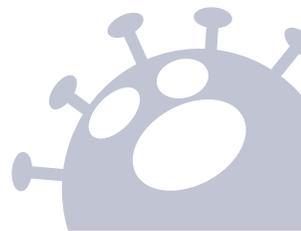


# COVID-19 Operational Plan Guide:

*Keeping New Brunswickers Safer Together*

This basic 'how-to' guide will help you to get started developing an operational plan for your New Brunswick business/service



**COVID-19 Operational Plan Guide: Keeping New Brunswickers Safer Together**

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## How to Use This Guide:

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The point of an operational plan is for your business/service to address public health measures during the COVID-19 recovery in New Brunswick.

The following guide will walk you through the process of planning for and creating your own unique COVID-19 Operational Plan. The guide provides questions for consideration, implementation guidance and planning advice to help address the following key Public Health measures:

- Physical distancing
- Cleaning and disinfection
- Staying home when sick
- Hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette
- Community face mask

This document is for general guidance only and will not provide action item details for specific sectors.

For a detailed template of an operational plan that also provides recommended solutions to address key risks, please review and complete *“Embracing the New Normal As We All Safely Return to Work: Guidelines for New Brunswick Workplaces Re-opening in a COVID-19 Environment”* (referred to as the *“Template”* for the remainder of this document). This guide may be used to help navigate your thinking as you complete or adapt the template to create your own operational plan. Please also review the *“Guidance Document of General Public Health Measures During COVID-19 Recovery”* for important detail.

For more information on COVID-19, please visit: [www.gnb.ca/coronavirus](http://www.gnb.ca/coronavirus)

## Steps for Developing Your Operational Plan:

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1. Review and reflect on guidance documents within the context of your business/ service.
2. Identify areas of risk related to public health measures and design an action plan for reducing those risks. This will become your operational plan.
3. Write and develop your official *COVID-19 Operational Plan*.
4. Implement and monitor your operational plan.

# Step 1: Thinking about decision-making

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**Identify and clarify who the decision-makers are in your business/service. Identifying and delegating responsibility early on will help to pave the way for a smoother process. Checklists and schedules can help you with this.**

**To do:**

- **Identify decision-makers.**
  - » Who is responsible for decision-making in your business/service setting?
- **Consider relevant resources.**
  - » Will you be required to consult with stakeholders prior to making any operational decisions/changes?
  - » Will you be required to connect with a trade association? Professional regulatory bodies? WorkSafe NB? Public Health?
- **Assign responsibility for the development, implementation, and monitoring of your operational plan.**
  - » Who will be responsible for implementing and monitoring the operational plan? Will this be a shared task?
  - » Who will be responsible for developing the operational plan? Will this be a shared task?
  - » Consider assigning someone to monitor key supplies (e.g., for cleaning and disinfection) and develop cleaning and disinfection schedule.

## Step 2: Identifying risks and solutions

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**This step will require you to think about how each of the public health measures will be applied and upheld in the context of your specific business/service.**

**Take note of your observations. This will inform your action planning, which will act as the basis of your operational plan.**

Businesses/services in New Brunswick are unique and will have different risks across each of the public health measures. It is important that you consider all aspects of your business/service from the perspective of both staff and patrons.

Based on the risks you identified, begin selecting appropriate solutions that will reduce risk within your business/service context.

A note that simply relies on 'telling' people to uphold public health measures will **not** be enough. Get creative in redesigning your business/service for this 'new normal' and involve staff in the process! This will not be easy for some businesses/services, but this is critical for keeping our communities and loved ones safe. Signage resources are available on the [GNB COVID-19 website](#).

### **To do:**

- **Consider the physical setting(s) of your business/service.**
  - » Make a list of your unique locations (e.g., entrance, staff room, areas where patrons frequent, outdoor spaces where people congregate, washrooms, eating areas, etc.).
  - » Consider how staff and patrons navigate through your setting and how your services/products are offered and accessed.
- **Document your findings and observations.** Use this information to guide your thinking as you progress through the following steps.
- **Consider the personal interaction(s) of your business/ service:**
  - » Consider how many people interact in the daily operation of your business/service (staff and customers/patrons) and how closely these people come into physical proximity of one another.
  - » Examine whether your business/service interacts with people who are at higher risk from COVID-19 (older adults, immunocompromised, those with chronic health conditions).
  - » Use this information to better protect those who are more vulnerable to COVID-19, but do not discriminate or force the sharing of personal health information.

