

Workplace health and safety and COVID-19

BC Chamber of Commerce

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Agenda

- 1 Understanding COVID-19
- 2 Developing your COVID-19 Safety Plan
- 3 Controlling the risk of COVID-19 exposure in the workplace
- 4 Industry information
- 5 WorkSafeBC support and other resources
- 6 Questions and answers

Understanding COVID-19

COVID-19 symptoms and transmission

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that can cause diseases ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases. **COVID-19** is the name of the disease caused by a newly identified coronavirus.

Symptoms

- Include fever, chills, new or worsening cough, shortness of breath, new muscle aches or headaches, sore throat
- Can range from **mild to severe** and can appear up to **14 days after exposure**

Transmission

The virus is transferred by **infected droplets** coming in contact with the **eye, nose, or mouth** through:

- Close contact with other people
- Touching contaminated surfaces or people

COVID-19 transmission risk factors

The following factors increase likelihood of transmission via person-to-person contact:

- Challenges maintaining 2 metres of distance
- High frequency of unique persons at the workplace (e.g., customers or clients)
- Potential to work in enclosed areas
- Potential for sustained group interaction
- Probability of infected persons
- Inadequate self-isolation practices

The following increases likelihood of transmission via surface contact:

- Potential for regular contact with shared surfaces

What to do if you, or your workers, experience flu-like symptoms

Anyone experiencing flu-like symptoms associated with COVID-19, should:

- Immediately inform their supervisor.
- Physically distance from colleagues and leave the workplace.
- Seek medical advice from a health care professional:
 - Call 911, if urgent.
 - Use the COVID-19 BC Support App and Self-Assessment Tool at <https://bc.thrive.health/>.
 - Call 811 for health advice.
- Consult with a health care provider before returning to work.

Developing your COVID-19 Safety Plan
To control the risk of exposure in the workplace

Requirements of the employer

Every employer is required to have a COVID-19 Safety Plan that assesses the risk of exposure at their workplace and implements measures to keep their workers safe. If a formal plan is not already in place prior to operation, you are expected to develop it while protecting the safety of your workers.

- WorkSafeBC will not review or approve the plans of individual employers in advance, but will review them during our inspections of your workplace.
- We will ask employers about the steps they have taken to protect their workers and to see the plan if it has been developed.
- By order of the Provincial Health Officer, your plan must be posted on your website, if you have one, and at your workplace.

Orders, notices, and guidance

Follow the **orders, notices, and guidance** from the **provincial health officer** and the **BC Centre for Disease Control**.

The basics

- Physical distancing (2 metres / 6 feet)
- Cleaning and disinfecting
- Personal hygiene:
 - Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue or use your elbow.
 - Wash your hands.
 - Avoid touching your face.
 - Do not share food, drinks, or items.



COVID-19 Safety Plan steps

Follow these steps to create your COVID-19 Safety Plan:

1. Assess the risk at your workplace
2. Implement measures to reduce the risk
3. Develop policies to manage your workplace
4. Develop communication plans and training
5. Monitor your workplace and update your plans as needed
6. Assess and address risks from resuming operations



Source (image): The Canadian Press

Step 1: Assess the risk at your workplace

- Assess the workplace to identify where risk of transmission is introduced.
- Involve frontline workers, supervisors, JHSC/worker representatives
- Consider questions like:
 - Where do people congregate?
 - What job tasks or processes require workers to come into close proximity with one another or members of the public?
 - What tools, machinery, and equipment do people come into contact with?
 - What surfaces are touched often?

Involve your workers

Joint health and safety committees

- Work with joint occupational health and safety committee (JOHSC) members or worker representatives to:
 - Identify and find solutions to workplace health and safety issues.
 - Includes concerns about exposure to COVID-19.
 - Joint committees must continue to meet regularly as required under the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation.



