

RETURN TO THE WORKPLACE

WHAT TO CONSIDER

November 2020



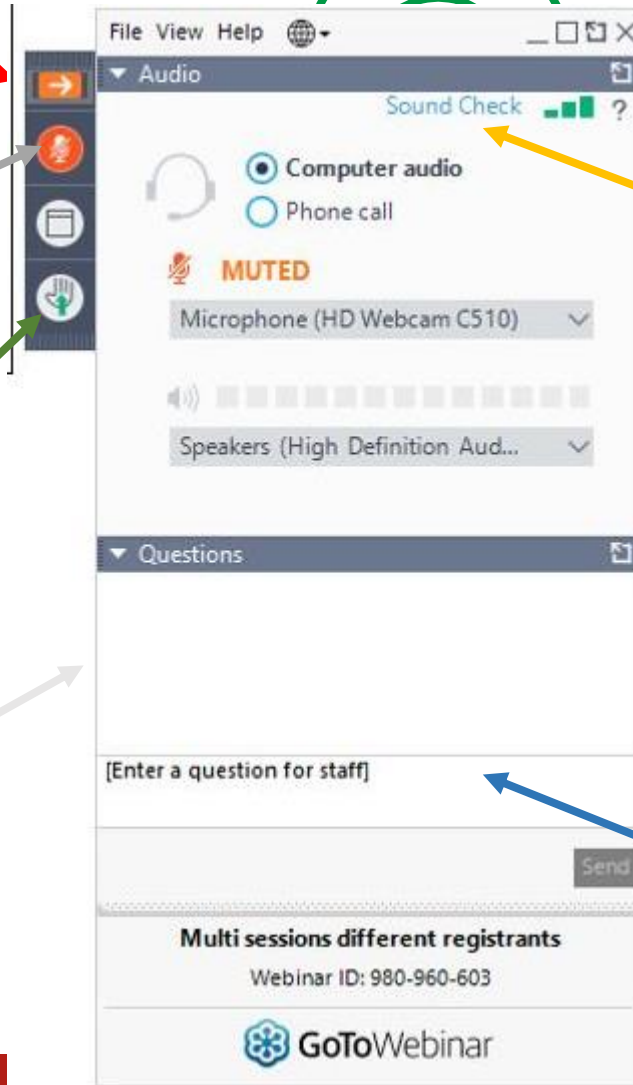
Welcome and settings!

Click on the red arrow to open or close your control panel.

Click on the mic to unmute or mute yourself. All mikes are muted when we start.

Click on the hand to ask a question.

Open and close your windows by clicking on the white triangle. If there are documents you can upload they will be in the window "documents to share"



If you hear the organizer, there no audio settings to modify. If not, click on "sound check" and select the right equipment.

Ask your questions or type your answers in the question window. Only the organizers will see them.



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RETURN TO THE WORKPLACE

WHAT TO CONSIDER

Agenda

- Moving forward in this current climate: November 2020 update
- What Employers Unions and H&S committees should be considering
- Understanding the fear of returning to the workplace and Helping members navigate it
- What a return to work plan should look like



Poll :

Question 1

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



The Current Climate



While the curve was flattening in Canada during the summer, active cases are increasing in several parts of the country as of November. Many employers have started or 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.

