

Saskatoon CommUNITY Commitment – Risk Assessment Resources

COVID-19 Transmission Hierarchy of Controls Cheat Sheet

COVID-19 Transmission Risks to Consider:

1. Person-to-person

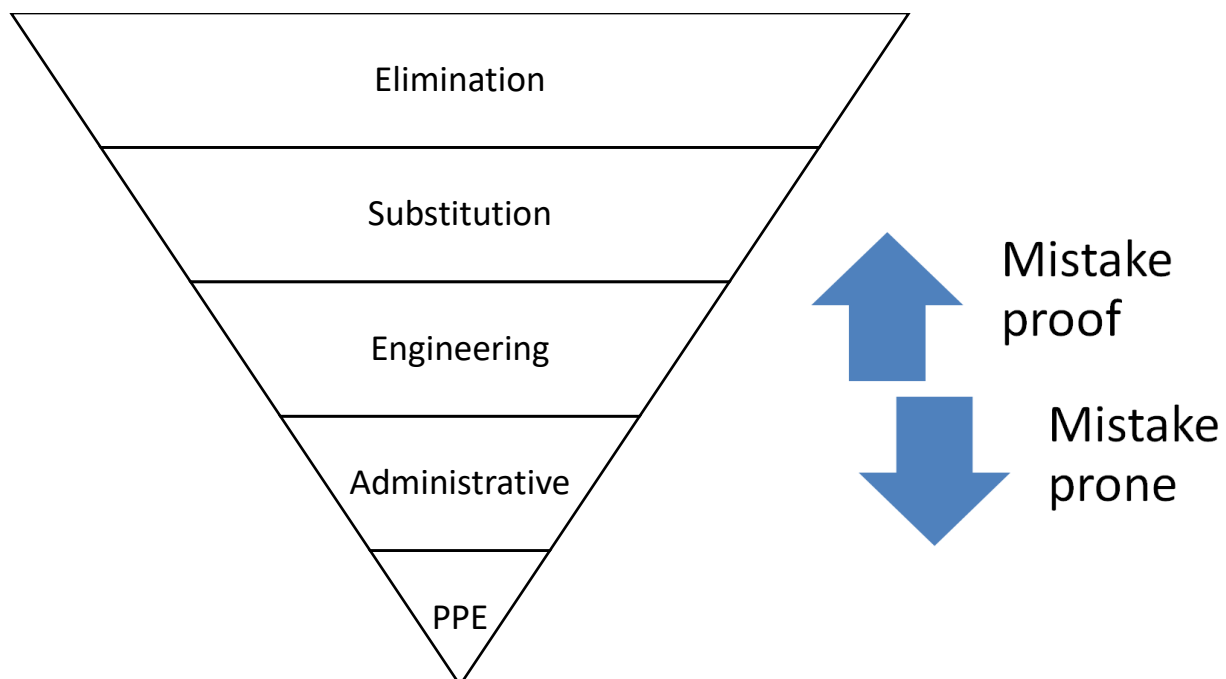
- Transmission via large respiratory droplets from an infected person getting into your respiratory system (e.g. inhaling an infected person's cough or sneeze)
- Transmission via small respiratory droplets from prolonged contact (e.g. conversation) in poorly ventilated spaces

2. Surface/contact

- Transmission via touching something with an infected person's respiratory droplets on it and then touching your own mucous membranes

The main transmission route is thought to be person-to-person transmission from large droplets – so physical distancing is your priority!

Hierarchy of Controls:



The higher up on the hierarchy, the less rules there are to follow (aka “more effective”).

People do not intentionally break rules, but it is difficult and overwhelming to adapt to a new set of rules every time one enters a different establishment, and stressful for staff to enforce customer behaviour on top of regular job duties.

It is preferable and safer to use higher-level, mistake-proof controls where possible. These types of controls are also more inclusive, as some administrative controls or PPE may not be practical for people with certain disabilities or medical issues, or children.

What does each category mean?

Elimination – Completely eliminate the possibility of any worker or customer coming into contact with infectious particles. This is not always possible for the service industry, but it may apply to some job tasks.

Eliminate:

- The need for people to be <2m apart
- The need for multiple people to touch things
- The need for multiple people to breathe common air for extended periods

Common elimination solutions:

- Do job tasks remotely
- Stay closed

Substitution – Substitute a task that would potentially expose someone to infectious particles with something that will not.

Substitute:

- The need for people to be <2m apart
- The need for multiple people to touch things
- The need for multiple people to breathe common air for extended periods

Common substitution solutions:

- Curbside pickup or delivery
- Customers seat themselves, chalkboard menu
- Use disposable items instead of reusable and have customers dispose of them
- Conduct some business activities outdoors

Engineering – Design systems or barriers to reduce the potential for workers or customers to come into contact with infectious particles.

Design out:

- The ability of people to be <2m apart OR cough in each other’s faces
- The ability of multiple people to touch things

- The ability of multiple people to breathe common air for extended periods

Common engineering solutions:

- Plexiglas barriers at counters, extended countertops, aisle barricades
- On/off motion sensors in bathrooms, automatic doors, prop door open
- Improve indoor ventilation - open windows, keep bathroom vent fans running, air purification

Administrative – Use procedures, training, or set behavioural expectations to reduce the potential for workers or customers to come into contact with infectious particles. “Rules-based” controls are not always easy for people to follow, especially if implemented poorly.

Make policies, procedures, training for:

- Keeping people 2m apart OR preventing people from coughing in each other’s faces
- Preventing people from touching things that might be infected OR making sure they can wash their hands after
- Ensuring people do not breathe common air for extended periods

Common administrative solutions:

- 2m indicators in lineup areas, directional markings
- Cleaning things that have been touched/used
- Hand hygiene policy
- Limiting capacity and/or time in the business
- "No small talk" policy

Personal Protective Equipment – Wear equipment that, if used correctly, is officially rated to protect workers from coming into contact with infectious particles.

While non-medical masks are not technically considered PPE, it can be treated as PPE for Hierarchy of Controls purposes, as it is a control that relies on human behaviour to be effective.

PPE is commonly referred to as “the last line of defense” – if it is your only control, reconsider what else you can do. If the current Public Health Order mandates mask use in public spaces, use is non-negotiable, but be aware of their limitations. Masks are one tool in a large toolkit for infection control, and their use does not remove the need to physically distance.

Other PPE that may be required by Re-Open Saskatchewan for certain workplaces:

- Medical-grade surgical/procedural mask (droplet)
- Medical gown (droplet)
- Safety glasses (droplet)
- Respiratory protection (aerosol) - need to follow OHS regulations if using, and contact a qualified safety professional for assistance