

Enhanced industry-wide  
hotel cleaning standards  
**in response to COVID-19**

***Safe Stay***



**Dear Valued Member,**

No one could have imagined what 2020 would bring when we rang in the New Year. In just a few short months, our industry experienced unprecedented losses and closures worldwide. Yet, as peak travel season in Canada approaches, we turn our sights to recovery and new and innovative ways to welcome guests to our cleaner, safer hotels.

To meet the new health and safety challenges and expectations presented by COVID-19, the Hotel Association of Canada has partnered with the American Hotel & Lodging Association (AHLA) in the launch of Safe Stay. This new initiative is focused on enhanced hotel cleaning practices, social interactions, and workplace protocols, while ensuring transparency throughout the guest journey. Safe Stay will seek to change hotel industry norms, behaviours and standards to ensure both hotel guests and employees are confident in the cleanliness and safety of hotels once travel resumes.

This initiative represents a new level of focus and transparency for an industry already built on cleanliness. Hotels have always had rigorous standards for cleaning and safety. With Safe Stay we are enhancing these standards to boost consumer confidence and doing so in accordance with guidance issued by public health authorities, including the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) and the Centres for Disease Control (CDC).

The Hotel Association of Canada is proud to collaborate with AHLA, our Provincial Association counterparts, and other key stakeholders as we work toward the common goal of bringing our industry back to life.

We look forward to throwing open our doors and moving forward.

Sincerely,



**Susie Grynol**  
President & CEO  
Hotel Association of Canada



**Chip Rodgers**  
President & CEO  
American Hotel & Lodging Association

**The hotel industry has a longstanding commitment to cleanliness and safety for our employees and guests.**

We continue this commitment during the public health crisis. The following health and safety guidelines represent best practices for the hotel industry, in accordance with Public Health Agency of Canada, during the re-opening phase of the economy. It is anticipated that these guidelines and protocols will evolve based on the recommendations of public health authorities and must be done in compliance with any federal, provincial and local laws.



# Employee & Guest Health



## Face Coverings & Other Protective Steps

Recent [guidance](#) issued by the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) suggests that fully vaccinated individuals are not required to wear masks in the following circumstances: outdoors with a small group of fully vaccinated individuals, indoors with a small group of fully vaccinated individuals, or outdoors with people from multiple households who are unvaccinated, partially vaccinated, or their vaccination status is unknown. PHAC also acknowledges that guidance between [Provinces](#) and municipalities may vary. Local guidelines should be followed if they differ from PHAC's guidance.



## Appoint a Cleanliness Manager

The cleanliness manager is responsible for developing a cleanliness plan, implementing the plan, updating the plan, training employees and ensuring that guests' hygiene-related questions are immediately answerable. This individual will also ensure that your establishment remains in compliance with any legislation and is the point of contact for any health agency interactions.

- ❑ Appoint a cleanliness manager
- ❑ Develop a cleanliness plan
- ❑ Train employees



## Develop a Cleanliness Plan

Develop, implement and continually update a cleanliness plan. This is the blueprint for the elevated efforts being made to assure guests that a hotel is safe and clean. This plan should address all steps being taken to sanitize or otherwise modify the hotel to minimize the chances of an outbreak or contagion event in the establishment. The plan should be updated regularly based on changing legislation, information or events in and around the hotel, and other relevant circumstances. Ensure that this plan is available to all staff and prospective guests to provide a sense of security so that they can feel comfortable in their choice to stay at your hotel. The cleanliness plan should include a course of action when a guest or worker is diagnosed with coronavirus or another infectious disease.

In accordance with PHAC and CDC guidelines, a [hazard assessment](#) of the workplace should be conducted to identify potential workplace hazards related to COVID-19.

Well-being checks of all employees, including virtual health checks, should be carried out in accordance with [PHAC/CDC guidelines](#) and/or as required by law. Please refer to [CDC's General Business Frequently Asked Questions](#) for more information on best practices for employee health checks.

