there have been no deaths, however the true number of cases may be higher since not everyone who has symptoms is eligible for testing.

Right now we are at a critical stage where we must try to contain the virus before many more become infected and our health care system becomes overwhelmed.

QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS?

We'll be here for you through every step of this pandemic. If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to reach out to us at safety@constructionsafety.ca or 204-775-3171 in Winnipeg or 204-728-3456 in Brandon.

IDENTIFY

WHAT IS CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)?

Coronaviruses are a family of viruses transmitted between humans and animals. COVID-19 can cause illness ranging from a very mild, cold-like illness to a severe lung infection. **Symptoms can include fever, cough, sore throat, runny nose, muscle ache, headache, and difficulty breathing (shortness of breath).** The World Health Organization advises that symptoms may appear in as few as two days or as long as 14 days after being exposed.

HOW IS COVID-19 TRANSMITTED?

If a person carrying the virus sneezes, coughs, or exhales, respiratory droplets are released into the atmosphere and they may quickly land on nearby surfaces and/or another person. A worker may then touch contaminated surfaces or objects and then rub their eyes, nose, or mouth before washing.

The virus can be transmitted by:

- Breathing in droplets in the air that are generated when people cough or sneeze.
- Close contact with other people (e.g. shaking hands or hugging).
- Touching contaminated surfaces and then touching the face, mouth, or food.
- Touching a contaminated surface and then touch another surface may cause the virus to transfer from one surface to another.

Currently, according to health experts, the virus is not known to be airborne (e.g. transmitted through the particles floating in the air) and it is not something that comes in through the skin. People who have been infected with COVID-19 may not exhibit any symptoms for up to 14 days but can still transmit the virus during that time.

Symptoms of COVID-19 include:

- Fever
- Cough
- Difficulty breathing
- Sore throat
- Sneezing

Shared Health Manitoba has developed a self-assessment tool to help people determine if they need further assessment for COVID-19. It is available at <https://sharedhealthmb.ca/covid19/screening-tool/>

COMMUNICATE & CONTROL

KEY PREVENTION STEPS:

- 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.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Clean and disinfect objects and surfaces that are frequently touched.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with your elbow or a tissue. Throw tissue in the trash.
- Stay home if you are sick.

COMMUNICATE & CONTROL

AT THIS TIME, THE FOLLOWING SAFE WORK PRACTICES ARE RECOMMENDED FOR CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS:

- Do not permit anybody to enter a worksite if:
 - They or a member of their household have travelled outside the country within the past 14 days.
 - They or a member of their household have exhibited symptoms of COVID-19 in the last 14 days.
- Do practice rigorous social distancing:
 - Ensure that all workers are able to maintain at least a two meter distance from one another at all times. If this does not allow you to complete a job safely, then the job should be delayed.
 - Manage schedules to prevent groups from congregating. Try to minimize unnecessary physical proximity between workers — consider staggering breaks so people don't congregate in one place at one time.
 - Do not participate in any group meetings in which you are not able to maintain the recommended two-meter distance from participants. Do not hold or attend any event with more than 50 participants.
 - Use technology, such as phone, Skype, or Zoom to avoid in-person meetings.
- Communicate and rigorously practice personal hygiene protocol.
 - Post and provide information on recommended personal hygiene protocol and proper [hand-washing procedures](#).
 - Ensure that handwashing stations and hand sanitizer are available for all workers.
- Frequently disinfect high-touch surfaces (i.e. doorknobs, handles, control panels) and eating areas with antimicrobial cleaners or bleach (one part bleach to nine parts water).
- All workers should change their clothing and remove their shoes immediately upon arriving home.
- Prepare to suspend all non-essential operations. This situation is evolving rapidly and further restrictions will likely be required in the coming days, weeks, and months.

For more info and guidance on responding to COVID-19, visit the [Health Canada](#) or [Province of Manitoba](#) websites.

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT COVID-19 RESPONSE – E.I. AND BUSINESS SUPPORT

This week the Government of Canada announced measures designed to support the economy in maintaining the current workforce where possible and support those who have lost or reduced work due to the COVID-19 pandemic. These measures include:

- Short-term support for employees via E.I. changes and the new Emergency Care Benefit
- Longer-term income support via the Emergency Support Benefit and the EI Work Sharing Program
- A temporary wage subsidy to help small employers keep their staff on the payroll
- Flexibility for businesses filing taxes
- Access to credit for businesses through the Business Credit Availability Program

The new E.I. measures mean it's extremely important that employers are aware of which EI code employers enter on their record of employments to laid-off employees.

- If an employee was sick or quarantined, employers must use Code D
- If an employee was laid off due a shortage of work or company shut down, employers must use Code A

The Winnipeg Construction Association has more details on these measures [here](#).