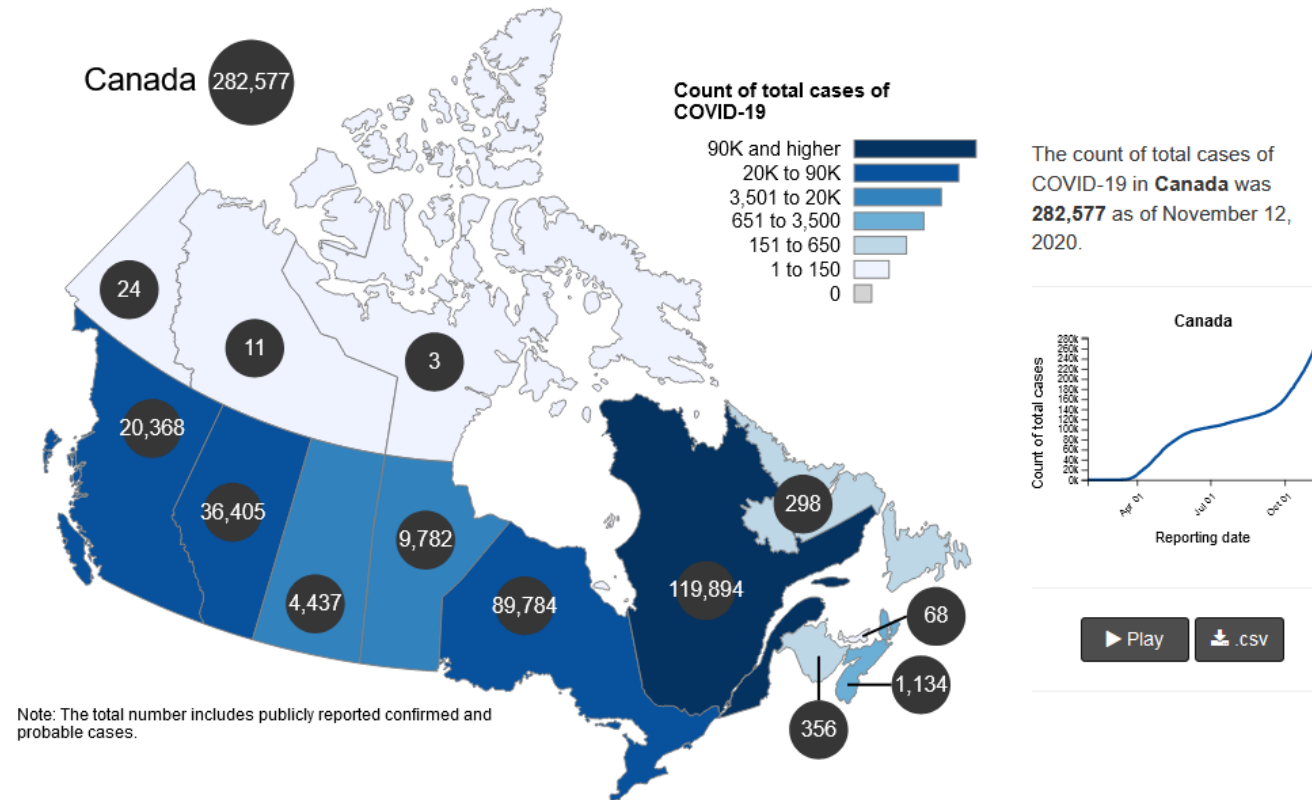
Current situation

Count of total cases of COVID-19 in Canada as of November 12, 2020

Last data update 2020-11-12 19:01 EDT

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

Total cases



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

Current situation

Count



of active cases

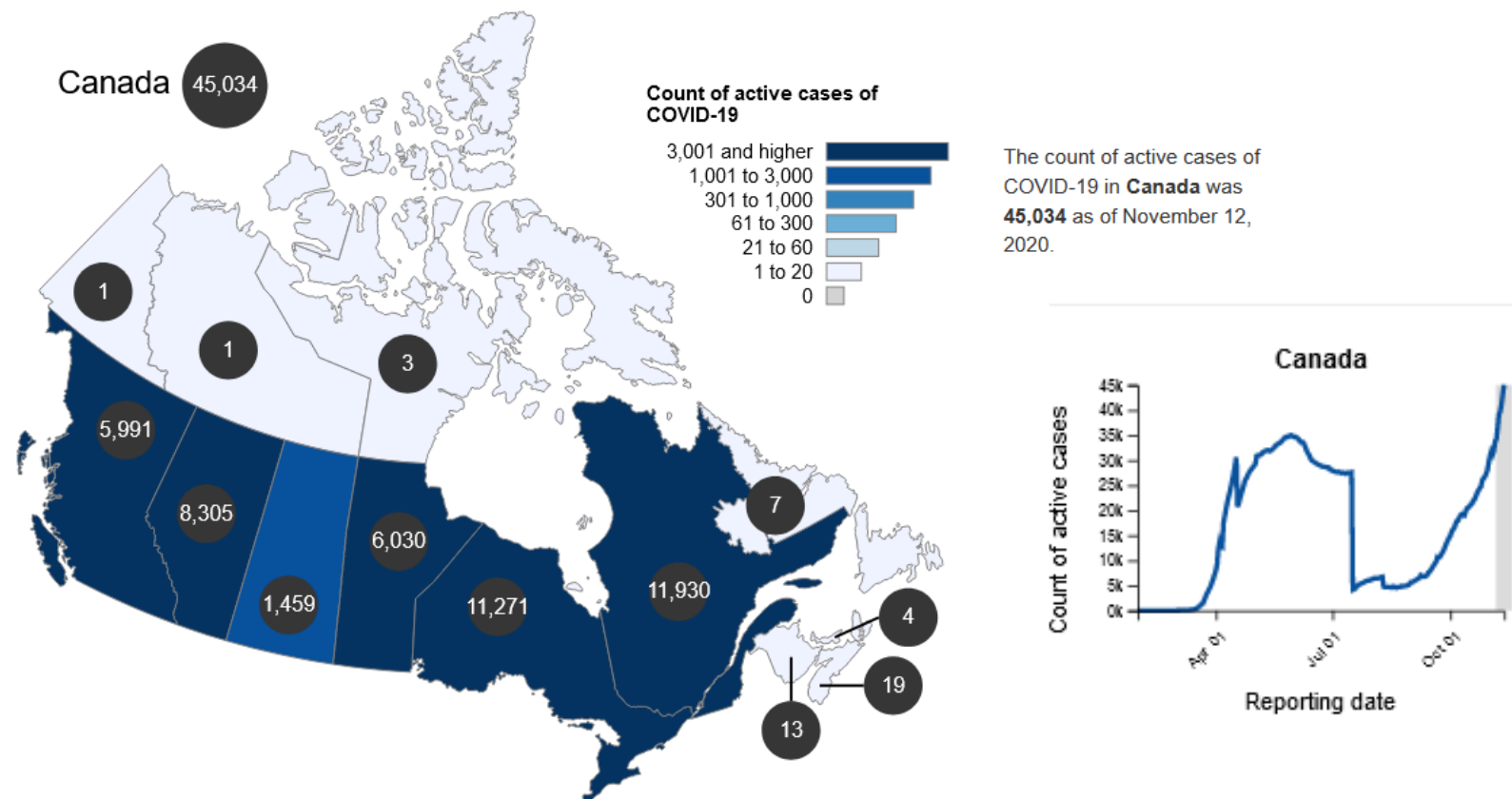


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Active cases



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New Realities - workplace

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



New Realities - workplace

- Treating sick leave differently- making it easier for people to stay home if ill
- Increased screening (on-site testing)
- Increased reliance on PPE and safety precautions
- H&S in the forefront of workplace concerns
- Increased 'visibility' of H&S committees



