

FAQs – COVID-19
As of March 26, 2020

A safe and healthy workplace and the well-being of everyone who works at our stores, retail service centres, and offices is important to the LCBO. As the situation develops, we will update our employees, partners, and customers as appropriate.

For official medical advice, contact your health care providers.

Get the most-up-to-date, factual and reputable information on COVID-19 from:

[World Health Organization](#)
[@WHO](#) on Twitter

[Public Health Agency of Canada](#)
[@CPHO_Canada](#) on Twitter

[Government of Canada – Travel Advice and Advisories](#)

[Public Health Ontario](#)
[@PublicHealthON](#) on Twitter

[Ontario Ministry of Health](#)
[@ONTHHealth](#) on Twitter

[Telehealth Ontario](#)
1-866-797-0000

[Find your local Public Health Unit](#)

COVID-19: General Questions

Q1: What is 2019 novel coronavirus / COVID-19?

A1: Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that can cause diseases ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases like bronchitis or pneumonia. COVID-19 is a new coronavirus of which cases are being reported around the world, including Canada.

Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS-CoV) are also examples of coronaviruses.

Q2: What are the symptoms associated with COVID-19?

A2: Those with COVID-19 may have little to no symptoms. You may not know you have symptoms of COVID-19 because they are like a cold or flu, including fever, cough, or difficulty breathing. Symptoms may take up to 14 days to appear after exposure to COVID-19. To determine if you should seek medical attention, use this [self-assessment](#) tool provided by Ontario Ministry of Health.

Q3: How is COVID-19 spread?

A3: Human coronaviruses, including COVID-19, are most commonly spread from an infected person through:

- Respiratory droplets that are spread when you cough or sneeze.
- Close personal contact, such as touching or shaking hands.
- Touching something with the virus on it, then touching your mouth, nose or eyes before washing your hands.

According to the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, food is not a likely source or route of transmission of COVID-19. Additionally, there is currently no evidence to suggest that this virus is circulating in animals in Canada.

UPDATE

Q4: What is the difference between quarantine, self-isolation, and self-monitoring as it relates to COVID-19?

A4: Quarantine or Isolation can be ordered to an ill person when exposure to COVID-19 has occurred; you have symptoms, even if mild AND or if you have been diagnosed with COVID-19 or are waiting for the results of a lab test for COVID-19. This may include referral to hospital or local public health authority.

Self-isolation occurs when you have no symptoms AND a history of possible exposure to COVID-19 due to travel outside of Canada or close contact with a person diagnosed with COVID-19. In self-isolation, you stay at home and avoid close contact with other people as much as possible

NOTE: The Government of Canada has put in place emergency measures that require **mandatory** 14-day self-isolation for all people entering Canada, even if they do not have COVID-19 symptoms.

Self-monitoring occurs when you have no symptoms and if you have a history of possible exposure to COVID-19 in the last 14 days. If symptoms of COVID-19 develop you should contact your local public health unit or healthcare professional.

For more information and clarity: click [here](#).

Q5: What does “social or physical distancing” mean?

A5: Physical distancing measures are approaches taken to minimize close contact with others in the community. It includes quarantine and self-isolation at the individual level, as well as other community-based approaches like avoiding crowding, school closures, and public gathering cancellations.

This means making changes in your everyday routines to minimize close contact with others, including:

- avoiding non-essential gatherings
- avoiding common greetings, such as handshakes
- avoiding crowded places such as concerts, arenas, conferences and festivals
- limiting contact with people at higher risk like older adults and those in poor health
- keeping a distance of at least 2 arms-length (approximately 2 metres) from others

The term physical distancing is recommended to be used over social distancing, to highlight what people can do to prevent the spread of COVID-19, while also encouraging social connection for our mental well-being.

More information can be found [here](#) on the Public Health Agency of Canada website.

UPDATE

Q6: Does wearing a mask prevent the spread of COVID-19?

A6: LCBO recognizes the heightened awareness to protect one's self from COVID-19, especially in a role involving customer service.

It cannot be stressed enough that the most effective way to control this type of spread is through good hygiene measures (handwashing, cough best practice, not touching your mouth/nose/eyes with unwashed hands, and avoiding close contact with those who are ill).

The Public Health Agency of Canada states that if you are a healthy individual, the use of a mask is **not necessary, nor recommended**. Masks and gloves are suggested as a precautionary step for medical professionals or those caring for a sick person only. Masks can easily contaminate and need to be changed frequently and fitted properly with training to provide adequate protection. Wearing a mask when you are not ill and are not at high risk for developing symptoms may give a false sense of security.

