

# COVID-19 GUIDE FOR ALBERTA HOTELS

RESOURCES TO HELP YOU  
NAVIGATE THE COVID-19 OUTBREAK



This resource guide was developed by the Alberta Hotel & Lodging Association to help Alberta hotels protect their guests and staff during the COVID-19 outbreak. This guide will be updated as additional information becomes available. Visit [ahla.ca/COVID19](http://ahla.ca/COVID19) for the most up-to-date information.

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## General Guidelines

- To reduce the likelihood of catching the virus, follow [Alberta Health Services' recommendations](#):
  - wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
  - avoid touching your face
  - cover your mouth and nose with your arm or a tissue when coughing or sneezing
  - avoid others who are unwell
  - stay home when you are sick
  - avoid greeting with handshakes and consider hands-free greetings, such as a wave
- Alberta's [Chief Medical Officer of Health](#) advises that anyone who has travelled outside of Canada should self-isolate for 14 days and monitor themselves for symptoms of illness. **This applies to both guests and staff.**
- Make sure employees know they should report respiratory illness to their employer. If they develop symptoms, they should self-isolate at home for at least 10 days following the onset symptoms, which include cough, fever, fatigue, sore throat, runny nose, difficulty breathing and/or shortness of breath — or longer if symptoms persist. They should also:
  - visit [Alberta Health Services' Self-Assessment Tool](#) for further guidance
  - contact 811 if requiring further health advice
  - call 911 if there is an emergency
- COVID-19 is spread mainly by coughing, sneezing or direct contact with a sick person, or contact with surfaces a sick person has recently touched. COVID-19 can also be spread where droplets (like from a cough or a sneeze) land on a surface which someone then touches. If that person puts their hands near their mouth, nose or eyes, the person may become ill.
- If you have specific health-related concerns about staff or guests, call [Health Link 811](#).
- Encourage guests and staff to follow [social distancing guidelines](#).

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## Cleaning & Disinfection

The AHLA encourages all hotels to adhere to the highest standards of cleanliness and disinfection at all times. Proper disinfection is essential to reducing disease transmission.

- There is currently no information to support the wearing of masks (especially N95) outside of health care settings. **Social distancing, along with proper hygiene (i.e., washing your hands), is the best way to reduce the risk of infection or spreading infection.**
- **Staff should wear gloves** if there is the potential for them to be exposed to an infected individual or contaminated items. Ensure staff know the [correct procedure for glove removal and disposal](#) (we also recommend that you print this poster off and post in your housekeeping and laundry areas). Wash hands immediately after gloves are removed.
- *Cleaning* refers to the removal of visible dirt, grime and impurities. *Cleaning* does not kill germs, but helps remove them from the surface.
- *Disinfecting* refers to using chemical to kill germs on surfaces. This is most effective after surfaces are cleaned. Both steps are important to reduce the spread of infection.
- **Increase the frequency of cleaning & disinfection of high-traffic areas and high-use items** such as door knobs/handles, menus, handrails, elevator buttons, light switches, Video Lottery Terminals, PIN pads, desktops, washrooms, keyboards, counters, and pens.
- Use a disinfectant that has a Drug Identification Number (DIN) and a virucidal claim. Be sure to follow the instructions on the label to disinfect effectively. Alternatively, use a bleach/water solution with 100 ml of unscented household bleach per 900 ml of water.
- Be sure to take the appropriate precautions when using chemicals for cleaning and disinfecting. Consult the products Safety Data Sheets and use PPE if required. Staff should be trained to remove PPE without contaminating hands.
- **Do not mix bleach with vinegar, ammonia, or rubbing alcohol, as this produces toxic results. In addition, hydrogen peroxide combined with vinegar is highly corrosive.**
- Review cleaning & disinfection and [disposable glove procedures](#) with all staff, not only those in the Housekeeping department.
- **Place hand sanitizer stations in high traffic areas.**

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## Laundry

- Wear disposable gloves when handling dirty laundry and discard after each use. Wash hands thoroughly immediately after gloves are removed.
- If possible, do not shake laundry (minimizes possibility of dispersing virus through the air).
- Launder items using the warmest appropriate water setting and dry items completely.
- Clean and disinfect clothes hampers according to guidance for environmental cleaning; consider using a bag liner that is disposable or a liner that can be laundered.
- Launder any removable cloth/plush items.
- Steam cleaning can be used for areas that are likely to be contaminated but cannot be laundered (plush chairs).