### **Combat risks by considering the following public health measures:**

#### **A) Physical distancing**

**Goal:** Protect against the spread of COVID-19 by ensuring staff and patrons are kept 2 metres (6 feet) apart.

#### **Guiding questions to get you started:**

- Are there areas where staff or patrons tend to congregate in your business/service setting (e.g. social settings, eating areas, lounge, etc.)?

- Are there areas where staff or patrons may find it difficult to practice physical distancing due to spatial restrictions or structural design (e.g., small rooms/entrances, line ups, rows of desks, walkways or aisles, etc.)?
- Are there any aspects of your business/service that would need to change to address physical distancing? Do you foresee difficulty? Think about what you could do to address physical distancing. (i.e. grocery stores, pharmacies, etc.).
- How can you make it as easy as possible for staff and customers/patrons to follow this measure?

## **B) Cleaning and disinfection**

**Goal:** Protect against the spread of COVID-19 by ensuring frequently touched surfaces are disinfected properly and regularly.

### **Guiding questions to get you started:**

- Are you aware of proper cleaning and disinfection guidance? See *“Guidance Document of General Public Health Measures During COVID-19 Recovery”* for more information.
- If needed, how could you change your previous cleaning and disinfection procedures to address the current risk of COVID-19?
- How will you ensure that cleaning and disinfection is done properly and regularly? Who will be responsible for this?
- What surfaces are frequently touched in your setting that may require more frequent disinfection (e.g., door handles, cart handles, counters, washrooms, cashier equipment, phones, computers, vehicles, etc.)?
- How can you make it as **easy** as possible for staff to follow these measures?

## **C) Hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette**

**Goal:** Protect against the spread of COVID-19 by promoting and enabling frequent and proper hand washing and respiratory etiquette for patrons and staff.

### **Guiding questions to get you started:**

- Are you aware of proper hand washing and respiratory etiquette procedures? See *“Guidance Document of General Public Health Measures During COVID-19 Recovery”* for more information.
- Think about your setting - do you have the supplies needed to enable hand washing and respiratory **etiquette** (running water, soap, paper towel, disposal bin; minimum 60% alcohol-based hand sanitizer, tissues)?
  - » Can you provide (minimum 60% alcohol-based) hand sanitizer where frequent hand washing would be beneficial but difficult to achieve? (e.g., checkout points, outdoor work settings, etc.).
- Where will you post hand washing and respiratory etiquette posters in your setting? Consider directing staff and customers/patrons to hand-wash points.
- How can you make it as **easy** as possible for staff and customers/patrons to follow this measure?

## D) Staying home when sick

**Goal:** Protect against the spread of COVID-19 by ensuring that staff stay home when sick and by encouraging patrons to do the same.

### Guiding questions to get you started:

- Do you have a workplace sick leave policy that enables employees to stay home when sick (e.g., do you offer employees sick leave pay and encourage employees to use this when they are ill)?
  - » How can you make it as **easy** as possible for staff to follow this measure?
- Will you check-in with employees when they are off sick?
  - » Consider how you will support their safe return to work.
- Do you feel that you have a workplace culture and system that supports employees feeling comfortable staying home when sick?
- How can you incorporate active screening of employees at the beginning of a shift to monitor for symptoms of COVID-19 where feasible?
  - » See *"Guidance Document of General Public Health Measures During COVID-19 Recovery"* for more information.
- Where can you put up posters about COVID-19 and COVID-19 symptoms in your business/service setting to encourage staff and patrons to screen themselves for COVID-19?

## E) Community face masks (for non-healthcare organizations)

**Goal:** Protect against the spread of COVID-19 by staying up to date and following guidance for community masks.

### Guiding questions to get you started:

- Does your business/service already have guidelines that require mask use?
- Have you checked for any updates for new measures during COVID-19?
- Are you aware of current recommendations on community mask use?
- In your setting, consider whether you may need to go beyond current recommendations for community masks to best address public health measures? (e.g., where physical distancing poses challenges)

### Guiding questions to consider on action-planning:

- Have you thought through how the public health measures might impact different areas of your business/service in enough detail to start identifying helpful actions and solutions to reduce risks?
- After working through all the risks you identified, can you think of ideas and ways to address some, most, or all of these risks? How will you fill any gaps?
- Try to imagine walking through your business/service setting from the perspectives of both staff and patrons (where applicable). Imagine coming across the risks you previously identified. Can you think of changes that would help to reduce the risks? Think through and make note of what actions you plan to take. Some changes may be surprisingly easy to make, so start small and work your way up to the bigger challenges.