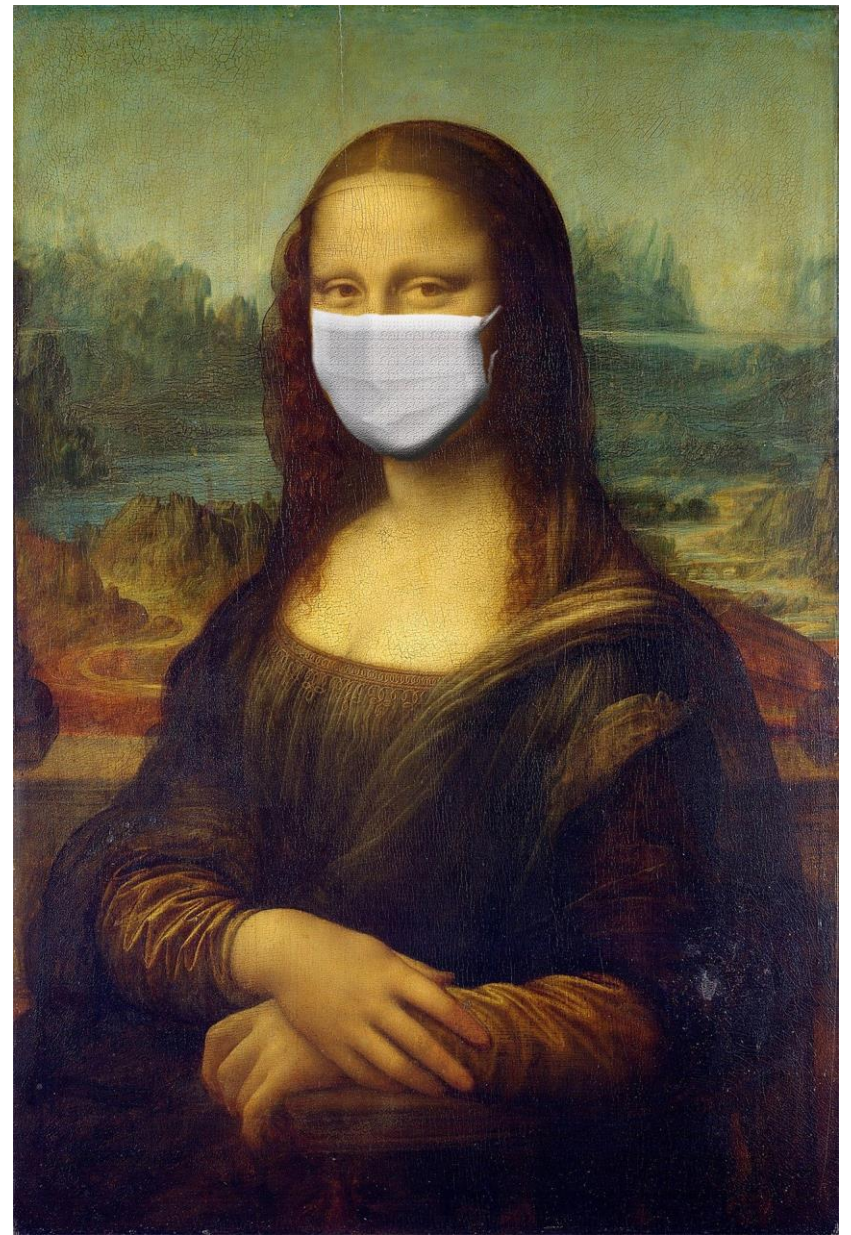
New Realities - community

- Parents with children have to deal with the rules surrounding the school environment and daycare.
- Provincial guidelines on the maximum number of people who can meet are sometimes different.
- Individuals need to assess the risk they are running and the risks they pose depending on the type of interaction.



The context is changing

- Society is slowly reopening; shops have reopened, classes have resumed, interactions are multiplying.
- The risks increase with each new contact
- Not everyone respects Public Health guidelines and instructions



What Should Employers be Considering Right Now?

- Where they get their guidance from?
- How they involve H&S committees and employees in the discussion?
- How will they monitor the workplace and changes to Public Health directives?



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
- The Precautionary Principle must always be enacted



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 :

Question 2

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 chat box and share your ideas for **a good return to the workplace plan** :

<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1G-YsVXeIW3RgQRogxAXRKnizMLZSXL7-wdDJekg/edit?usp=sharing>



Poll :

Question 3

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



Questions?



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Monitoring Implementation



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



Determination must be done in consultation with workplace committee or representative



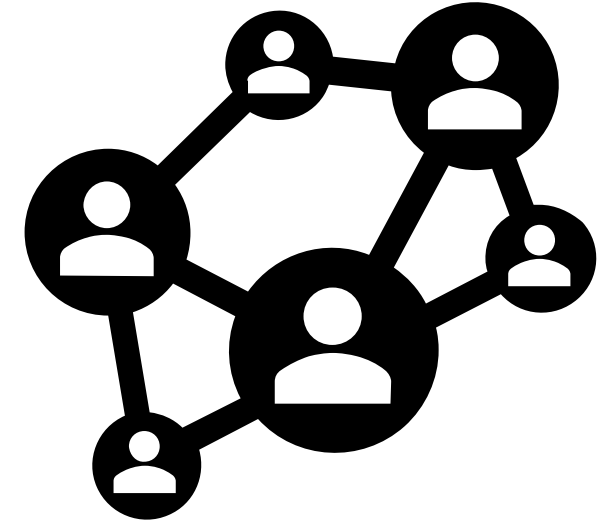
Hazard assessments must be performed

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

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>



The Role of the Union



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Talking to Members

- What is the health and safety situation of your worksite?
- Are members' shifts changing?
- What are the expectations of members who are asked to work from home?
- For those working at home, have the managers put into place resources and training?
- How can I and the Union help in these times?



