

1. I have already developed COVID-19 policies and procedures to respond to the crisis. Will the program recognize systems and procedures we already have in place?

Any COVID-19 related policies and procedures your business has in place are considered NEW health and safety initiatives, eligible for program participation, regardless of when started. Noting that the new restrictions placed on businesses are still evolving, the program will help you with further adjustments and tweaks to existing policies in place.

2. Am I required to choose a COVID-19 suggested topic(s)?

The five suggested COVID-19 topics will be helpful in following the guidance provided by the Government of Ontario for re-opening and **ensuring the safety of your employees and customers**, however the program is flexible and you are not required to select them. You can choose any of the 36 program topics available to improve the health and safety in your workplace.

3. Is COVID-19 recognized as an individual hazard under the topic of Control of Hazards topic?

Yes, you can complete the Control of Hazards topic based on addressing the risks posed by COVID-19.

4. If I have a claim for a COVID-19 related illness or fatality, will I still be eligible for the rebate?

Yes, your business is still eligible for rebates. You can also learn more about our adjudicative approach to COVID-19 related claims **here**.

5. When will I receive a rebate for implementing the COVID-19 suggested topics?

The COVID-19 suggested topics are treated the same as the other 31 program topics. Rebates are paid in the spring and fall of each year. To qualify for the fall 2020 rebate you will need to implement your topics by August 1, 2020.

6. How can I change topics on my approved action plan to address the impacts of COVID-19?

Please contact your provider to make any revisions to your approved action plan topics – this change can only be made by your provider.

7. Can I select a topic if I already have a procedure in place? A business can select any topic if it creates health and safety value and will help make their workplace safer.

8. I only want to work on COVID-19 topics. Do I need to do the health and safety assessment? Yes. The assessment will help identify gaps in your current health and safety program and other topics your workplace may need to develop in the future after responding to the COVID-19 situation.

9. **If I register in the program now, can I work on less than the five COVID-19 suggested topics for this year?** Yes, the program is flexible and you can choose between one to five topics for your action plan, as reviewed and approved by your provider.
10. **Are prerequisites for topics mandatory?** No, prerequisites are suggestions only. Your business's individual health and safety needs will determine the appropriate selection of topics.
11. **Can I select any of the 36 topics and focus only on a COVID- 19 response?** Partial implementation of a topic is not permitted in the Health and Safety Excellence program. All topic requirements need to be developed and implemented, which is why focusing only on a pandemic response program is not permitted.
- Other than the 'Control of Hazards' topic, you can only earn a rebate once for completing a topic, regardless if you change providers or there is a gap in your program participation.
- (b) Can I choose the 'Control of Hazards' topic again for another hazard next year?** Yes. Control of Hazards can be repeated for different hazards, therefore you are able to select to a maximum of five control of hazard topics per year (or any other topics).
- (c) Can I repeat a previously completed topic?** Yes, you can repeat a topic completed in prior years of the program and earn a rebate if there is a significant change to the work environment, processes, hazards, equipment, management structure or ownership since the topic was first completed. The significant change should result in an existing policy, procedure, or process that is no longer sufficient to respond to or effectively manage the health and safety hazards/risks you would like to address.
12. **How quickly can I submit evidence of topic completion for WSIB to validate (i.e. Can I submit evidence prior to the 90 day window for validation review regardless of when my action plan was approved) ?** You can submit evidence of topic completion as soon as you are ready. However, submitting ALL of your evidence early suggests that the topic may not have had time to live and breathe in your business. It is best to plan ahead on how you will collect the evidence throughout the year. If you plan ahead, you can collect great examples like interviews with your employees, who can speak to how completion of the topics has enhanced the safety of your workplace how it made work safer for them, and pictures of hazards that have been fixed.