

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



## 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.

- ▣ Develop, implement and update cleanliness plan



## Washing Hands & Hand Sanitizer

[Public Health Agency of Canada \(PHAC\) guidelines](#) shall 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 shall include no less than 60% alcohol content, where available, and touchless where possible. As available, dispensers shall 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 shall be placed at high-traffic areas on property
- ❑ FAQs for guest-facing staff



## Back of the House Signage

Signage shall 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 shall 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 shall remain or return home. While at work, employees who notice a coworker or guest exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 shall immediately contact a manager. At a minimum, hotels shall 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 shall remain or return home

### For Employers:

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



## Case Notification

At minimum, confirmed cases of COVID-19 shall 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



# Employee's Responsibilities

## Hand Cleaning

If not wearing protective gloves, all employees shall follow PHAC guidance regarding hand washing. Employees shall 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 shall 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.

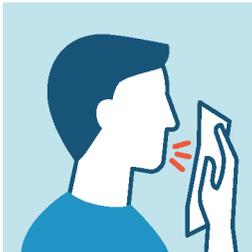
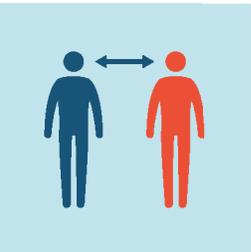
## COVID-19 Training

All employees with frequent guest contact (including Housekeeping, Food & Beverage, public areas, Hotel Operations, Security, Valet/Door/Bell Services, and Maintenance/Engineering) shall 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 shall dictate appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) to be worn by employees. PPE, along with appropriate training for use and disposal, shall be made available to any employee upon request.

### GENERAL ADVICE

 <p><b>WASH HANDS WITH SOAP AND WATER OR SANITIZER AT LEAST 20 SEC</b></p>	 <p><b>DRY HANDS WITH A DISPOSABLE TOWEL, DON'T SHARE TOWELS</b></p>
 <p><b>COVER COUGHS AND SNEEZES WITH A TISSUE OR FLEXED ELBOW, DISPOSE TISSUES</b></p>	 <p><b>DO NOT TOUCH EYES, NOSE, MOUTH WITH UNWASHED HANDS</b></p>
 <p><b>DO NOT SHARE PERSONAL OBJECTS AND HOUSEHOLD ITEMS</b></p>	 <p><b>KEEP A SAFE DISTANCE FROM OTHERS</b></p>

# Cleaning Protocols

Cleaning products and protocols shall [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 shall 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.

- 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 shall 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 shall be bagged in the guest room to eliminate excess contact while being transported to the laundry facility.

- ❑ Linens, towels and laundry shall 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 shall be disinfected at regular intervals, including the beginning of each housekeeping staff work shift and continuing throughout the day.

- ❑ Button panels shall be disinfected at regular intervals

### **Back of House**

Cleaning and disinfecting of all high touch areas shall 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 shall 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 shall be removed from service and quarantined. The guest room shall 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 shall be removed from service and quarantined employee
- ❑ The guest room shall not be returned to service until undergoing an enhanced cleaning and disinfecting

### **Food & Beverage**

Food and beverage service shall reduce in-person contact with guests, buffet

service and minimize dining items for increased sanitation. Traditional room service shall be replaced with a no contact delivery method. Traditional buffet service shall 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 shall 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 shall 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 shall 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

# Physical Distancing

## Physical Distancing & Queuing

As recommended by the [PHAC's social distancing guidelines](#), guests shall 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 shall 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.

- ❑ 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 shall not enter a guest room during a stay unless specifically requested, or approved, by the guest, or to comply with established safety protocols. Housekeeping shall maintain the practice of cleaning rooms thoroughly following check-out.

- ❑ Housekeeping shall 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

Meeting and banquet arrangements shall allow for physical distancing between guests based on PHAC and regional recommendations.

- ❑ Allow for physical distancing between guests



## Hotel Front Desk, Concierge, and Parking Services

Front desk agents shall 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 shall be limited, and disinfecting of contact points will be required.

- Allow six feet of separation between groups of guests

- 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 shall 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 shall 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.

## 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 \(CDC\)](#)

**hotelassociation.ca**  
**info@hotelassociation.ca**



## **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.

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