- ❑ Develop, implement and update cleanliness plan



## Washing Hands & Hand Sanitizer

[Public Health Agency of Canada \(PHAC\) guidelines](#) should govern the duty of all hotel employees to engage in frequent hand washing and use of hand sanitizer. Washing hands with soap and water is the preferable method. In situations where soap/water is not available, alcohol-based sanitizer is recommended.

Hand sanitizer dispensers should include no less than 60% alcohol content, where available, and touchless where possible. As available, dispensers should be placed at key guest and employee entrances and contact areas. At a minimum, this will include lobby reception areas and employee entrances, but could also include any other reception areas, entire hotel lobby areas, restaurant entrances, meeting spaces, elevator landings, pools, exercise areas and other public areas as applicable to the property.

### For Employees:

- Frequently wash hands and use hand sanitizer

### For Employers:

- Place sanitizing dispensers placed at key guest and employee entrances and contact areas



## Front of the House Signage

Signage featuring health and hygiene reminders should be placed in high-traffic areas around the property, including the front lobby area at a minimum. Guest-facing staff (reception, sales staff, concierge, GM, housekeepers) should also be provided with training and/or resources (such as an FAQ document) enabling them to confidently answer guest inquiries

related to the property's preventative measures policies.

### For Employers:

- Health and hygiene reminders should be placed at high-traffic areas on property
- FAQs for guest-facing staff



## Back of the House Signage

Signage should be posted at a minimum in the employee break room and cafeteria, and other areas employees frequently enter or exit. Signage will remind employees of the proper way to wear, handle and [dispose masks](#), use gloves, wash hands, sneeze and to avoid touching their faces.

### For Employers:

- Signage should be posted in areas employees frequently enter or exit



## Employee & Guest Health Concerns

Staff will be required to immediately report any presumed cases of COVID-19 at the hotel property to the General Manager or other such designated individual. Reporting of presumed cases to the local health authority will be the responsibility of the General Manager or other designated individual. Employees exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 should remain or return home. While at work, employees who notice a coworker or guest exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 should immediately contact a manager. At a minimum, hotels should follow PHAC guidelines for employers and businesses, including instructing employees to self-isolate for the required amount of time, as defined

by the PHAC, from the onset of symptoms and be symptom-free for at least three days without medication. Well-being checks of all employees, including physical temperature checks, is recommended in areas of high infection rates.

#### **For Employees:**

- ❑ Employees exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 should remain or return home

#### **For Employers:**

- ❑ Employees exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 should remain or return home
- ❑ Employees exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 should be reported to local health officials
- ❑ Well-being checks of all employees, including physical temperature checks, should be carried out in areas of high infection rates



### **Case Notification**

At minimum, confirmed cases of COVID-19 should be immediately reported to [local health authorities](#) in accordance with appropriate actions recommended by the PHAC.

#### **For Employers:**

- ❑ Report employees exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 to local health officials



### **Personal Protective Equipment**

In accordance with all PHAC, provincial, municipal in addition to corporate policies, face coverings should be utilized when mandated in all indoor public spaces to ensure the safety for our employees and guests.

- ❑ Utilize face coverings, when mandated, in all indoor public spaces

# Employee's Responsibilities

## Hand Cleaning

If not wearing protective gloves, all employees should follow PHAC guidance regarding hand washing. Employees should wash their hands for at least 20 seconds, or use sanitizer when a sink is not available, after any of the following activities: using the restroom, sneezing, touching the face, cleaning, smoking, eating, drinking, accepting items from a guest (ID, cash, credit card, key card), taking a break, and before a shift and as needed throughout the shift. When possible, employees should wear gloves for added protection and sanitation efforts. Proper hand hygiene, in accordance with PHAC guidelines, should be followed prior to and after removing the gloves.