We need to follow the recommendations of public health agencies and we also need to consider not depleting the supply required by frontline healthcare workers at this time. For these reasons, masks will not be provided to LCBO employees. There are also considerations with training for proper use of masks.

This does not mean that we aren't here to support you with individual considerations. If you have a compromised immune system or an underlying condition, and you have received medical advice for a workplace accommodation to wear a mask or use gloves, please talk it through with your manager.

Where there are employees using gloves for specific job functions, it is important to use safe work practices to protect yourself and limit the spread of contamination. To remove and dispose gloves safely:

- Grasp outside of glove with opposite gloved hand; peel off;
- Hold removed glove in gloved hand;
- Slide fingers of ungloved hand under remaining glove at wrist;
- Peel glove off over first glove;
- Avoid touching the outside of the gloves with your bare hands;
- Discard gloves into a no-touch receptacle (waste container with no lid);
- Perform hand hygiene.

COVID-19: Travel Related Questions

Q7: I am a returning traveler? What should I do?

A7: The Government of Canada has put in place emergency measures that require **mandatory** 14-day self-isolation for all people entering Canada, even if they do not have COVID-19 symptoms.

These risk levels may change as COVID-19 evolves so it's important that you follow the guidance outlined in terms of any required quarantine, self-isolation and self-monitoring of your health. Click here for a [Decision Tree](#) for Quarantine or Self-Isolation.

Q8: I have work travel planned. What is the LCBO's position on this?

A8: We have paused any work-related travel outside of Ontario until further notice.

There are many ways of connecting with our national and international partners. Anyone with previously planned work-related travel outside of Ontario should explore alternate arrangements.

Talk through any individual considerations with your manager.

Q9: I have personal travel planned to an area that doesn't have an official active health notice in place. What should I do?

A9: The Canadian government has issued an announcement to avoid any non-essential travel outside of Canada to further contain COVID-19. Contact your Manager to further discuss planned travel outside of Canada to ensure precautions are put in place, prior to your travel to protect the health and safety of you, your families, your colleagues and our customers.

Q10: Do I need to disclose the destination of my travel to my Manager?

A10: According to the government of Canada, any non-essential travel outside of Canada is to be postponed or canceled to contain the spread of COVID-19. As a result, you must discuss your planned travel outside of Canada to ensure LCBO takes every reasonable precaution to protect the health and safety of you, your colleagues and our customers.

Q11: If I am unable to get home from travel, what should I do?

A11: The most important thing is that you follow the direction of public health officials – in Canada and the location in which you are. Your Manager would provide more information to you regarding available options.

Remember that the [Employee and Family Assistance Program \(EFAP\)](#) remains available to you for support if you need it while travelling.

COVID-19: Employee Health, Wellness & Safety

Q12: Will I need to provide a medical note for any period of required quarantine or self-isolation, related to COVID-19?

A12: No. The LCBO is mindful to not overburden the healthcare system with the requirement of medical notes to substantiate absences related to COVID-19. Requirements for medical notes related to COVID-19 will therefore be waived until April 30, 2020. Requirements beyond that will be reviewed and communicated at that time.

Q13: What should I be doing to protect myself, my colleagues, and our customers?

A13: The same daily actions that prevent the spread of germs are considered best to prevent the spread of COVID-19:

- Wash your hands thoroughly and often with soap and water or alcohol-based hand rub.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve when you cough or sneeze.
- Make sure your workstation surfaces and objects are clean – wipe with disinfectant regularly.
- Try not to touch your eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick and take care of yourself if you are feeling unwell.

If you are concerned about any symptoms you can use this [self-assessment tool](#) provided by the Ontario Ministry of Health to guide decisions whether to seek medical attention with your healthcare provider, Telehealth Ontario (1-866-797-0000) or your local Public Health Unit.

Local COVID-19 Assessment Centres have been introduced for you to call ahead and be screened. Visit the [Toronto Region COVID-19 Assessment Centres](#) link for locations. There will be additional Community Assessment Centres which may have a drive thru option which we confirm the locations once announced.

You should also talk to your Manager:

- To advise of any upcoming personal travel outside of Canada.
- If you are provided with medical advice to quarantine, self-isolate or self-monitor symptoms related to COVID-19, particularly if you have had any contact with other employees.
- If you have a family member at home who has received medical advice to quarantine, self-isolate or self-monitor symptoms related to COVID-19.

