

Survey: Employee Safety During COVID-19 a Priority for Canadian Businesses

65% Say They Feel Safe in the Workplace

TORONTO, March 24, 2021 – One year after the COVID-19 pandemic caused the first lockdowns of businesses across the country, a new survey shows the vast majority of companies (87%) have made changes to keep employees safe in physical workplaces.

The most common measures taken by companies to ensure employee safety include:

- Adding sanitation stations around the workplace: 58%
- Providing personal protective equipment (PPE): 54%
- Reorganizing physical workspaces to meet social distancing guidelines: 53%
- Reducing the number of employees in physical workspaces at any given time: 48%
- Increasing the flexibility of sick-day policies: 32%

The survey also found that more than 4 in 5 (82%) of those surveyed believe their company offers employees adequate PPE.



Likewise, more than 3 in 5 (65%) employees now say they feel completely safe going to work in a physical workplace (e.g., an office) right now, and 60% say they feel safer physically going into work now than they did when the COVID-19 pandemic first began.

Express experts around the country say their clients are taking employee safety seriously and have implemented multiple measures to help mitigate the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace.

KV Aulakh, an Express franchise owner in Barrie, Ontario, says no employee is placed at a company unless appropriate safety measures are in place. Protocols such as strict mask policies, face shields, distancing of workstations, daily COVID-19 screenings and/or plexiglass installment have been implemented at most, according to Aulakh.

“Companies in our area have done a tremendous job of adhering to the safety protocols and ensuring the safety of all members of their workplace,” Aulakh said. “Due to this, we have not had any outbreaks due to the negligence of a particular employer in our community.”

Niven Lee, an Express franchise owner in Delta, British Columbia, says companies in his area are also taking safety seriously, and the government is checking to ensure safety protocols are being followed.

“Almost all companies have taken steps to make workplaces safer by either providing physical barriers, dedicated staff to clean common areas, PPE and limiting the number of staff for each area,” Lee said. “Additionally, WorkSafeBC has made unannounced inspections to ensure COVID protocols are being followed.”

Regarding what additional steps companies can take to improve the safety of their employees, Niven points to the increasing number of companies that are improving air quality and circulation by purchasing specialized air purifiers to reduce airborne viruses from indoor spaces.

As employees have become acclimated to the changes made to improve safety and understand the risks better, Lee says they feel safer going into their physical workspace.

“Investing in employees has always been important for hiring and retention of top talent, but keeping them safe during this once-in-a-lifetime pandemic is essential to company survival,” Express CEO Bill Stoller said. “I’m pleased to see so many companies taking measures to protect their greatest assets.”

Survey Methodology

The survey was conducted online within Canada by The Harris Poll on behalf of Express Employment Professionals between Nov. 16 and Dec. 7, 2020, among 506 Canadian hiring decision-makers (defined as adults ages 18+ in Canada who are employed full-time or self-employed, work at companies with more than one employee, and have full/significant involvement in hiring decisions at their company). Data was weighted where necessary by company size to bring them into line with their actual proportions in the population.

If you would like to arrange for an interview to discuss this topic, please contact Ana Curic at (613) 858-2622 or email ana@mapleleafstrategies.com.

About Bill Stoller

William H. "Bill" Stoller is chairman and chief executive officer of Express Employment Professionals. Headquartered in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, the international staffing company has more than 830 franchises in the U.S., Canada, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand. Since inception, Express has put more than 9 million people to work worldwide.

About Express Employment Professionals

At Express Employment Professionals, we're in the business of people. From job seekers to client companies, Express helps people thrive and businesses grow. Our international network of franchises offers localized staffing solutions to the communities they serve across the U.S., Canada, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand, employing 526,000 people globally in 2020. For more information, visit www.ExpressPros.com.