## Tableware & Foodservice Items

### [Alberta Health Services recommends:](#)

- Wash dishes thoroughly with soap and water, or
- Place in the dishwasher for cleaning.

Certain temperatures and chemical requirements apply; see [Alberta Health Services' Dishwashing Requirements](#) for more details.

**If you have further questions about Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), cleaning & disinfecting, or health & safety, please email Erica Blewett, Health & Safety Advisor, at [eblewett@ahla.ca](mailto:eblewett@ahla.ca).**

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## Food & Beverage

Currently, the following regulations apply to gatherings in Alberta:

- Gatherings of more than 50 people are prohibited.
- Restaurants, cafés, coffee shops, and other food service facilities are limited to 50 per cent capacity, up to a maximum of 50 people.
- Albertans are prohibited from attending buffet style restaurants, including hotel breakfast rooms.
- Albertans are restricted from attending bars and nightclubs.

### Food & Beverage departments should follow the following guidelines:

- Food handlers must **wash hands** even if they have no disease symptoms:
  - Before starting work
  - Before handling cooked or ready-to-eat food
  - After handling or preparing raw food
  - After handling waste
  - After cleaning duties
  - After using the toilet
  - After blowing their nose, sneezing or coughing
  - After eating, drinking, or smoking
  - After handling money
- **Review cleaning & sanitation procedures with all members of the Food & Beverage team.**
- Review cleaning & disinfection products and procedures with vendors to ensure the products you use are adequate.
- **Follow respiratory hygiene by covering your mouth when you cough or sneeze and wash your hands afterwards.**
- **Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.**
- **Discard any foods that may have been contaminated** (including from coughs or sneezes).
- **Clean and sanitize utensils and surfaces in the kitchen regularly** using your regular sanitizing solutions (QUATs or chlorine).

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- **Increase daily cleaning and disinfection of common areas and surfaces**, including bars, tables, or doorknobs. *Cleaning* refers to the removal of visible dirt, grime and impurities. *Cleaning* does not kill germs but helps remove them from the surface. *Disinfecting* refers to using chemical to kill germs on surfaces. This is most effective after surfaces are cleaned. Both steps are important to reduce the spread of infection.
- **Discontinue buffet and self-service options.**
- **Avoid providing common water coolers or other lobby snacks to guests.**
- **Encourage customer hand hygiene before eating**; provide properly stocked customer handwashing facilities and hand sanitizer stations where possible.
- **Ensure outlets are set up to support social distancing.** Offer pick up or room service where possible.
- Risk of transmission on dishware is low; **dishes from meals can be washed/sanitized using regular procedures** (sanitizing dishwasher). Read [Alberta Health Services' Dishwashing Requirements](#) for guidelines to ensure proper cleaning and sanitization.

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## Front Office & Administration

- Given the unforeseen nature of the COVID-19 situation, hotels should **consider relaxing their cancellation policies.**
- **Increase the frequency of cleaning & disinfection of high-traffic areas and high-use items** such as menus, handrails, elevator buttons, Video Lottery Terminals, PIN pads, keyboards, counters, and pens.
- Reduce cross contamination by **asking guests to hold up identification for staff to view** instead of holding it in their hands.
- **Have separate pens for guest and staff use.** Disinfect guest pens after each use.
- **Increase the frequency of cleaning & disinfection in business centres or for shared use computers.** Consider discontinuing these amenities during the COVID-19 situation.

