



# KEY CONSIDERATIONS IN PROVIDING DIRECT SERVICE DELIVERY DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC



As a community member working with partner organizations during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Canadian Red Cross Global Health Unit is pleased to share some key considerations when delivering direct services during the pandemic.

It is recommended that charities review and follow the federal ([www.canada.ca/coronavirus](http://www.canada.ca/coronavirus)), provincial and municipal guidelines regarding COVID-19 (including what the symptoms are, how the virus spreads and how to protect yourselves and others). The following recommendations cover only Infection, Prevention and Control (IPC) areas and do not replace other local, provincial and/or federal standard operating procedures (SOPs) and protocols. Furthermore, these are general recommendations that must be adapted by the organization, based on the type of service provided. Once complete, all specific guidance should be reviewed with local, provincial and/or federal health agencies as required.

## Audience

It is important to consider the individuals or groups who will be impacted during the delivery of the service. In designing COVID-19 related services, key principles of IPC should be followed to ensure health protection and safety for:

- ▶ **Charity personnel (staff and volunteers)**
- ▶ **Clients**
- ▶ **Local communities and contexts where the services are taking place**

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# Infection Protection and Control Protocols (IPC)

Each organization doing front line service delivery should consider developing their own infection prevention and control protocols based on their workforce, clients and context (as noted above).

Beyond this, organizations need to assess risk based on the degree of contact between workforce and clients ranging from virtual, to dropping things off outside of someone's door to direct contact. This is the main driver for determining what infection prevention and control protocols are appropriate.

This can be in the form of standard operating procedures and the workforce template you can find here. This can help to confirm your organization's approach and communicate expectations to your personnel, clients and beneficiaries.



Hand hygiene, when done correctly, is the single most effective way to stop the spread of infectious germs including COVID-19. Wash hands frequently with soap and water (for 20 seconds) or use an alcohol-based hand rub if soap and water are not available.

Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth. Hands touch many surfaces which can be contaminated with infectious germs. Touching eyes, nose or mouth with your contaminated hands, can transfer infectious germs from the surface to another person.

Proper use of PPE is extremely important – improper use could actually increase your risk of infection.

## Other key IPC measures may include:

- ▶ Use of appropriate personal protection equipment (PPE)
- ▶ Limiting time spent interacting with client
- ▶ Provision of direct services to asymptomatic clients only
- ▶ Always maintaining a 2-meter distance (also referred to as “physical distancing”)
- ▶ Not entering small spaces with clients such as a bus, car, hotel/shelter room, etc.
- ▶ Not taking any items from the beneficiaries directly and instead dropping items at the door/in the corridor
- ▶ Working in a buddy system: always have 2 people working together even if there is a shortage of staffing
- ▶ Disinfecting and cleaning surfaces regularly using alcohol-based wipes
- ▶ Monitor compliance to the IPC measures put in place
- ▶ Constant review of any breaches and making recommendations to ensure preventing such breaches

### The Canadian Red Cross Global Health Unit

The role of the Canadian Red Cross' Global Health Unit's (GHU) role is to provide strategic, evidence-based and operational direction in health for support to and implementation of health activities at the international and domestic levels. It includes national and international expertise in Epidemic/Pandemic, Community Health, Health System Strengthening, Health in Emergency, Health in Conflict Setting, Health Policy and Research.

Once the key IPC measures are identified, it is important to provide the appropriate briefings and training for all personnel before starting the services and ensure your team members are self-monitoring their health status. It is also important to develop mechanisms to record and report breaches of IPC protocols.

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