

# RETURNING TO WORK

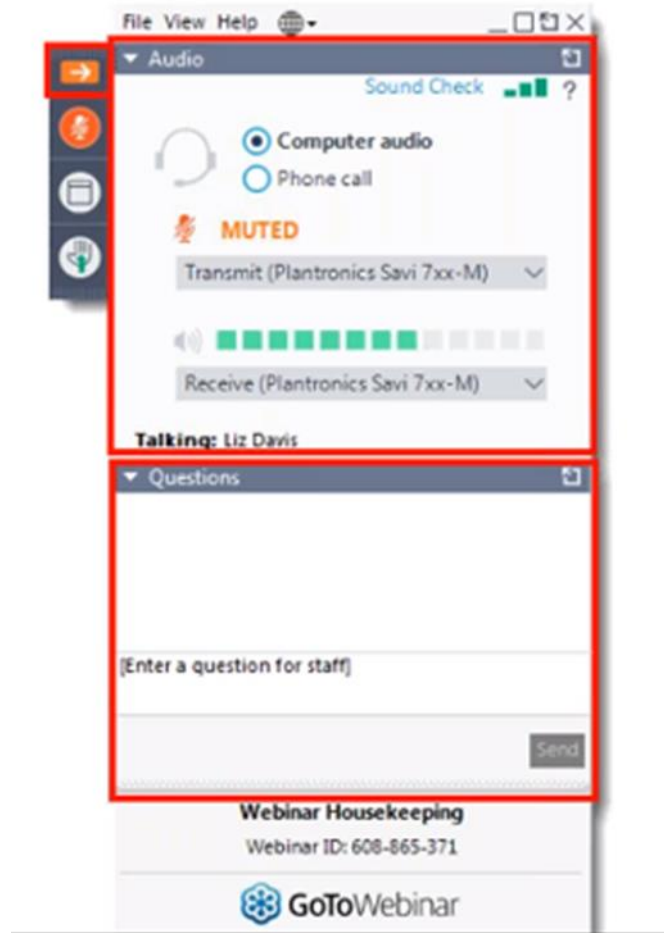
## WHAT TO CONSIDER



Public Service Alliance of Canada  
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# GoToWebinar Housekeeping



## Your Participation:

- Open and close your control panel using the orange arrow
- Join audio
  - Choose Mic & Speakers to use VoIP; or
  - Choose Telephone and dial using the information provided
- Submit questions and comments via the questions panel
- Today's presentation is being recorded and will be shared
- Handouts are available under the handouts tab

# **RETURNING TO WORK**

## **WHAT TO CONSIDER**



# Agenda

- Moving forward in this current climate
- What Employers should be considering
- Understanding the fear of returning to the workplace
- What a return to work plan should look like



Poll :

**Does your workplace have a  
Return to Work Plan?**



# The Current Climate



The curve is flattening in Ontario and Quebec and as such the employers have begun to talk about returning employees to workplaces



This work needs to be done jointly with workplace and policy Health & Safety committees