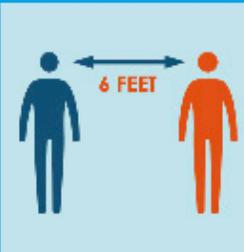
## COVID-19 Training

All employees with frequent guest contact (including Housekeeping, Food & Beverage, public areas, Hotel Operations, Security, Valet/Door/Bell Services, and Maintenance/Engineering) should receive COVID-19 safety and facility sanitation protocols guidance and training consistent with the PHAC recommendations.

## Personal Protective Equipment

PHAC recommendations along with federal and local government regulations should dictate appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) to be worn by employees. PPE, along with appropriate training for use and disposal, should be made available to any employee upon request.

GENERAL ADVICE

 <p><b>FACE COVERINGS UTILIZED IN ALL INDOOR PUBLIC SPACES</b></p>	 <p><b>WASH HANDS WITH SOAP AND WATER OR SANITIZER AT LEAST 20 SECONDS</b></p>
 <p><b>DRY HANDS WITH A DISPOSABLE TOWEL, DON'T SHARE TOWELS</b></p>	 <p><b>KEEP A SAFE DISTANCE FROM OTHERS</b></p>
 <p><b>COVER COUGHS AND SNEEZES WITH A TISSUE OR FLEXTED ELBOW, DISPOSE TISSUES</b></p>	 <p><b>DO NOT TOUCH EYES, NOSE, MOUTH WITH UNWASHED HANDS</b></p>

# Cleaning Protocols

Cleaning products and protocols should [include disinfectants indicated by PHAC as being proven effective against viruses](#), bacteria and other airborne and blood-borne pathogens. For more information, please refer to the Centre for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines on [disinfecting buildings and facilities](#).



## Public Spaces and Communal Areas

Cleaning and disinfecting should be frequent (multiple times per day) with an emphasis on frequent contact with hard non-porous surfaces including, but not limited to, front desk check-in counters, bell desks, elevators and elevator buttons, door handles, public bathrooms, vending machines, ice machines, room keys and locks, ATMs, escalator and stair handrails, gym equipment, pool seating and surrounding areas, dining surfaces and all seating areas.

- Clean and disinfect hard non-porous surfaces multiple times per day



## Guest Rooms

Cleaning and disinfecting protocols will require that particular attention is paid to high-touch, hard non-porous items including television remote controls, toilet seats and handles, door and furniture handles, water faucet handles, nightstands, telephones, in-room control panels, light switches, temperature control

panels, alarm clocks, luggage racks and flooring. The frequency of room cleaning during a guest's stay may be altered based on guest requirements.

Discard all single use items provided by the hotel that were used by the guest during their stay, or left by the guest. If bulk personal care items are used, the cleaning staff should clean and disinfect all high touch surfaces in the room including any bulk toiletry items that may have been used or touched by guests prior to the next occupant.

- Clean and disinfect hard non-porous items in guest rooms



## Maintenance

As with Housekeeping, non-urgent in-room maintenance issues should be halted until a room is no longer occupied and has been cleaned according to post-occupancy standards. If an instance arises where maintenance must be performed immediately in an occupied room, the hotel should have protocols in place to ensure the safety of both the staff and guest. The maintenance should only be performed by a trained, designated staff person adhering to prescribed safety procedures.

- Halt non-urgent room maintenance issues
- If maintenance must be performed, proper protocols should be in place



## Laundry

Linens, towels and laundry should be washed in accordance with CDC or your regional guidelines, including washing items as appropriate in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. Where

possible, launder items using the warmest permissible water setting for the items and dry items completely. Dirty linen should be bagged in the guest room to eliminate excess contact while being transported to the laundry facility.

- ❑ Linens, towels and laundry should be washed in accordance with regional guidelines including washing items as appropriate in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
- ❑ Launder items using the warmest permissible water setting for the items and dry items completely
- ❑ Bag dirty linen in the guest room to eliminate excess contact while being transported to the laundry facility



## Hotel Guest Elevators

Button panels should be disinfected at regular intervals, including the beginning of each housekeeping staff work shift and continuing throughout the day.