Q14: I am concerned that I may be exposed to COVID-19 by providing customer service, working around others, or commuting in close proximity to others.

A14: A safe and healthy workplace and the well-being of everyone who works at our stores, retail service centres, and offices is important to the LCBO.

Our ask to all employees at this time is to follow the direction of all public health agencies as it relates to the good hygiene measures (handwashing, cough best practices, not touching your mouth/nose/eyes with unwashed hands, and avoiding close contact with those who are ill) that are the most effective in controlling the spread of COVID-19 and the colds and flus most common this time of year.

Should you have a specific concern, please discuss it with your Manager.

Q15: Should I stay home if I'm feeling unwell?

A15: Use this [self-assessment tool](#) to guide your decision whether to seek medical attention. If you are sick or are experiencing the symptoms of COVID-19, [stay home](#) and follow the guidance of health care providers.

If you report to work with symptoms, you will be advised to go home and contact your healthcare provider to discuss any concerns over reporting to work.

LCBO's Leave of Absence due to Illness, Injury or Disability policy would apply. Talk to your Manager or AskHR for further guidance.

Q16: My family member has a compromised immune system, and I'm concerned my exposure to COVID-19 when I go to work will increase their risk.

A16: LCBO understands the heightened concern of exposure to COVID-19 for employees, or those who have family member that may be high risk due to age, an underlying condition, or immunocompromised health conditions. We encourage any high-risk employee to seek medical advice to confirm they are able to work or if they require an accommodation. Similarly, if an LCBO employee needs to take additional precautions to protect the health and safety of someone they care for, they are encouraged to speak to their Manager. Should an LCBO

employee require time off related to concerns of their exposure to COVID-19 as it relates to the care they provide to someone they live with, they can rely on the following leave options:

- New COVID-19 Compassionate Leave
- Vacation and/ or MCO and/ or Compassionate Days (if available)
- Application through Employment Insurance (e.g. Compassionate Care Benefits, Family Caregiver Benefits, Family Responsibility Leave, etc.)

Q17: What will happen if I refuse work related to COVID-19?

A17: LCBO's existing [process](#) of [Work Refusal](#) will apply. Health and Safety concerns should be raised directly with your Manager and health and safety representative(s). Your Health and Safety Coordinator will be a resource to assist with your concerns as well.

Q18: Are there any changes to our Attendance Management Program?

A18: The Attendance Management Program supports employees with periodic absenteeism. Any absenteeism related to the 2019 novel coronavirus will be exempt from the attendance management program.

Talk to your Manager or AskHR for further guidance.

Q19: What if I can't get to work because of transit issue outside of my control?

A19: While schedule changes may apply, city transit as an essential service is not currently impacted by any closures. If you rely on public transit to commute to and from work and find that you are unable to reasonably do so, talk to your manager.

Transit providers are taking preventative measures as well, but some general safety tips are:

- Try to time your commute to avoid the busiest or most crowded times on buses and trains
- Avoid touching your face with your hands
- Wash your hands or use hand-sanitizer as soon as possible after leaving the bus or train
- If other forms of transportation are available, including walking or biking when possible, you may wish to add those into your routine.

Office-based employees whose jobs permit them to work from home should do so with Manager approval.

Q20: What if I or a family member is being tested for or tests positive for COVID-19?

A20: If you test positive for COVID-19 or are determined to be a probable or suspected case by public health officials you must immediately notify your manager and ASKHR so that any necessary assistance can be obtained. Do not report to work.

Employees should follow this same notification process if you reside with or have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19. Do not report to work or otherwise perform any public-facing duties in these circumstances until advised otherwise by the LCBO.

Q21: What is the LCBO doing to support employee health and wellness in response to COVID-19?

A21: A safe and healthy workplace and the well-being of everyone who works at our stores, retail service centres, and offices is important to the LCBO.

It can't be stressed enough that we all have a role to play to protect ourselves, each other and our communities. Our ask to employees continues to be to follow the direction of all public health agencies as it relates to the good hygiene measures (handwashing, cough best practices, not touching your mouth/nose/eyes with unwashed hands, and avoiding close contact with those who are ill) that are the most effective in controlling the spread of germs.

We also understand that news and social media coverage can be worrisome.

