**External Auditor Guidance Protocol for Covid-19: Restarting External Audits (BC Phase 3)**

BCFSC external auditors have an opportunity to provide guidance and leadership to companies during COVID-19. The following guidance material is to allow the auditors the opportunity to assist forestry companies while maintaining their safety and the safety of the workers they interact with. Auditing is NOT an essential service, so public health guidance for non-essential travel and other protocols should be followed. Part of the leadership role is to model a high level of PPE use, distancing and other control mechanisms. This includes wearing a non-surgical mask, or similar control as a minimum standard unless in an isolated space such as being the solo occupant of a vehicle or room.

**Guidelines include but are not limited to:**

Prior to the audit discuss and establish with companies expectations and parameters required to accomplish the visit during the COVID Pandemic. This is a two-way discussion for each party to provide their current controls for safe work practices during the COVID pandemic. Relevant safe work practice may include:

* Physical Distancing
* Site and Object Sanitization
* Emergency Procedures (Muster Points & Physical Distancing)
* First Aid Reporting (including auditor & worker symptom reporting)

The auditor will work to the higher of the BCFSC guidance protocols, their own protocols or the company protocols. Only 1 external auditor is permitted at a time on a company site.

For 2 weeks prior to working on a site the auditor will monitor their health and external exposures. The monitoring will be documented and maintained by the auditor. The health monitoring does not have to be shared with any other party unless the auditor chooses to share that information but should be retained in case of infection investigations by a relevant authority later.

When meeting in an office physical distancing is a requirement. Limit those participating in the meeting to essential personnel. Pre- and post-audit meetings are permitted to be performed remotely.

The external auditor should not eat or drink with host company personnel at any time, and should use only their personal food, drink and utensils (drinking bottles, lunch kit, cutlery, etc.). Meals should not be consumed in restaurants but should be taken ‘to go’ and consumed alone in a safe, isolated setting.

BCFSC external auditors will wear all required PPE. This includes Face shield or mask & eye protection and impervious gloves in addition to the required site PPE where worker interactions without physical distancing take place or handling documentation. Auditors can also take pictures of documentation or receive most of the document for review prior to attending the site to minimize exposures during the documentation review.

External auditors will limit travel to their own vehicle or rental vehicle to and from the site visits. Air travel and public transit are strongly discouraged. During ferry travel, auditors should remain in their vehicle where practical. If travel onsite is required during the audit physical distancing will be maintained or the hierarchy of controls will be used to limit exposure between those in the vehicle.

Interviews with employees will be conducted with 2 m / 6’ distancing. The safety of auditor and worker is of primary concern during interviews. Pre-arrange safe places for interviews that include the ability for physical distancing. Interviewing outside is recommended. Interviewing across a truck tailgate width may be useful. The auditor will wear face shield or mask & eye protection and impervious gloves in addition to the required site PPE.

Site observations will be performed using physical distancing. If an auditor is unable to maintain physical distancing during the site observations the hierarchy of controls will be used to establish appropriate controls or appropriate PPE will be utilized.

If there are any indications of infected or infectious person on site, the auditor should immediately withdraw and contact BCFSC.

Auditors will follow all WorkSafeBC and BC CDC COVID Guidelines:

<https://www.worksafebc.com/en/about-us/covid-19-updates/covid-19-returning-safe-operation>

BC Health <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19>