- ❑ Button panels should be disinfected at regular intervals



## Back of House

Cleaning and disinfecting of all high touch areas should occur in accordance

with [PHAC's guidance](#) including at least twice per day in high traffic areas. Hand-washing stations and access to hand sanitizer should be convenient and highly visible.

- ❑ Clean and disinfect all high touch areas in accordance with regional guidelines



## Shared Equipment

Shared tools and equipment should be disinfected after each shift or transfer to a new employee.

- ❑ Clean and disinfect all high touch areas in accordance with regional guidelines



## Room Recovery Protocol

In the event of a presumptive case of COVID-19 the affected guest room should be removed from service and quarantined. The guest room should not be returned to service until undergoing an enhanced cleaning and disinfecting utilizing [disinfectants](#) indicated by PHAC as being proven effective against viruses, bacteria and other pathogens.

- ❑ In the event of a presumptive case of COVID-19 the affected guest room should be removed from service and quarantined employee
- ❑ The guest room should not be returned to service until undergoing an enhanced cleaning and disinfecting



## Food & Beverage

Food and beverage service should reduce in-person contact with guests, buffet service and minimize dining items for increased sanitation. Traditional room service should be replaced with a no contact delivery method. Traditional buffet service should be limited, but when offered, it should be served by an attendant wearing personal protection equipment (PPE), and utensils should be washed and changed more frequently. Portion controls should be emphasized to reduce food exposed for long periods.

Sneeze and cough screens should be present at all food displays. Minimal items should be placed on guest tables to allow for effective disinfection in between each guest, including condiments, silverware, glassware, napkins, etc. For certain segments, the use of prepackaged foods and 'grab & go' items should be the preferred method of food delivery.

- ❑ Reduce in-person contact with guests and buffet service
- ❑ Minimize dining items for increased sanitation
- ❑ Room service should be replaced with no-contact delivery method
- ❑ Traditional buffet service should be limited, when offered, should be served by attendant in PPE
- ❑ Portion controls should be emphasized to reduce food exposed for long periods
- ❑ Reduce items placed on guest tables to allow for effective disinfection between guests



## Ventilation & Water System Checks

After a prolonged shutdown, properties should ensure ventilation systems operate properly and provide acceptable indoor air quality for the current occupancy level for each space in accordance with [CDC guidelines](#). In addition, assessments of property water systems should be conducted in accordance with the [CDC Guidance for Building Water Systems](#) that provide a step-by-step process for reopening water systems after a prolonged shutdown.

- ❑ Ensure ventilation systems operate properly and provide acceptable indoor air quality
- ❑ Conduct assessment of property water systems

# Physical Distancing



## Physical Distancing & Queuing

As recommended by the [PHAC's social distancing guidelines](#), guests should be advised to practice physical distancing by standing at least six feet away from other groups of people not travelling with them, including any area where guests or employees queue. Such areas should be clearly marked for appropriate physical distancing, and where possible, encourage one-way guest flow with marked entrances and exits. When applicable, lobby furniture and other public seating areas will be reconfigured to promote social distancing.

Minimize traffic in enclosed spaces, such as elevators and stairwells. In accordance with [CDC guidelines](#), consider limiting the number of individuals in an elevator at one time and designating one directional stairwells, if possible.

- ❑ Guests advised to practice physical distancing
- ❑ Areas clearly marked for physical distancing
- ❑ Encourage one-way guest flow with marked entrances and exits
- ❑ Reconfigure public seating areas to promote physical distancing



## Guest Rooms

In anticipation of individual concerns of guests, housekeeping should not enter

a guest room during a stay unless specifically requested, or approved, by the guest, or to comply with established safety protocols. Housekeeping should maintain the practice of cleaning rooms thoroughly following check-out.