Communicate

- This is the time to encourage members to reach out to their local executive.
- This is the opportunity for local executive to have fulsome discussions about members work realities.
- Ask your members what they need



Know Your Members

Start by mapping your membership

- 1) If there are multiple worksites breakdown your membership list by worksite
- 2) Determine who the stewards are by worksite or work area
- 3) By worksite/area connect to the most social of your colleagues
- 4) Create a telephone tree
- 5) Each day reach out to 5 to 10 members and confirm their personal/home email contact.



Let members know...



- about Health and Safety initiatives for their worksites
- about the union structure
- what PSAC is doing to protect their rights at work
- That you value their input



Staying in Touch

- What PSAC is doing
- Your rights at work
- Help for workers
- How the government is supporting workers
- Mental health resources
- Get support to cope with COVID-19
- Webinars



Connect

Instead of physical distancing – **Connect and Use;**

- | | |
|------------------|--|
| Facebook | Create a local page – links and new information |
| Twitter | short burst of pertinent info |
| Instagram | pictures of the best cakes baked while at home or pictures of the first sign of spring on daily walks. |
| Email | sending out information as needed |
| Facetime | with groups of members |
| Whatsapp | send information, chat by video and audio –it's free |
| Zoom | For groups of people to chat or hold meetings |

For example on Facebook: Federal Public Service Workers-COVID-19 Support page



Connect

Instead of physical distancing – connect

Facebook	Create a local page – links and new information
Twitter	short burst of pertinent info
Instagram	pictures of the best cakes baked while at home or pictures of the first fall walk in the woods
Courriel	sending out information as needed
Facetime, Zoom, Messenger	with groups of members
What'sApp	send information, chat by video and audio –it's free



Keep up to date

- Your Provincial and Municipal Health authorities
- Health Canada
- Federal Code & Regulations, or Provincial Acts and Regulations
- Guide on the Right to Refuse

[www.https://psac-ncr.com/](https://psac-ncr.com/)

www.PSACUnion.ca

www.ccohs.ca

www.publichealthontario.ca

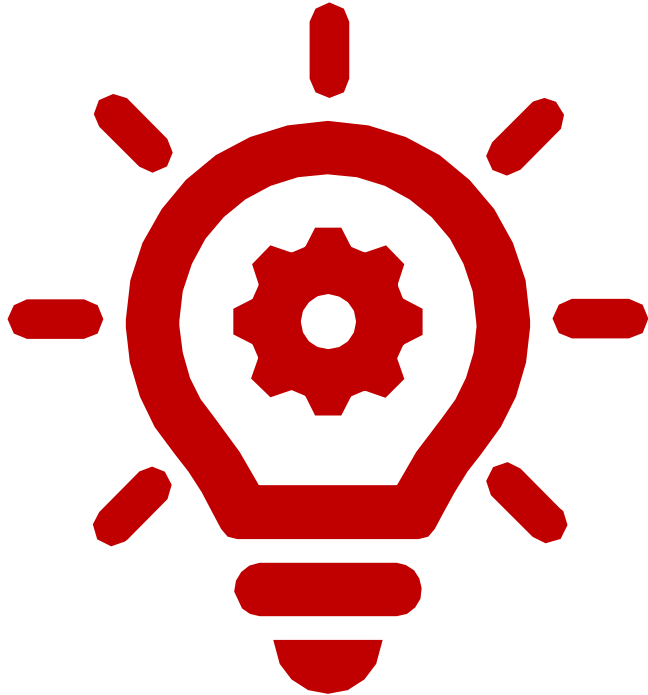
www.Canada.ca-publichealth

<https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/services/health-safety/reports/right-refuse.html>



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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