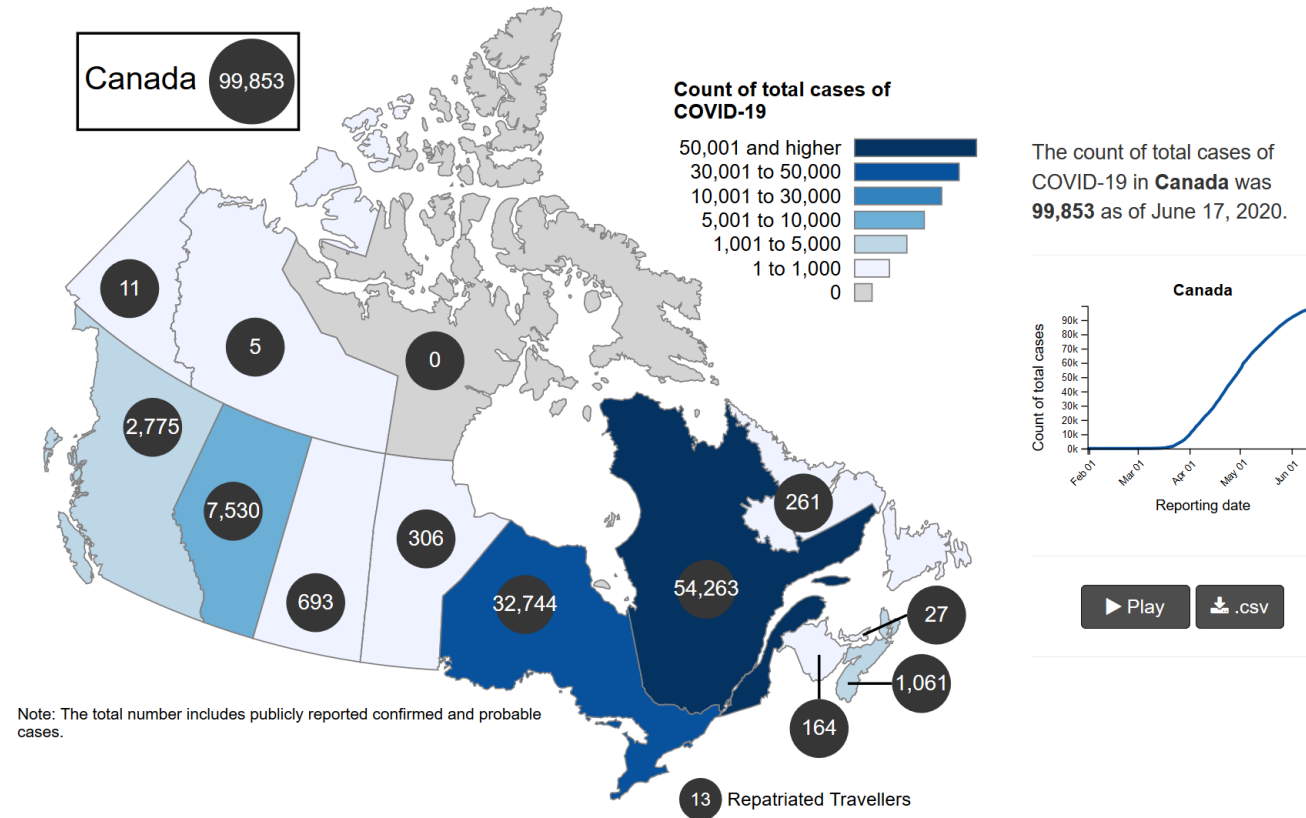
Health & Safety is essential.

# Current situation

Count of total cases of COVID-19 in Canada as of June 17, 2020

Last data update 2020-06-17 19:00 EDT

Hover over provinces and territories to see total cases, recovered cases, number of people tested or deaths in Canada over time. Click the play button to animate the map.



<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection.html?amp%Bqid=96637021>



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# New Realities

- Increased sanitation in workplaces especially high contact surfaces and shared surfaces
- Increased distance between work stations
- Re-evaluation of more permanent teleworking situations
- Evaluating how we work, minimizing personal interactions





# New Realities

- Treating sick leave differently-encouraging people to stay home if ill
- Increased screening
- Increased reliance on PPE and safety precautions
- H&S in the forefront of workplace concerns



# What Should Employers be Considering Right Now?

- Where they get their guidance from
- How they involve the employees in the discussion
- How will they monitor the workplace and changes to directions



# What Should Employers be Considering Right Now?

- What PPE and workplace modifications will be needed
- Evaluating current policies
- Duty to accommodate situations



# What Should Employers be Considering Right Now?

- Employers should be seeking advice from more than one source
- Provincial guidance will often be the clearest guidance
- Federally legislated workplaces should still consult provincial and local guidance, and vice versa