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## Swimming Pools & Fitness Areas

- **Alberta Health Services has advised that all public swimming pools be closed** at this time. This includes pools, whirlpools, wading pools and water spray parks located in but not limited to gyms, institutions, clubs, camps, spas, hotels/motels, condominiums and recreation centers.
- AHS strongly recommends that pools continue to **maintain recirculation rates and chemical parameters** in accordance with section 3.0 and 4.0 of the [Pool Standards, July 2014 \(Amended January 2018\)](#). If the pool is drained, follow guidance from the local utilities about drainage.
- **Consider draining swimming pools and hot tubs** to reduce heating and chemical costs. This may be an ideal time to conduct maintenance with minimal impact on guest satisfaction.

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## Your Staff

- Report respiratory illness to your employer and do not come to work for at least 10 days following the onset of cough, fever, fatigue, sore throat, runny nose, difficulty breathing and/or shortness of breath. Contact 811 if requiring further health advice and 911 if an emergency.
- Practice social distancing to reduce the risk of getting sick. Avoid close contact (within 2 meters), when possible, with other staff or guests.
- Ensure employee illness policy is up-to-date and communicated to staff.
- Encourage staff to avoid touching personal items of guests such as luggage, and to wash hands or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer often and when they could be contaminated.
- If staff live in facility-provided housing, develop plans regarding isolation areas for ill individuals. If staff need to be isolated, they should be provided a separate room and bathroom where possible.
- Discuss [Alberta Health Services' \(AHS\) recommendations](#) for transmission prevention (washing hands, staying home if you are unwell, etc.) with all of your staff.
- Meet with your staff regularly to discuss what is going on and to address their questions and concerns.
- AHS has a [mental health help line](#) at 1-877-303-2642 (toll-free) for any staff who need additional support.
- Discourage your staff from travelling outside of Canada. **Require that any staff members who are returning from outside of Canada self-isolate for 14 days, even if they do not show [symptoms](#).**
- If your hotel has difficulty maintaining hours for staff, encourage employees to take any available vacation. Should you be forced to lay staff off, you are [able to do so temporarily](#), according to the Government of Alberta's [Employment Standards Code](#). Please see our [Managing Your Staff web page](#) for the proper procedure to do this, and a [sample layoff letter](#) you can use.
- If a member of your staff needs to be quarantined, or if you have to make the difficult decision to lay staff off, direct them to the AHLA's [Resources for Employees](#) for information on programs and resources available to help them manage, both financially and personally. If your hotel's finances permit, consider topping up employees' wages during their quarantine period.
- To help employees access Employment Insurance and other supports, provide them access to your business centre or public computers. Some hotels have set up a computer in a vacant guest room to provide assistance to employees applying for EI. To ensure social distancing, create a schedule for access. Be sure to disinfect computers and surrounding surfaces after each use.

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## Hotels with Self-Isolating Guests

Some Alberta hotels have been receiving bookings for guests that need to self-isolate. We have developed a printable guide of [suggested procedures](#) to help keep your staff and guests safe in this situation.

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## Possible Use of Hotels as Quarantine Facilities

The [Alberta Public Health Act](#) (Section 37[2b]) states that hotels and other facilities in Alberta may be called on to serve as quarantine facilities. The AHLA is seeking additional information on what would be expected of hotels in this event, and will provide updates as soon as possible.

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## Business Continuity Support

The AHLA has compiled a [list of programs](#) available to support your business continuity at this time. If you have other questions or need additional support, please contact Michael Presniak, Manager of Membership & Operations, at [mpresniak@ahla.ca](mailto:mpresniak@ahla.ca) or 780.423.9239.

The Hotel Financial Coach has a number of tips on [what to do in a financial crisis](#).

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## If You Close Your Property

If you find yourself in the difficult position of having to close your property, our [sample property closure checklist](#) can help.

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## Additional information

**The AHLA is here to assist Alberta hotels.  
Please contact us if you require additional information or support.**

Watch [ahla.ca/covid19](https://ahla.ca/covid19) for updates about COVID-19 in Alberta and resources to help you manage the situation at your property. A [list of resources](#) can also be found on ahla.ca.

**If you have additional questions or concerns, please contact Tracy Douglas-Blowers, Director of Membership & Industry Relations, at [tdblowers@ahla.ca](mailto:tdblowers@ahla.ca) or 780.423.9227.**