Step 2: Implement protocols to reduce the risk

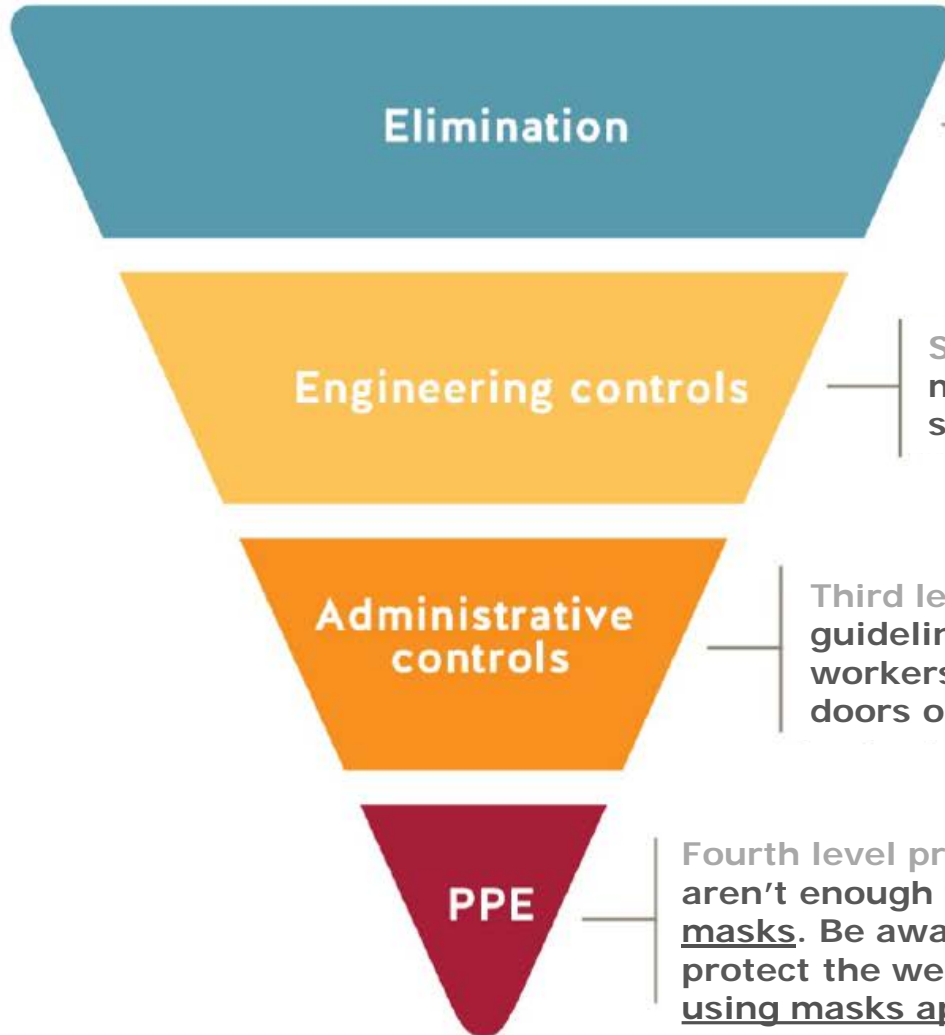
- You must select and put protocols in place to minimize the risk of transmission, with an emphasis on:
 - Maintaining physical distance
 - Other measures where physical distance cannot be maintained
 - Cleaning and hygiene

Selecting protocols for your workplace

Consider first



Consider as needed



Elimination

First level protection – Limit the number of people in your workplace where possible by implementing work-from-home arrangements, establishing occupancy limits, rescheduling work tasks, or other means. Rearrange work spaces to ensure that workers are at least 2 m (6 ft) from co-workers, customers, and members of the public.

Engineering controls

Second level protection – If you can't always maintain physical distancing, install barriers such as plexiglass to separate people

Administrative controls

Third level protection – Establish rules and guidelines, such as cleaning protocols, telling workers to not share tools, or implementing on-way doors or walkways.

PPE

Fourth level protection – If the first three levels of protection aren't enough to control the risk, consider the use of non-medical masks. Be aware of the limitations of non-medical masks to protect the wearer from respiratory droplets. Ensure workers are using masks appropriately.

Protocols for workers in vehicles

- Limit essential work travel and ban non-essential travel.
 - For instances where work travel is required, consider practices to encourage physical distancing between workers.
 - Follow other preventative measures related to cleaning and hygiene.



Protocols for cleaning and hygiene

- Enhance cleaning and hygiene measures:
 - Provide adequate handwashing facilities.
 - Put up reminders for personal hygiene practices.
 - Provide cleaning supplies.
 - Disinfect high-contact areas and items.
 - Remove shared items.
- Train, supervise, and document.