- Will your business/service face significant challenges in addressing the public health measures?  
For example:
  - » Does your business rely on peak periods where more customers are on the premises?
  - » Is your physical location too small to easily address physical distancing?
  - » Does your client base make it difficult to encourage public health measures (example children)?
    - How will you overcome these challenges where possible? How will you navigate around business/service impacts?
  - » Will you be able to continue to operate a viable business?
  - » Is additional support available for your business/service?

**For more information, you can reach out to:**

**New Brunswick Business Navigator Line**

Number: 1-833-799-7966

Email: [nav@navnb.ca](mailto:nav@navnb.ca)

Website: [COVID-19 Guidance for Businesses](#)

**To do:**

**At this stage you have:**

- Identified decision-making authority for your unique business/service
- Identified and documented risks in your business/service setting, for both staff and patrons; and,
- Identified the actions that you will take to meet the public health measures and considered how this may impact the operation of your business/service.

**Now begin to work towards:**

- Identifying the actions you will take for each identified risk.
- Implementing a plan that will help to bring your action items to life. Decide on how and when you are going to apply your action items.
- Communicating this plan to relevant parties (e.g., staff and patrons where appropriate) to manage and prepare expectations and to promote understanding of the importance of these measures for public health.
- Planning early for any training, engagement, or communications that may be required to see your operational plan through to successful implementation and maintenance. Remember to involve your staff in the process.

## Step 3: Creating schedules and processes

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**Consider developing schedules and processes to help make sure implementation and ongoing monitoring take place.**

**Guiding questions to consider:**

- Are you able to create a daily checklist to monitor that your plan is in place and functioning?
- Are you able to follow-through on the solutions you identified to reduce your risks?
- Would developing or adapting an existing cleaning and disinfection checklist and schedule help to keep you on track with your efforts to address the public health measures in your setting?
- What additional supply/inventory or process checklists may be helpful?

**To do:**

Checklists and schedules can help you keep on track and pre-emptively identify which key supplies may be running low.

Make this easier and more likely to occur by delegating responsibility early on. Remember to work as a team and keep spirits high!

## Step 4: Writing your Operational Plan

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**At this point in the process, you have identified your risks and will have planned through how you are going to address public health measures during COVID-19 - well done!**

Please refer to WorkSafe NB's *Embracing the New Normal As We All Safely Return to Work: Guidelines for New Brunswick Workplaces Re-opening in a COVID-19 Environment* for a COVID-19 Operational Plan for Workplaces (template).

### **Guiding questions to consider:**

- Have you reviewed and completed the template, or adapted it to suit your needs? Remember to use this to form the basis of your operational plan, but feel free to include additional details to help guide your processes and suit your individual business/service context. Refer to the template for critical considerations.
- Where are you going to keep copies of your operational plan to have it ready for staff to refer to for guidance? This way it will also be readily available for potential spot checks when necessary.
- What revision date will you put in place to revisit the operational plan, consider how it is working and plan for any additions? Are you going to share your operational plan publicly so that other business/services who may operate in a similar field may benefit from learning from your good work? This may also promote customer/patron confidence.

### **To do:**

Remember that according to New Brunswick's Phased Reopening, operational plans are required for businesses/services as they enter back into operation. Your written plan does not need to look fancy.

**At minimum, your plan needs to include the following** to ensure that community members (including your own staff and patrons) are kept as safe as possible:

- Identification and documentation of unique risks and solutions that include:
  - ✓ Active screening for staff and enabling staff to stay home when ill;
  - ✓ Facilitating physical distancing;
  - ✓ Facilitating personal hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette;
  - ✓ Ensuring adequate daily cleaning and disinfection of frequently touched surfaces;
  - ✓ Following guidelines on community masks;
  - ✓ Providing additional employee protection where warranted based on risk assessment (e.g., plexiglass barriers);
  - ✓ Communicating COVID-19 public health measures to staff and the public in your setting; and,
  - ✓ Incorporating guidance on accountability and monitoring into your plan.
  - ✓ Copies of schedules and checklists to support your plan.