



SAFETY STARTS **HERE**

## OPENING THE ECONOMY AND COVID-19



### DOES REOPENING THE ECONOMY CHANGE THE RISK OF COVID-19?

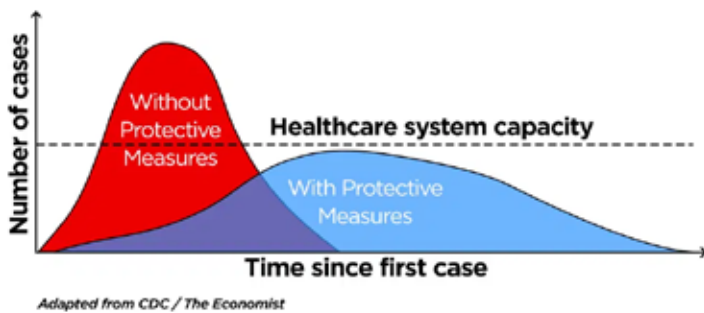
On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 as a pandemic. The COVID-19 virus was rapidly spreading throughout countries and causing catastrophic strains on the health care systems in some of the first countries and cities impacted such as Wuhan, China, Italy and Spain. The health care systems in these areas were not equipped to handle such a large incline or “peak” in sick people which resulted in many deaths and many more people getting sick due to lack of appropriate PPE.

The Canadian government, along with Provincial governments, started to implement protective measures to prevent a spike in sickness by:

- Restricting gatherings of multiple individuals
- Closing schools and daycares
- Closing non-essential services, public facilities and restaurants etc.

Flattening the curve was never a solution to get rid of COVID-19, it was the attempt to prevent clusters of people from all getting sick at the same time so the health care system did not go over capacity and could respond effectively.

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After many weeks of Provincial restrictions and businesses being closed, Provinces have started to announce individual relaunch strategies to “re-open the economy”. Re-opening the economy does not mean COVID-19 is no longer a threat, this just means the curve has been flattened enough that our hospitals have room to treat sick people. Said differently, we can now re-open the economy because your health care system has capacity to treat you, should you get sick.

COVID-19 is still present in the communities and is just as much of a threat as it was when the government first announced it was closing businesses. The relaunch is taking place in multiple phases/stages so public health officials can watch for peaks or spikes in illness.

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**As the economy begins to open, it is critical that everyone continues to follow precautions put into place to help prevent the spread of COVID-19.**

1. **Wash your hands frequently and thoroughly.** Clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand rub or wash them with soap and water.
2. **Maintain physical (social) distancing.** Maintain at least 2 metre (6 feet) distance between yourself and others. If physical distancing cannot be achieved, wear a face mask.
3. **Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.**

4. **Practice respiratory hygiene.** Make sure you, and the people around you, follow good respiratory hygiene. This means covering your mouth and nose with your bent elbow or tissue when you cough or sneeze. Then dispose of the used tissue immediately.
5. **Stay home if you feel unwell.** If you have a fever, cough and difficulty breathing, seek medical attention and call in advance. Follow the directions of your local health authority.
6. **Stay informed and follow advice given by your healthcare provider.** Stay informed on the latest developments about COVID-19. Follow advice given by your healthcare provider, your national and local public health authority or your employer on how to protect yourself and others from COVID-19.
7. **Follow the COVID-19 safety procedures Valard has put into place.** We have designed these procedures to be compliant with information provided by all Provincial Health Authorities, CDC and Health Canada. You can find all of Valard’s procedures on SharePoint or talk to your immediate supervisor or local safety representative.
8. **Follow provincial guidelines if you’ve recently traveled.** Some provinces have travel restrictions for travel within Canada, it is important to know where you are going and what you are required to do.
9. **Seek medical advice promptly.** If you develop fever, cough, difficulty breathing or other symptoms as directed by provincial health authorities, seek medical advice promptly as this may be due to a respiratory infection or other serious condition. Call in advance and tell your provider of any recent travel, contact with travelers or exposures to any with presumed or confirmed COVID-19.

Opening our economy does not mean COVID-19 has weakened or gone away. In fact, it means we have to be even more diligent in following precautions to help prevent the spread of COVID-19.