Step 3: Develop policies

- Develop the necessary policies to manage your workplace, including policies around:
 - Who can be at the workplace
 - How to address illness that arises at the workplace
 - How workers can be kept safe in adjusted working conditions

Step 4: Communication plans and training

- Ensure that everyone entering the workplace, including workers from other employers, knows how to keep themselves safe while at your workplace.
 - Train everyone on the measures and policies you have put in place.
 - Post signage.
 - Ensure supervisors have been trained on monitoring workers and workplace to ensure policies and procedures are being followed.

Step 5: Monitor workplace and update plans

- Update policies and procedures as needed, involving workers in this process.
- Ensure workers can raise safety concerns.

Step 6: Assess and address risks from resuming operations

- Have you had any staff turnover, or are workers being required to change or adapt job roles, or to use new equipment? Consider training or new employee orientation.
- Will workers need time or training to refresh their skills after having been out of the workplace?
- Have you changed anything about the way you operate, such as the equipment you use or the products you create?
- Are there any processes required for start-up that might introduce risks? Consider the impact of restarting machinery, tools and equipment, or clearing systems and lines of product that may have been left when your business was closed.

COVID-19 Safety Plan Template

- Fillable PDF you can download and save with the details of the plan for your workplace.
- This tool will guide you through a six-step process to help you create your plan.
- Visit www.worksafebc.com to access.

WORK SAFE BC COVID-19 Safety Plan

Employers must develop a COVID-19 Safety Plan. To develop your plan, follow the six-step process described at [COVID-19 and returning to safe operation](#).

This planning tool will guide you through the six-step process. Each step has checklists with items you need to address before resuming operations. You may use this document, or another document that meets your needs, to document your COVID-19 Safety Plan.

WorkSafeBC will not be reviewing or approving the plans of individual employers, but in accordance with the order of the Provincial Health Officer, this plan must be posted at the worksite.

Step 1: Assess the risks at your workplace

The virus that causes COVID-19 spreads in several ways. It can spread in droplets when a person coughs or sneezes. It can also spread if you touch a contaminated surface and then touch your face.

The risk of person-to-person transmission increases the closer you come to other people, the more time you spend near them, and the more people you come near.

The risk of surface transmission increases when many people contact the same surface and when those contacts happen over short periods of time.

Involve workers when assessing your workplace

Identify areas where there may be risks, either through close physical proximity or through contaminated surfaces. The closer together workers are and the longer they are close to each other, the greater the risk.

- We have involved frontline workers, supervisors, and the joint health and safety committee (or worker health and safety representative, if applicable).
- We have identified areas where people gather, such as break rooms, production lines, and meeting rooms.
- We have identified job tasks and processes where workers are close to one another or members of the public. This can occur in your workplace, in worker vehicles, or at other work locations (if your workers travel offsite as part of their jobs).
- We have identified the tools, machinery, and equipment that workers share while working.
- We have identified surfaces that people touch often, such as doorknobs, elevator buttons, and light switches.

Step 2: Implement protocols to reduce the risks

Select and implement protocols to minimize the risks of transmission. Look to the following for information, input, and guidance:

- Review industry-specific protocols on worksafebc.com to determine whether any are relevant to your industry. Guidance for additional sectors will be posted as they become available. If protocols are developed specific to your sector, implement these to the extent that they are applicable to the risks at your workplace. You may need to identify and implement additional protocols if the posted protocols don't address all the risks to your workers.
- Frontline workers, supervisors, and the joint health and safety committee (or worker representative).
- Orders, guidance, and notices issued by the provincial health officer and relevant to your industry.
- Your health and safety association or other professional and industry associations.

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What workers should do

- Know when not to come to work.
- Follow preventative measures while at work:
 - Comply with the employer's instructions around minimizing exposure.
 - Practice physical distancing, cleaning and disinfecting, and personal hygiene.
- Report hazards and refuse unsafe work.
- Take steps to minimize exposure to COVID-19 while away from work.



