

When Physical Distancing Is not Possible - COVID-19

Physical distancing is keeping a minimum space of 2m or 6.5 ft between workers at all times.

Conducting Tasks

A number of tasks conducted in the workplace, can become difficult and sometimes impossible to complete without breaking the distance barrier. The following should be considered when determining if a task is essential or not:

- How urgently does the task need to be completed.
- Is there an alternate way to perform the task (additional controls, different process).
- Can the number of workers be reduced.

Breaching Physical Distancing

Anytime physical distancing needs to be breached, it must be for a short period of time and not occur frequently. Suggestions when physical distancing is breached in the workplace:

Workers

When necessary, work requiring physical distancing to be breached should not be by workers who are at higher risk of COVID-19. Workers at higher risk would include:

- Workers over the age of 60.
- Pre-existing chronic health conditions (heart disease, diabetes, asthma).
- Workers that are immunocompromised.

****Other safety procedures during physical distancing breaches must not be neglected.****

Only workers who are at lower risk of transmitting COVID-19 should be conducting work. Workers must complete the [Health Screening Tool - Blank Template](#) prior to conducting work on-site.

Task Supervision

It is recommended that any work that breaches physical distancing, should be under the direct supervision of someone with health and safety experience. The person supervising must ensure:

- Best practices are followed.
- Physical distancing breaches are for short periods of time and not frequent.
- Other safety considerations are not overlooked during breaches.

Handwashing

- Provide handwashing or hand sanitizing stations that are easily accessible for workers.
- Hands must be washed in accordance with the [Safe Work Practice - Hand washing](#) following a breach. If the task requires gloves, wash hands after removing gloves.

- Always use soap with water to wash hands as a first resort. Alcohol based sanitizer can be used in the event soap and water is not an option.
- Always avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with or without gloves.

Cleaning/Disinfecting

- Following completion of a task ensure all tools that are used get properly disinfected.
- All frequently touched surfaces must be cleaned and disinfected.

Clothing

- Workers should change clothing at the end of a shift to reduce the risk of “take home exposure”. Clothing removed should be placed in a plastic bag and put directly into the wash.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Controls listed above should be followed prior to considering the use of PPE. Other controls being followed can sometimes eliminate the need for PPE (ex. Turning a 2 person task into a 1 person task).

- Face coverings (masks, shields) should be used for people who are breaching physical distancing measures. This does not protect the wearer, but reduces the spread of droplets from infected individuals.
- Always wash or sanitize hands prior to putting on PPE and immediately after removing it.
- Always avoid any sort of contact with your face while wearing PPE.
- Reusable non-porous PPE must be sanitized between and after use (Read manufacturer's instructions for proper cleaning).
- DO NOT share PPE with other workers.
- Always use clean cloths, wipes or rags when wiping PPE down to clean or disinfect.
- DO NOT leave PPE that will be used or is re-usable on frequently touched surfaces.
- When using gloves, hands must be washed immediately after they are used.