- ❑ Housekeeping should not enter a guest room during a stay unless specifically requested or approved by the guest or to comply with safety protocols



## Meeting and Convention Spaces

Meetings, conventions and all other events should align with PHAC and regional recommendations, including physical distancing, use of face coverings, contactless service offerings, cleaning and disinfecting guidelines, modified layouts and limiting capacity. Please display signage and messaging about proper hand hygiene and use of face coverings and other protective equipment, as well as promoting physical distancing. All meetings and events should operate in accordance with local and provincial law.

- ❑ Allow for physical distancing between guests



## Hotel Front Desk, Concierge, and Parking Services

Front desk agents should practice social distancing including utilizing every

other workstation to ensure separation between employees whenever applicable and possible. Contact-less check-in, including mobile check in/check out and pre group arrivals are encouraged, when feasible, to reduce lobby population and front desk queue. In addition, contactless payment processes are encouraged, and when not available, employees should minimize contact as much as possible.

Self-parking options should be emphasized, where possible. If valet service is provided, disinfecting of contact points within the vehicle is required. In addition, van and shuttle service should be limited, and disinfecting of contact points will be required.

- ❑ Utilize every other workstation to ensure separation between employees
- ❑ Conduct contact-less check-in
- ❑ Utilize contact-less payment processes
- ❑ Employees should minimize contact as much as possible
- ❑ Emphasize self-parking
- ❑ For valet service – disinfect contact points in the vehicle
- ❑ Limit van and shuttle service



## **Pools and Beaches**

Seating should allow at least six feet of separation between groups of guests.

- ❑ Allow six feet of separation between groups of guests



## **Back of House**

Physical distancing among all employees should be practiced in employee dining rooms, uniform control areas, training classrooms, shared office spaces, and other high-density areas, in accordance with recommendations from PHAC.

- ❑ Allow six feet of separation between groups of guests



# ENHANCED INDUSTRY-WIDE HOTEL CLEANING CHECKLIST

## GUEST CONSIDERATIONS

- Prominent signage is displayed, including any required social distancing signage, floor markings indicating 6-foot distancing in common areas, including elevators, and required hygienic practices and policies in all employees and guest common areas.
- Where physical distancing is not possible, 'sneeze guards,' mask requirements, or usage limits and layout adjustments are in place.
- Request guests and visitors use hand sanitizer and provide dispensers, touchless whenever possible, at primary guest entrances and contact areas.
- An amenity bag is provided during check-in containing COVID-19 awareness information, hand sanitizer, and perhaps masks/gloves (optional).
- Guests enter through doors that are open or are automated or manually operated by an employee (if possible/practical).
- Employees do not open the doors of guest vehicles and there are no valet services, unless requested or special circumstances.
- Guests requesting bell service are assisted and the bell cart is sanitized after each use.
- If masks are required, the hotel displays signage prominently, outlining proper mask usage.
- Provide a spray bottle of sanitizer or wipes in each room for guest use (optional).
- Elevator button panels are sanitized at least once per hour, and/or hand sanitizer is available at or in elevators, and the number of guests per elevator is limited.
- Multi-use and unnecessary items and amenities are removed from guest rooms.
- Housekeeping does not enter guest rooms during a stay, unless by special request or circumstances (if possible).
- Room service is adjusted for proper pickup/delivery protocols, sanitation of cutlery and single use condiments.
- Dining services are updated to discontinue self-service buffets, using cafeteria style or grab-and-go services instead.
- The property website communicates expectations to guests, including cleanliness and safety features, as well as expectations for arrival and stay.

## EMPLOYEE CONSIDERATIONS

- Employees are educated on COVID-19 and all guest protocols and procedures.
- Employees have been educated on proper hand cleaning practices and follow guidelines hourly and after activities such as using the restroom, cleaning, eating, and before and after starting shifts.
- Employees wear appropriate PPE in accordance with provincial, territorial or local regulations and are trained on proper use and disposal of PPE. Masks and gloves have been provided to employees when appropriate/required.
- Housekeepers are required to wear gloves, with masks and eyewear recommended or required per provincial, territorial or local regulations.
- Staff meetings are conducted with appropriate social distancing (outdoors, virtually, or in other appropriate areas).
- Employees are encouraged to check their temperature prior to their shift and not come to work if feeling sick. Ask employees if they are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 (confidential medical record).