Industry-specific protocols

Industry-specific protocols

Phase 1

- Agriculture
- Construction
- Forestry
- Health care
- Hospitality
- Manufacturing
- Municipalities
- Retail
- Small business
- Transportation

Phase 2 & 3

- Accommodation
- Arts and cultural facilities
- Child care
- Education (K-12)
- Gyms and fitness centres
- Health professions
- In-person counselling
- Motion picture and TV production
- Offices
- Parks
- Personal services
- Real estate
- Restaurants, cafes, and pubs
- Retail

Transportation (Phase 1)

- Visit www.worksafebc.com/en/about-us/covid-19-updates/covid-19-industry-information/transportation for guidance and resources for the entire transportation industry, with specific protocols for:
 - General trucking
 - Courier and delivery services
 - Passenger transit
 - General waste and recycling
 - Auto towing and auto service and repair
 - Warehousing
 - Taxi, limo, chauffeur and ride hailing
 - Moving and storage

Small business (Phase 1 & 2)

- Visit www.worksafebc.com/en/about-us/covid-19-updates/covid-19-industry-information/small-business for guidance and resources on subjects including:
 - Understanding COVID-19
 - Who should come into the workplace
 - Physical distancing
 - Cleaning and hygiene
 - Documentation and training
 - Employment status, work sharing and temporary work
 - Mental health

Child care

- Visit www.worksafebc.com/en/about-us/covid-19-updates/covid-19-returning-safe-operation/child-care for guidance and resources on subjects, including:
 - Access to child care facilities
 - Pick up and drop off
 - Cleaning and disinfecting
 - Use of personal protective equipment
 - Meals and snacks
- You may also benefit from reviewing protocols related to office space by visiting <https://www.worksafebc.com/en/about-us/covid-19-updates/covid-19-returning-safe-operation/offices>.

Gyms and fitness centres

- Visit <https://www.worksafebc.com/en/about-us/covid-19-updates/covid-19-returning-safe-operation/gyms-and-fitness-centres> for guidance on subjects including:
 - Managing people in the facility
 - Front desk and sales
 - Equipment layout
 - Group classes
 - Personal training
 - Climbing walls
 - Saunas and steam rooms
 - Locker rooms, showers, and washrooms
 - Linens and towels
 - Equipment cleaning and disinfecting
 - Tanning services

Personal services (Phase 2)

- Visit www.worksafebc.com/en/about-us/covid-19-updates/covid-19-returning-safe-operation/personal-services for guidance on subjects including:
 - Managing the workplace
 - Client management
 - Providing personal services
 - Tools and equipment
 - Enhanced cleaning and disinfecting

Restaurants, cafés, and pubs (Phase 2)

- Visit www.worksafebc.com/en/about-us/covid-19-updates/covid-19-returning-safe-operation/restaurant-cafes-pubs for guidance on subjects including:
 - General considerations
 - Table service
 - Kitchen
 - Delivery

**Psychological health and safety
during a pandemic**

Mental Health: Helping your workers cope

Psychological health is of equal importance to physical health.

Here's how you can help:

- Support the mental well-being of workers by helping them manage stress, anxiety and uncertainty created by the COVID-19 outbreak.
- Leverage existing resources
 - [Managing COVID-19 Stress, Anxiety and Depression](#) (Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions)
 - [Mental Health and Psychosocial Considerations During COVID-19 Outbreak](#) (World Health Organization)
 - [Coronavirus: Managing Stress and Anxiety](#) (Canadian Mental Health Association)
 - [Mental Health and COVID-19](#) (Conference Board of Canada)
 - [Taking Care of Your Mental Health \(COVID-19\)](#) (Public Health Agency of Canada)

**Best practices for
the work at home office**

Working from home: responsibilities & policy

Many health and safety **roles, rights, and responsibilities** of employers and workers are just as applicable for **working at home** as they are for more traditional workplaces, including but not limited to:

- Hazard and risk assessment of the at-home workplace
- Procedures for working safely at home, including ergonomics
- Evacuation from the home in an emergency and emergency contacts
- Education and training
- Worker's duty to follow safe work procedures
- Reporting workplace injuries
- Check-in procedures

Develop a health and safety **working at home policy** which includes, at minimum, the above topics.