# What Should Employers be Considering Right Now?

- Plans must be workplace/industry and region specific. What may be applicable in one area of the country, may not be to another
- Plans must be flexible and fluid, and based on latest information
- Employers should go with the most cautious approach when in doubt



# Consultation with and Participation of Employee Representatives

- H&S committees / H&S Representatives have a legal right to participate and be consulted on any changes that may affect H&S of employees - 135(7)(i) 136(5)(i) – Canada Labour Code, part II
  - Article 78, Act respecting occupational health and safety (Quebec)
  - Article 18 of the Occupational Health and Safety Act (Ontario)
- Local Union Representatives should also be consulted for input on planning and implementation
- Where consultation doesn't occur - you will see a lack of buy in, pushback (right to refuse) and general anxiety for a return to work
- Any decisions or directions at a national level still need to be considered at a worksite level

Poll :

**If you are a member of your Local H&S Committee, have you met to discuss the return to the workplace plan?**



**Brainstorm** : click on the following link in your question box and share your ideas for a good return to the workplace plan : [https://psacunionafpc-my.sharepoint.com/:p:/g/personal/lebelp\\_psac-afpc\\_com/EcqboGs21pVDn4GbBvnTaz4BJREeYbNNWDHjWY9lO0x6lw?e=KjK8Mi](https://psacunionafpc-my.sharepoint.com/:p:/g/personal/lebelp_psac-afpc_com/EcqboGs21pVDn4GbBvnTaz4BJREeYbNNWDHjWY9lO0x6lw?e=KjK8Mi)





# Poll

**Rate how would you feel if you had to go back to your workplace in two weeks?**



# Questions?



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# Monitoring Implementation

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Workplaces should be determining **\*now\*** what PPE supplies and modifications are needed



Determination must be done in consultation with workplace committee or representative



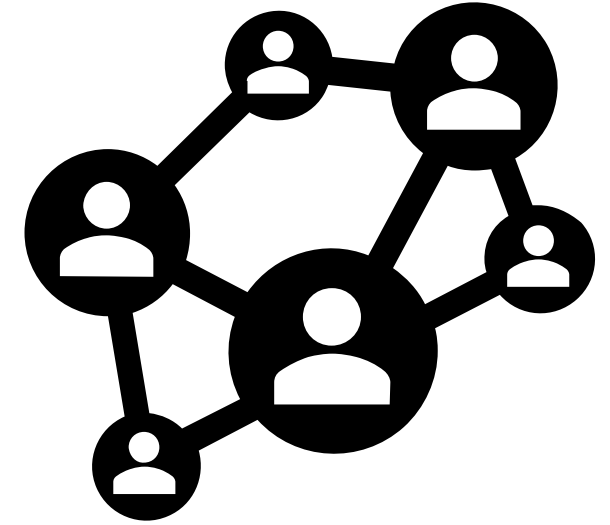
Hazard assessments must be performed

# Monitoring Implementation

- Any plans made need to be fluid, and adaptable as information changes
- Decisions need to be made in a timely manner

This could be due to:

- a loosening of restrictions,
- a second wave of the pandemic,
- or new information/guidance as we gain a better understanding of the virus



# Pre-screening

- Who gathers this information?
- How is the information stored?
- Who uses this information? How is it used?



# Evaluating Current Policies: Hazard Prevention Program

(Part XIX, Canada Occupational Health and Safety Regulations - COHSR)



Workplaces should be taking the opportunity to learn from these events, and updating their current policies



No workplace was prepared for this pandemic, and every workplace has areas of improvement



This will be important for future pandemics or subsequent waves

# Evaluating Current Policies: Hazard Prevention Program (Part XIX, COHSR)



Participation and consultation of the proper committee must take place



Workplace modifications- creating space or barriers for interaction with public must also be identified



Actions must be risk appropriate

# Evaluating Current Policies: Violence Prevention Program

(Part XX, COHSR)

