

SARS Information for the General Workplace or Institution

Employers and employees are advised to direct enquiries about SARS to their Public Health or Community Health Centers. The following is a summary of recommendations for the workplace from the Office of the Chief Medical Health Officer and a listing of helpful web sites.

Recently, the World Health Organization has received reports of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) from various parts of the world. The main symptoms include fever, dry cough, shortness of breath or breathing difficulties. At this time, the cause of the illness remains unknown. Health Canada is monitoring confirmed reports of outbreaks of SARS in China (Guangdong Province and Hong Kong Special Administrative Region), Vietnam (City of Hanoi), Singapore and Taiwan, as well as the occurrence of isolated cases in other countries.

NWT residents may be concerned regarding coworkers returning from abroad. Staff who have traveled to the affected areas in Asia and who have not been in contact with a person with SARS can attend work.

Recommendations:

- Individuals should be reminded to practice good personal hygiene (e.g., good hand-washing practices). Hand washing is the single most important procedure for preventing infections.
- Individuals who have recently traveled to high-risk sites in China (Guangdong Province and Hong Kong Special Administrative Region), Vietnam (City of Hanoi), Singapore and Taiwan during spring break should monitor their health for 10 days following their departure from these areas. You may attend school and work if you don't have any symptoms.
- Should these travelers experience a fever over 38.0°C (100.4 °F), and one or more respiratory symptoms:
 - cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
 - medical advice should be sought as soon as possible.
- The individual or parent should contact their public/community health center, or their family physician by phone prior to going for assessment.
- The person should not be attending work or school until evaluated and cleared by public health officials.

The following websites have frequently updated information on SARS:

www.hltthss.gov.nt.ca NWT Department of Health and Social Services
www.who.int/csr/sars World Health Organization
www.sars.gc.ca Health Canada