Working from home: resources

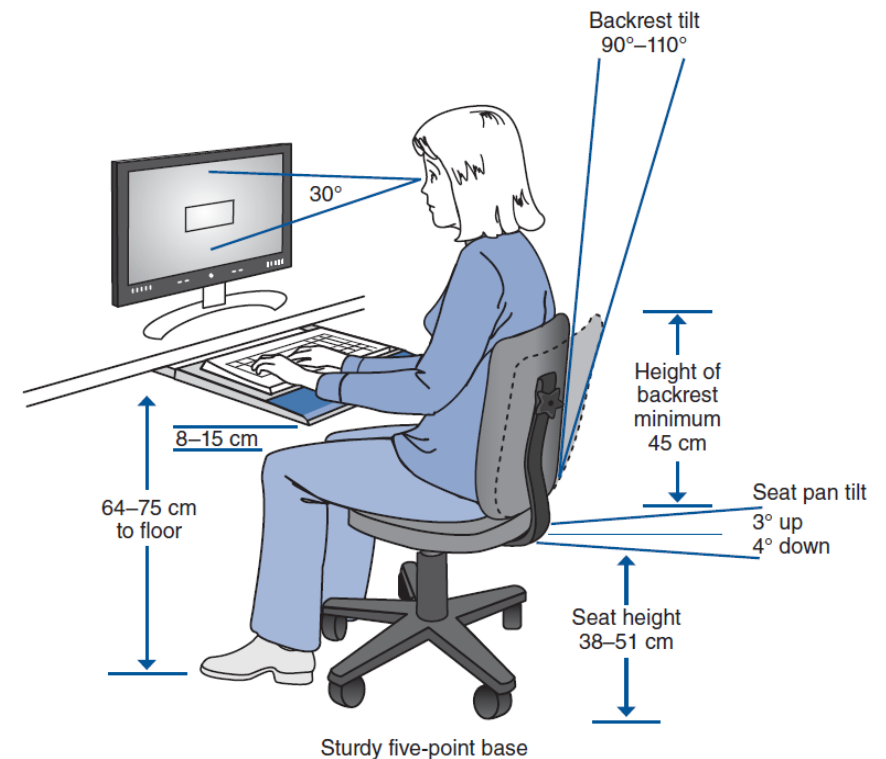
- Visit worksafebc.com for:
 - [Working from home: A guide to keeping your workers healthy and safe](#)
 - [Setting up, organizing, and working comfortably in your home workspace](#)

Ergonomics for the home office

Computer workstation: preventing injury

Prevent **musculoskeletal injuries (MSIs)** such as sprains and strains by assessing the home workstation, identifying risks, and making appropriate adjustments.

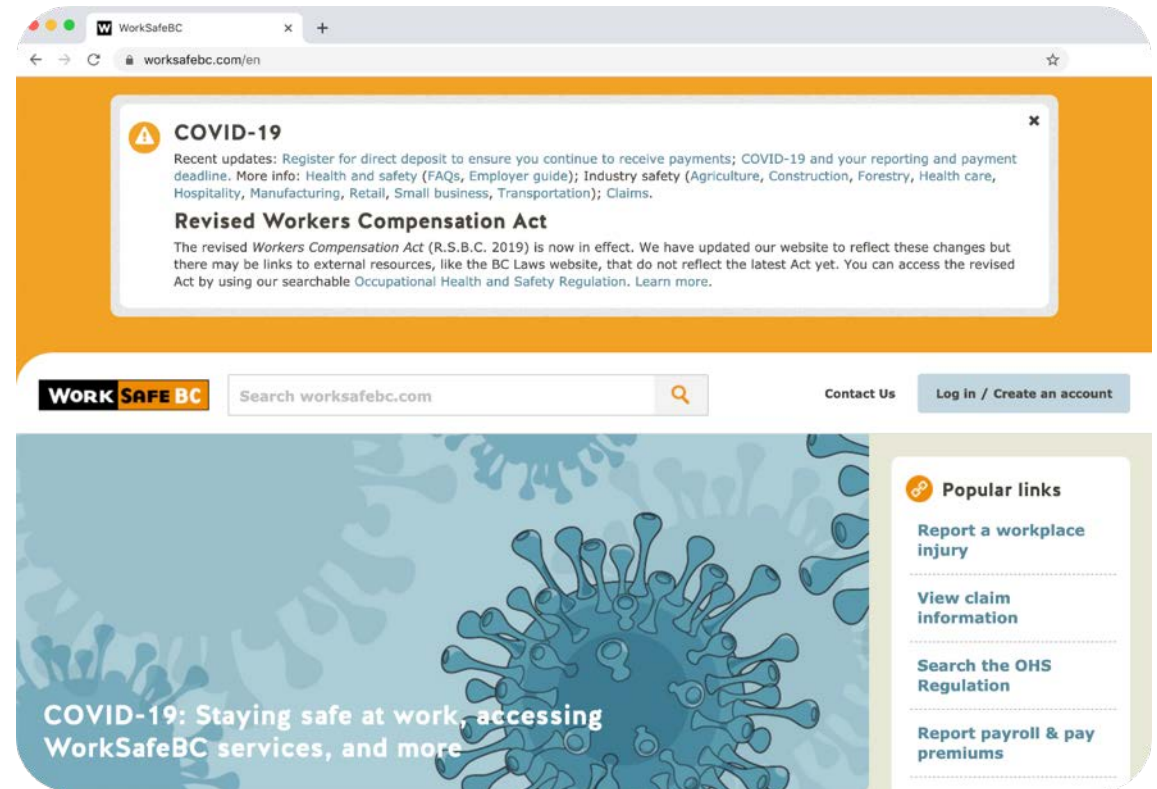
- Workstation layout for neutral posture
 - Chair
 - Backrest and footrest
 - Monitor/Laptop
 - Keyboard
 - Mouse
 - Documents
 - Lighting
- Organization of workday and activities
 - Breaks and micro-pauses
 - Exercises
- WorkSafeBC resource:
 - [How to make your computer workstation fit you](#)