- Make sure you are following and getting your news and information from reputable sources
- If you are concerned about your health or are looking for medical information related to COVID-19, call ahead to your local COVID-19 Assessment Centre, your healthcare provider, Telehealth Ontario ([1-866-797-0000](#)) or your local Public Health Unit.
- If needed, we encourage you to also talk to your Manager and/or make use of the resources

available through our [Employee and Family Assistance Program](#). Please see this [article](#) for Tips for Coping with COVID-19.

Key areas of the business are also continually monitoring the situation and will provide updates as needed.

COVID-19: LCBO Safety Measures

Q22: Has LCBO arranged for additional cleaning in all work environments?

A22: We are taking several precautions to stay healthy and safe to ensure we continue to support our staff, our customers, and the business. We have further elevated our already stringent cleaning and sanitization protocols in- store, at our RSCs and at our offices.

Q23: How will LCBO ensure all work settings continue having hand sanitizer?

A23: Supply of hand sanitizer is being closely monitored across all work settings. As well, an inventory is being established to determine if stock should be diverted to other locations.

Q24: Is there the potential for product shipped from an affected area to be contaminated?

A24: According to Public Health Agency of Canada, currently there is no known risk of coronaviruses entering Canada on parcels or packages and no evidence to support the transmission of COVID-19 associated with imported goods. There have not been any cases of COVID-19 in Canada associated with imported goods. In general, because of poor survivability of these coronaviruses on surfaces, there is considered to be a very low risk of spread from products or packaging that is shipped over a period of days or weeks at ambient temperatures.

The LCBO follows the lead of multiple regulatory agencies including the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, Health Canada and Public Health Ontario. There are currently no known risks to beverage alcohol products in Ontario.

COVID-19: LCBO HR Assistance

Q25: What is the LCBO doing to support critical business functions in response to COVID-19?

A25: We are relying on information from public health agencies and other reputable sources and will provide updates as needed.

There is also a cross-divisional team in place actioning business preparedness and continuity plans, protocols, policies, and communications approaches.

Directors within the business, working with the Business Continuity Program team as well as HR, are engaged in this process and are responsible for continually assessing their functions and needs. Talk to your Directors if you have questions on your area or division's plan.

Q26: I don't feel like I am getting the answers I need from my Manager or AskHR – why?

A26: We are doing our best to be prepared in an uncertain and complicated time. We need to follow public health direction and we want to do what's right. That may require us to ask for your patience in working through any personal consideration.

Your health and safety, as well as that of the communities in which we live and work, is the most important thing. Any business decisions we make will reflect that and we are committed to getting you answers as quickly and as best as we can.

Q27: How do I contact AskHR?

A27: LCBO's People Operations team is available for all human-resource related questions or concerns – and now have extended hours. Contact AskHR by phone directly: **1-833-89-AskHR (1-833-892-7547)** or online through [ServiceNow HR](#). Note: Please contact AskHR by phone only to report any COVID-19 testing or diagnosis information. **Extended hours include: Monday – Friday 8:30 a.m. – 8 p.m., Saturdays from 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. & Sundays from 11 a.m. – 4 p.m.**

COVID-19: LCBO Retail Stores

Q28: Are there any LCBO workers with confirmed COVID-19 cases? And what would LCBO's response be, if there was a confirmed case?

A28: No, there are no LCBO workers with confirmed COVID-19 cases (positive test). We understand the worry that employees may have if one of our colleagues has a confirmed COVID-19 case and we are committed to being transparent if this occurs. You have our commitment that we will take immediate action, including through the following activities as appropriate:

- Openly work with local public health unit to assess impact to colleagues and customers, and the work setting,
- Notify and support colleagues in the same work setting to self-isolate as soon as possible,
- Provide transparent information to customers/visitors who had recently visited the LCBO setting
- Arrange additional cleaning protocols on the advice of public health officials,
- Close the work setting while waiting further advice from public health officials

Q29: Are any LCBO stores currently closed due to COVID-19?

A29: Most of our stores remain open, but there are a handful in more rural areas that have had to close. Any stores that are closed are not due to COVID-19 cases. They are closed due to resourcing and staff shortages.

Q30: Is the LCBO an essential service?

A30: Yesterday, following the announcement of a two-week closure directive to all non-essential businesses, the provincial government released a [list of essential workplaces and services](#). The LCBO remains open. Like grocery stores, we are a part of many Ontarians' regular shopping routines and we want to continue to serve our communities as much as possible as we navigate this uncertain and unprecedented time.

Q31: What difference does a one-day closure make?

