

FAQ: COVID-19

March 13, 2020

This document will be placed on the Resuscitation portal.

Overview

At Heart & Stroke, we are committed to the safety and well-being of our instructor network, course participants, staff, and volunteers. We are regularly monitoring information and recommendations about COVID-19 from the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC), provincial and territorial health authorities and municipal public health authorities. PHAC continues to assess the public health risk associated with COVID-19 as low for Canada. To learn more about the prevention and risks of the Coronavirus, including guidelines around gatherings and events, please visit the [PHAC website](#).

FAQ

The following questions and answers can help with any questions that instructors or students have or may receive for upcoming training sessions.

Should I cancel upcoming scheduled classes?

The Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) continues to assess the public health risk associated with COVID-19 as low for Canada. [Please visit PHAC's website](#) for the latest guidelines for gatherings and events. ***At this time, courses may continue as scheduled as we recognize the essential role of CPR in health care.*** We are monitoring the advice of public health authorities and will update you if there is a change to the current advice.

What is COVID-19, and how do I protect myself against it?

COVID-19 is an illness caused by a coronavirus. Human coronaviruses are common and are typically associated with mild illnesses, similar to the common cold. The best way to prevent the spread of infection is to:

- wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds;
- avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth, especially with unwashed hands;
- avoid close contact with people who are sick;
- cough and sneeze into your sleeve and not your hands; and
- stay home if you have symptoms, to prevent spreading illness to others.

Where can I find reliable information about COVID-19?

The following websites are updated regularly with the latest information about COVID-19:

- [Public Health Agency of Canada \(PHAC\)](#)
- Your provincial or territorial public health agency
- [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#)
- Local public health agency.
- [Centres for Disease Control \(CDC\)](#)

What infection control practices should instructors be following during the coronavirus outbreak?

The health and safety of our network is our top priority. Heart & Stroke has a detailed chapter about safety practices in the *Instructor Resource for Resuscitation Programs* (IRRP), which is found on the Resuscitation Portal [under the policy section in resources](#).

Refer to *Section 3.1, Pre-Course Precautions*, and *Section 3.4.1 – Preventing disease transmission during resuscitation training*, which outlines recommendations regarding disease transmission. For convenience here are excerpts:

Performing or practicing resuscitation skills requires close contact with other people and/or mannequins, a fact that may cause trepidation among some people. Before a course, instructors should inform students of the close physical contact required with fellow participants and mannequins. Instructors are required to inform participants of the medical reasons they should not attend or identify where sections of the course may aggravate pre-existing medical conditions. Instructors and participants should not participate in training sessions if they have reason to believe they are in the active stage of an infection or viral illness.

By following the recommendations for resuscitation skills practice and performance, a high level of disease control can be maintained.

Follow the Heart & Stroke IRPP recommendations for equipment decontamination during training sessions with these additional requirements from the American Heart Association and Centres for Disease Control (CDC):

- Instructors should decontaminate the mannequin after each course participant practices or tests on the mannequin using an alcohol-based solution.
- Face shields should not be used, and direct mouth-to-mouth ventilations should not be practiced.
- Each course participant must be provided with a new or sanitized pocket mask and a one-way valve when practicing one-rescuer skills. Pocket masks should not be shared during the course.
- Bag-valve masks (BVMs) should be used when practicing two-rescuer skills, and participants should wear gloves and clean BVMs between practices with an alcohol-based solution. When possible, mannequins should be spaced at least 3 feet (1 meter) apart during training, based on the [World Health Organization \(WHO\) guidance on social distancing](#).
- Instructors and participants must wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds before and after the course, and before and after snack or meal breaks during instruction.

These additional precautions should be practiced until further notice from Heart & Stroke.

As always, please take actions in your classrooms to help prevent disease and protect your health:

- Practice good hygiene, including handwashing as directed above.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth, especially with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Cough and sneeze into your sleeve and not your hands.
- Stay home if you are sick to avoid spreading illness to others.

What should I do if I have travelled to an area that is currently on the Government of Canada's travel advisory list for COVID-19? Should I continue instructing/attending the course if I feel fine?

If you have recently travelled, you should follow the guidance of PHAC and that of your healthcare provider. The latest information on travel advisories and what to do following travel [is available on the PHAC website.](#)

What should I do if a participant/student tells me they have recently travelled to an area on the travel advisory list for COVID-19? What is they are feeling ill?

You should advise your students to follow the guidance of the [Public Health Agency of Canada \(PHAC\)](#) and that of their healthcare provider.

If your course participant communicates to you that he/she has travelled to affected areas or is feeling ill, please ask them to leave the course and ask that they follow PHAC guidelines and contact their health care provider.

What should I do to ensure the health & safety of my students?

As is typically recommended, please use pre-course communications with students to share important information. Sample pre-course letters are available on the portal, and we recommend adding additional information on disease control measures. We suggest that you:

- Review section about safety practices in the *Instructor Resource for Resuscitation Programs (IRRP)*, which is found on the Resuscitation Portal under the policy section in resources. With heightened concerns about disease transmission, please review Section 3.1: Pre-Course Precautions (beginning on page 38 of the manual) and ensure compliance, review current [Public Health Agency of Canada \(PHAC\) recommendations](#), and follow any other recommendations available to you such as organizational policies of your affiliated institution.

What should I do if a student is unable to attend the course due to being unwell?

Follow the usual protocol for cancellation due to illness. As a reminder, instructors must have a cancellation policy and must communicate this policy clearly to their students.

Given the current global situation, we ask that you strive to accommodate participants and prioritize healthy, safety, and public health practices.