WorkSafeBC's support

Accessing WorkSafeBC services

- WorkSafeBC has been deemed an essential service.
- Check worksafebc.com for regular updates and announcements.
- We are committed to continuing to provide core services for workers and employers around the province, which includes helping employers prevent workplace injury, illness, and disease.



WorkSafeBC's prevention efforts

Prevention field officers and occupational health and safety consultants are still performing **inspections, education, and consultations.**

Online resources:

- [General health and safety information for all workers and employers](#)
- [Preventing exposure to COVID-19 in the workplace: A guide for employers](#)
- Posters and other resources

Prevention Information Line:

- Workers and employers can speak to a prevention officer to get answers to questions.
- If required, a prevention officer will be assigned to assess the health and safety risk at your workplace.
- Call **604.276.3100** in the Lower Mainland or **1.888.621.SAFE** toll-free within B.C.

Claims: Info for workers and employers

WorkSafeBC continues to support injured and ill workers and their employers during the pandemic.

Existing claims

- Payments continue.
- Submit expenses and manage claims through the [Online Services Portal](#).
- Service continues, including updates, treatment plans, and return-to-work procedures.

New claims

- Tell your employer, seek first aid/medical attention, and report to WorkSafeBC. This **includes work-related illness cases of COVID-19**.
- Continue to report using phone, online, fax, or mail.
- Services to register, adjudicate, and make payments will continue.
- If you disagree with a decision, you can request a review from the **Review Division**.

For more info, see the [COVID-19 Claims FAQs](#) on worksafebc.com, call the **Claims Call Centre** at 1.888.967.5377, or use the [Email us](#) form on worksafebc.com.

Additional resources

Public health agency websites

For more information, please see the COVID-19 pages on the following websites:

- [BC Centre for Disease Control](#)
- [Office of the provincial health officer](#)
- [HealthLinkBC](#)
- [COVID-19 Symptom Self-Assessment Tool \(BC Ministry of Health\)](#)



BC Centre for Disease Control



Call

- **1.888.COVID19 (1.888.268.4319):** For non-medical information about COVID-19. Available 7:30 a.m.–8 p.m., 7 days a week.
- **811** (HealthLink BC): To talk to a nurse if you need advice about how you are feeling and what to do next.

Resources for employers and businesses

- **Health & Safety Associations:** COVID-19 information and resources for industry-specific employers and workers
- **Industry and Employer Associations**
- **Labour Organizations**
- **Small Business BC:** COVID-19 Support Service for BC Businesses
- **Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (CCOHS):** Online products and resources



Thank you!

Questions?

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