A31: Shopping volumes in our stores remain high. And our in-store and supply chain teams are doing an incredible job keeping up with this demand. Reducing our operations to six days a week allows us to maintain staffing levels to provide the service our customers have come to expect. It also means a break from the daily pressures and contact with customers and helps us keep our stores ready to safely service our customers.

Q32: Are we moving gradually toward full store closures?

A32: LCBO remains open and we are doing our best to be prepared in an uncertain time. There is always the possibility that we will need to make different business decisions in which case you will hear it from us and every decision will be made in line with public health direction and with the well-being of our people, partners, customers, and community's top of mind.

Q33: We have seen panic buying and crowded locations – isn't that against physical distancing recommendations?

A33: We are asking customers to do their part to help us ensure safe store experiences and to follow public health guidance on the avoidance of panic-buying and physical distancing. We are doing our best to create more space for everyone and make it easier to practice physical distancing. Your efforts in limiting the number of customers allowed in our stores at the same, our signage marking safe distances in lineups, opening fewer cash registers, limiting handling of cash, having customers pack their own reusable bags, and not accepting in-store returns are all part of what we are doing to make shopping as safe as possible.

Q34: Customers are disclosing that they have travelled outside of Canada, and should be in self-isolation, but are not. What can I do?

A34: We have, and will continue, to ask any customers who are sick, in isolation or returning from travel outside of Canada not to visit our stores. Any customer who does not comply with this direction should be refused service. If a customer self-identifies as someone who is supposed to be in self-isolation – you have every right to politely ask them to leave.

A35: We do not provide a necessity of life, like grocery and pharmacy. Why are we staying open?

Q35: Like grocery stores, we are a part of many Ontarians' regular shopping routines and our products are not always available through other retailers. The steps we have put in place, including this weekly closure, reduced

store hours, increased cleaning and sanitization, ways to promote physical distancing and new HR policies are all in support of you and our communities. We have also been in lock step with our Union partners to collaborate on health and safety plans and to respond to your concerns. We are navigating this unprecedented situation together and will continue to implement measures that are in your best interest.

Q36: Why aren't we taking the additional measures that other retailers are, including grocery, such as installing plexiglass and increasing employee wages?

A36: Taking the lead from public health officials, we have and will continue to implement measures that support the safety of our frontline retail team. In addition to the measures we currently have in place, we will continue working with the Union to explore any and all support options.

COVID-19: LCBO Employee Benefits

Q37: What measures does Manulife have in place to maintain service in the event of a widespread outbreak of COVID-19?

A37: Manulife has detailed plans in place to make sure they can continue service during events such as widespread contagious illnesses. To provide continued support to LCBO employees, Manulife can be reached through the plan members website (<https://wwwec7.manulife.com/signin/#benefits>) or by phone at 1-800-268-6195 (8 a.m. and 8 p.m. EST Monday to Friday).

Q38: Why can't I refill my prescription early or stock-up in case of emergency?

A38: Manulife and many other insurance companies are not changing the rules for early refills of prescriptions. Currently, people who take maintenance drugs can get up to 3 months' supply. Manulife has taken this position to protect the medication supply in Canada and help make sure all Canadians have access to the prescriptions they need.

If you have any concerns about your medications or if you are sick at home and in need of your medications, the Canadian Pharmacists Association recommends calling your pharmacist. Many pharmacies offer a delivery service to help patients get their medications when they can't leave their home.

Q39: If a vaccine is developed to protect against COVID-19, will the cost be covered by the LCBO extended health care plan?

A39: Yes, once a vaccine is developed the cost will be covered under the LCBO extended health care plan.

Q40: Can I submit expenses for masks and antibacterial supplies under the LCBO extended health care plan?

A40: No, masks and antibacterial supplies are not covered under the LCBO extended health care plan.

Q41: Does my Emergency Travel Assistance/Out of Country insurance cover me if I get COVID-19 while travelling?

A41: If you are travelling, and you or a covered member of your family have a medical emergency and get sick (with COVID-19 or another illness), your Emergency Travel Assistance/Out of Country coverage will pay for your emergency medical treatments (subject to the terms of the LCBO contract).

If you are currently covered by the Emergency Travel Assistance/Out of Country insurance, are currently travelling and find yourself nearing your maximum number of days away from home, your coverage will be extended until April 30, 2020. This situation is changing daily and Manulife will re-visit this decision at the end of April.

Q42: Can I continue to submit my health and/or dental claims to Manulife?

A42: Yes. You can continue to submit health and/or dental claims either by paper or online through the plan member website (<https://wwwec7.manulife.com/signin/#benefits>).