## CLEANING PROTOCOLS

- The frequency of cleaning and sanitizing in all public spaces, with an emphasis on frequent contact surfaces, is increased.
- EPA approved cleaning and sanitizing protocols are in place to clean guest rooms, with particular attention paid to high-touch items.
- Rooms are 'sealed' or mechanisms/notices are in place for clean rooms not to be entered between guests.
- All bed linens and laundry are washed at a high temperature in accordance to CDC guidelines, and dirty laundry is bagged/contained in the guest room to eliminate excess contact while be transported.
- Rooms are left vacant for 24-72 hours prior to or after cleaning (if possible).
- The frequency of cleaning and sanitizing in all high traffic back of house areas, with an emphasis on employee dining rooms, locker rooms, restrooms and kitchens, is increased.
- Shared tools and equipment are sanitized during and after each shift or anytime the equipment is transferred to a new employee.
- The use of shared food and beverage equipment, including shared coffee/tea service, has been discontinued (optional).
- In the case of a presumptive COVID-19 positive guest, the guest's room is removed from service and quarantined and the guest room is not returned to service until case is confirmed or cleared. In the event of a positive case, the room is only returned to service after undergoing an enhanced sanitization protocol (per county regulations, if applicable), which is encouraged to be performed by a licensed third-party service.
- The frequency of air filter replacement and HVAC system cleaning is increased to maximize fresh air exchange.
- Suppliers, delivery drivers, and other individuals from third-party

I, \_\_\_\_\_  
PRINT NAME

the \_\_\_\_\_  
JOB TITLE

at \_\_\_\_\_  
PROPERTY

located at \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS

\_\_\_\_\_  
CITY / PROVINCE / POSTAL CODE

certify that the above checked items are correct and accurate to the best of my knowledge.

\_\_\_\_\_  
SIGNATURE / DATE

Please complete, sign, and return this form and after verification of your membership, you will be sent a Safe Stay Certified window decal for website and promotional use.

## Recognition

The Hotel Association of Canada (HAC) thanks the American Hotel & Lodging Association and their Safe Stay Advisory Council for granting HAC permission to repurpose the contents of their Enhanced Industry-Wide Hotel Cleaning Standards in response to COVID-19 document for dissemination to the Canadian lodging industry.

## Provincial Links to COVID-19 Guidance

[Alberta Hotel & Lodging Association](#)

[Manitoba Hotel Association: Clean it Right](#)

[British Columbia Hotel Association](#)

[Saskatchewan Hotel & Hospitality Associations](#)

[Ontario Restaurant Hotel & Motel Association](#)

[Association Hôtellerie Québec](#)

[Hospitality Newfoundland and Labrador](#)

## References

1. [Public Health Agency of Canada \(PHAC\)](#)
2. [Centers for Disease Control \(CDC\)](#)

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## **Legal Disclaimer**

This information is intended solely for the purpose of providing the hotel industry with top line health and safety guidance during the reopening phase of the economy.

The information provided is obtained from publicly available sources, including federal agencies and governmental entities, member companies, other leading trade associations and consultants.

The information contained in these guidelines is general in nature and should not be considered to be medical, legal, insurance or any other professional advice. In all cases you should consult with professional advisors familiar with your particular factual situation before making any decisions.

While we have taken every precaution to ensure that the content of these guidelines is both current and accurate, errors can occur. AHLA and HAC assumes no responsibility or liability for any errors or omissions in the content of these guidelines. The information contained in these guidelines is provided on an “as is” basis with no guarantees of completeness, accuracy, usefulness or timeliness and without any warranties of any kind whatsoever, express or implied.

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