



Coronavirus (COVID-19) Producer Guidance Document and Business Continuity Plan

Introduction:

With the spread of COVID-19, Screen Nova Scotia has received a number of queries from producers planning for its potential impact, and examining ways to best protect both the health and safety of workplace parties and their businesses. The following is a series of considerations that producers may choose to apply when putting their plans in place.

As this is a rapidly evolving situation, Screen Nova Scotia urges producers to stay abreast of the latest developments and advisories from the Government of Canada found [HERE](#), the World Health Organization found [HERE](#), as well as those from the Provincial Government of Nova Scotia found [HERE](#).

Workplace Health and Safety Considerations:

All workplace parties have duties and responsibilities to control hazards in the workplace and ensure a safe working environment. Broadly, employers have a duty to take all reasonable steps to ensure workers' health and safety. The following are some of the steps that can be considered in seeking to meet this obligation:

- Ensure updates from official and credible sources are being effectively communicated to the workforce, including those from the Government of Canada, the World Health Organization, and local governments and public health agencies.
- Encourage the workforce to keep themselves abreast of updates through credible sources, rather than unofficial and potentially unreliable channels.
- Educate workers on the symptoms of COVID-19, how to avoid the spread of the virus, and what to do if someone believes they are symptomatic or has come into close contact with someone who is. The above links to Government of Canada and WHO resources will be of use in this regard and the contact information for provincial public health authorities can be found below.

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- Require workers to stay home and seek medical attention if they experience symptoms of COVID-19, including a cough, fever or shortness of breath, and ensure they do not return to work until at least 14 days have passed after they are symptom-free. In this regard, you may wish to request a doctor's note confirming that the worker is asymptomatic.
- Require all workers to advise production of any recent or planned travel to determine whether it is safe for a worker to return to work, or whether they should be required to stay home in isolation for 14 days following their return. (Again, requesting a doctor's note confirming that the worker is asymptomatic may be advisable.) A list of countries subject to Government of Canada COVID-19 travel health notices can be found [HERE](#). Note that in developing and applying protocols around return from travel, you should do so in a manner that is fact-based, non-discriminatory and otherwise consistent with applicable human rights legislation.
- Require that workers contact the workplace by phone or email (rather than meeting face-to-face) when informing you that they may be symptomatic, have come into contact with someone who is, have travelled, etc.
- Ensure that hygiene amenities are readily available, including soap and freshly running water, hand sanitizer, antiseptic and/or alcohol wipes.
- Regularly communicate proper hygiene protocols, including frequent handwashing (with soap and water for at least 20 seconds) or the use of alcohol-based hand sanitizer or wipes; coughing or sneezing into a bent elbow or tissue and immediately disposing of the tissue; staying at least one meter (3 feet) away from anyone coughing or sneezing; and avoiding touching your eyes, nose and mouth. For example, signs with these tips may be posted throughout the workplace, reminders may be provided at break time and in safety meetings, included on call sheets etc.
- Ensure that all communal spaces and frequently-touched objects like door handles, phones, keyboards and often-used production equipment are regularly cleaned.
- Develop a plan to obtain and implement directives from government or health

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authorities. This could include the assignment of responsibilities for communications to workers in the event of an emergency.

- Ensure visitors to the workplace are adequately screened in advance of their arrival to determine (i) whether they are symptomatic; (ii) their recent travel history; (iii) whether they have recently come into close contact with someone who is symptomatic or has travelled to a high-risk area, and ultimately, (iv) whether the visit is necessary or should be postponed.

How to contact public health authorities in Nova Scotia: Dial 811

Business Continuity Plan:

Screen Nova Scotia encourages producers to proactively develop and implement a business continuity plan aimed at mitigating the risks associated with disruptions to production from COVID-19. While each company's plan will by necessity be unique to it, the following are some elements that may be included:

- Determining which elements of the business may be suspended and which are Essential.
- Reviewing budgets to plan for best-case and worst-case scenarios.
- Determining how the business will operate if a significant number of employees, contractors or suppliers cannot come to the workplace, either because of travel restrictions or because they are ill.
- Determining what, if any, resources or supports may be (or must by law be made) available to assist employees required to go into quarantine or care for someone in isolation.
- Assessing whether existing Information Technology infrastructure will meet company needs, what elements could be added, such as video conferencing and remote access, and ensuring those new elements are properly tested in advance.

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- Reviewing existing insurance coverage for current and future productions to determine whether coverage will extend to situations relating to COVID-19.
- Updating emergency contact lists.
- Developing an effective internal communications strategy to ensure updated and accurate information and emergency measures may be rapidly disseminated to the Workforce.
- Developing an effective external communications strategy to provide applicable updates to outside parties.
- Reviewing and understanding the company's specific obligations relating to employment, human rights, and health and safety legislation, collective agreements, individual contracts, etc.
- Assigning roles and responsibilities in relation to the development, implementation and execution of the business continuity plan, and training appropriate workplace parties on it.

Obtaining Legal Advice:

Advice in relation to legislation including employment, health and safety, and human rights, union and guild agreements, personal contracts, broadcaster agreements and other such documents will differ based on numerous factors including the language of the legislation or agreement, the issue at hand, and the jurisdiction in question. We therefore urge you to consult with legal counsel for advice on issues specific to your company and productions.