Employer must consider all aspects of workplace violence, including domestic violence, and anti-Asian violence

Research has shown that domestic violence makes its way into the workplace in Canada

Employer must put in place preventive measures to ensure the Health & Safety of all persons granted access to the workplace





# Duty to Accommodate

- Employers still need to address any requests for accommodations as per the provincial and federal Human Rights Acts.
  - Disability, Age, Gender, Family Status etc.
- Each request for accommodation must be considered on a case by case basis
- Employers need to have flexibility when considering accommodation requests
- Failure to accommodate could result in a grievance and Human Rights Complaint



# Understanding Fear



# Understanding Fear – Recommendations from the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA)

The CMHA recommends employers consider the following six tips:

- 1. Have a plan.** Let employees know that you are thinking and looking ahead, that you will stay well-informed and that you can answer the questions they already have: What if I get sick? How do I take time off work? What if my family members contracts the virus? You may want to compile frequently asked questions and direct employees to them often.



**2. Communicate, share and be open.** Worry and fear grow in the absence of up-to-date information. Let your employees know that they can expect regular updates from you. Communicate even if the situation remains unchanged.

**3. Empathize.** Share that you know it's stressful. Recognize that it's okay to be anxious. Remind your employees of resources (EAP) that are available for those who are experiencing stress.



**4. Reassure – as best you can.** You can refer to reports indicating that most people who become infected with the virus will recover.

**5. Understand.** Recognize when stress has become unmanageable for individual employees. Stress can lead to anxiety and even panic. Some employees may need mental health days and medical intervention in order to cope. Encourage employees to practice self-care activities on-the-job and reassure them that it's ok to take steps to manage stress, such as relaxation exercises, listening to relaxing music or taking regular breaks.

**6. Recognize this is not quite ‘business as usual.’** Know that work will likely be impacted—work will slow down, necessary travel may be canceled. Reassure staff that expectations will shift accordingly, and that’s ok. We will get through this!

(PDF of Maintaining Your Mental Health Webinar slides in “Handouts”)





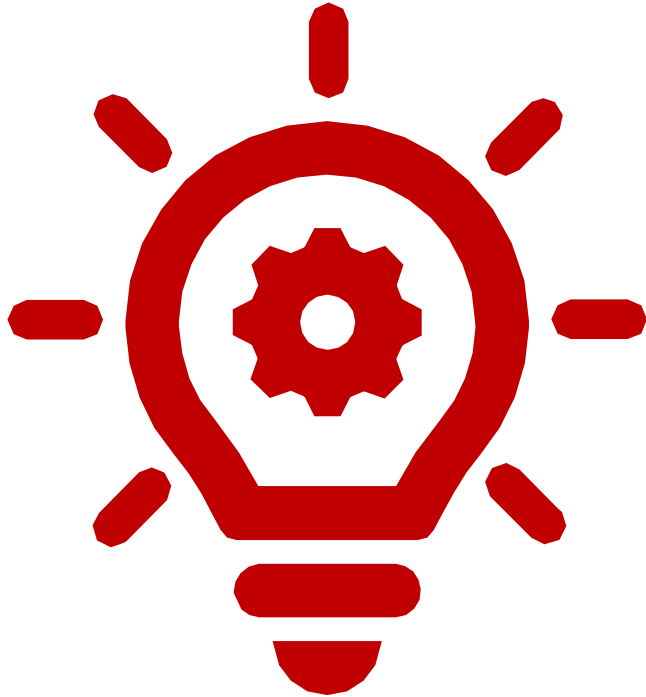
# This is What a Successful Return to Work Plan Looks Like

- <http://psacunion.ca/what-successful-return-workplace-plan-looks>



# Final Thoughts

- We need to return to work plans now
- Hazard/Risk Assessments need to be done
- We need to change the way we do business
- We need to learn from what other workplaces are doing, share information, and adapt to new information - no one has experience in this.





# Thank You! Questions?

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