

# OHS OBLIGATIONS AND CONSENT FORMS FOR WORKING DURING A PANDEMIC

This bulletin addresses some issues surrounding workers signing consent forms related to working during a pandemic. Such forms may include the following:

- Instructions for a self-assessment.
- Awareness of the requirement to [isolate](#) when needed.
- Awareness of the potential risk of disease transmission in the workplace.

## Key information

Employers must protect the health, safety and welfare of workers at their work sites. This includes controlling all hazards at the work site including those related to a pandemic.

A worker's signature on a consent form does not replace employer and worker responsibilities under OHS legislation.

## OHS obligations

### Employers

Employers have an obligation to inform workers of the health hazards associated with the pandemic disease, as well as providing information and training in relation to the employer's procedures to minimize worker exposure to the hazard. An employer might use a consent form as part of its obligation to inform.

Employers might ask workers to sign documentation to confirm they understand work site hazards and hazard mitigation procedures, including those related to the disease. With that being said, employers and workers must abide by requirements under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*. Employers must ensure, as far as it is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of their workers.

A worker's signature on a consent form does not replace employer and worker rights and responsibilities under OHS legislation. An employer cannot disclaim responsibility for providing a safe and healthy workplace, and a worker cannot consent to working where work site hazards are not appropriately controlled.

If the employer uses a document to meet the obligation to inform workers of the health hazards associated with the disease and prevention procedures in place, employers must confirm that workers:

- Understand what they are signing.
- Are given an opportunity to ask questions.
- Have their questions addressed prior to signing.

### Workers

Workers must work in a manner that ensures the health and safety of themselves and others.

Workers who have concerns about their health and safety at work are encouraged to first discuss their concerns with their employer so the concerns may be addressed.

- When a worker presents a concern about health and safety, the employer must resolve it in a timely manner.
- Workers can also take their concerns to their health and safety committee or representative to address health and safety concerns in the workplace.
- Workers who continue to have concerns about their employer's health and safety protocols may notify OHS of their concerns.

## COVID-19 INFORMATION

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## Contact us

### OHS Contact Centre

Anywhere in Alberta

- 1-866-415-8690

Edmonton & surrounding area

- 780-415-8690

Deaf or hearing impaired

- 1-800-232-7215 (Alberta)
- 780-427-9999 (Edmonton)

### Notify OHS of health and safety concerns

[ohscomplaintsportal.labour.alberta.ca](https://ohscomplaintsportal.labour.alberta.ca)

Call the OHS Contact Centre if you have concerns that involve immediate danger to a person on a work site.

### Report a workplace incident to OHS

[alberta.ca/ohs-complaints-incidents.aspx](https://alberta.ca/ohs-complaints-incidents.aspx)

### OHS website

[alberta.ca/ohs](https://alberta.ca/ohs)

## For more information

OHS guidance for workers: respiratory viruses (COVID19-14)

[ohs-pubstore.labour.alberta.ca/covid19-14](https://ohs-pubstore.labour.alberta.ca/covid19-14)

Respiratory viruses in the workplace (BP022)

[ohs-pubstore.labour.alberta.ca/bh022](https://ohs-pubstore.labour.alberta.ca/bh022)

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[alberta.ca/covid19](https://alberta.ca/covid19)

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