



**BC Forest Safety**



# PREVENTION



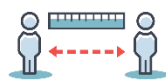
Wash hands



Avoid touching



Wear Mask



Social distance



Use alcohol based



Stay home

## COMMUNICABLE DISEASE PREVENTION

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# COMMUNICABLE DISEASE PREVENTION AND COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS

As of July 1, 2021, COVID-19 Safety Plans are no longer required at workplaces in British Columbia as British Columbia moves to Stage 3 of its restart plan. For more information on the reasons behind this decision and some of the implications the **Provincial Health Officer has published a letter to employers** and WorkSafeBC has published **guidance to employers**. Although the spread of COVID-19 is now mostly controlled in British Columbia by vaccinations, COVID-19 and other communicable diseases (e.g. influenza, norovirus) still circulate in our province and employers have a responsibility to limit the spread of these diseases in workplaces. While we no longer need to follow all the measures that we originally put in place to prevent transmission of COVID-19, some of the procedures that we have developed will continue to be useful to prevent transmission of all communicable diseases.

## 1.0 Overview from WorkSafeBC

Employers are expected to maintain the following ongoing measures:

- Implementing policies to support staff who may be sick with a communicable disease (for example, fever and/or chills, recent onset of coughing, diarrhea), so they can avoid being at the workplace.
- Promoting hand hygiene by providing hand hygiene facilities with appropriate supplies and reminding employees through policies and signage to wash their hands regularly and to use appropriate hygiene practices.
- Maintaining a clean environment through routine cleaning processes.
- Ensuring building ventilation is properly maintained and functioning as designed.
- Supporting employees in receiving vaccinations for vaccine-preventable conditions to the extent that you are able.

Employers are not expected to post a communicable disease plan, but they are expected to take reasonable measures to reduce the risk of communicable disease transmission in the workplace.

WorkSafeBC has published **Communicable Disease Prevention: A guide for employers**. This document includes a checklist of factors to consider for preventing communicable disease transmission.

### **Additional measures — as advised by Public Health**

- Employers must also be prepared to implement additional prevention measures as required by a medical health officer or the provincial health officer to deal with communicable diseases in their workplace or region, should those be necessary.

## 2.0 BCFSC COVID-19 Resources

The BCFSC resources developed for the COVID-19 pandemic will continue to be available on our website. We have updated the following resources so that they can be adapted into a communicable disease prevention program:

- Handwashing station on-site
- Communicable disease surface cleaning and disinfection
- Health screening tool
- COVID-19 case on-site procedures (this will continue to be relevant until COVID-19 is no longer managed by contact tracers)

We also have an ergonomics resource for workers who continue to work from home.

- Ergonomics – Working from your home office

### **Guidance on continued prevention procedures**

Worksites are often large with natural ventilation and space for workers to be dispersed so they are not working near one another. We do not anticipate there will be increased contact with the public or with additional workers on-site in Step 3 and 4 of the BC Restart Plan so the risk of transmission of COVID-19 or other communicable diseases at the worksite is expected to remain low.

The BCFSC recommends employers follow the guidelines under **Health Monitoring** for transitioning into Steps 3 and 4 of the Restart Plan.

## **3.0 Health Monitoring**

It is still important for people who may be sick with COVID-19 or with other communicable diseases to stay at home and get tested for COVID-19 if appropriate.

Employers should continue to encourage workers who are exhibiting symptoms of communicable diseases to stay at home. Workers should also continue to monitor their health throughout the workday and go home if they are feeling unwell. Some large worksites may continue to use health screening questionnaires and you may be required to complete these questionnaires when working on their sites.

Symptoms of communicable disease include:

- Fever and/or chills
- Nausea and/or vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Recent onset of coughing or sneezing
- New onset or worsening of sneezing/running nose
- Sore throat
- New onset or worsening headache
- Severe fatigue

Presumptive and confirmed cases of COVID-19 should continue to be managed in accordance with established procedures for investigation/tracing, notification, cleaning, and disinfecting, and return to work.



## 4.0 Work Site Prevention Controls

### Ventilation

Ventilation in indoor spaces is important in preventing disease transmission. We recommend that indoor spaces be well ventilated. This is particularly important in spaces where people may congregate. The [WorkSafeBC Prevent the Spread of Communicable Disease: Ventilation and Air Circulation](#) has some useful information on the role of ventilation in reducing disease transmission and how to ensure optimal ventilation in a workplace.

For many communicable diseases, the risk of transmission is lower outdoors than indoors.

### Hand Hygiene

Employers should continue to promote the benefits of hand hygiene for the prevention of transmission of COVID-19 and other communicable diseases. Workplaces and employers should continue to provide wash stations, soap and water, and hand sanitizer at workplaces.

### Cleaning and Disinfecting

Employers should continue to promote the importance of cleaning of high touch surfaces. Cleaning products that have been approved for use against COVID-19 should continue to be used.

### Procedures Incorporating COVID-19 Controls

Procedures for the use of shared tools, two-way traffic in stairwells, etc. may return to normal at the start of Stage 3, however some contractors may choose to continue using these controls to reduce the risk of communicable disease transmission and you will be expected to follow the procedures for the worksite you are on.

### Physical Distancing

Continued physical distancing is encouraged where practicable. We recommend that, where practicable, site trailers, meeting rooms, lunchrooms, tool cribs, Sea-cans, hoists, and other spaces where workers have the potential to congregate continue to operate at reduced capacity and/or with mask use until Stage 4 of the restart plan.

### Work Pods

Work pods that consistently work together have been recommended to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and to facilitate contact tracing if disease transmission does occur. The use of work pods is not mandatory, but some employers may continue to find it useful for reducing the risk of infectious disease transmission on site.

### Masks

Starting in Stage 3 (July 1, 2021), masks are no longer mandatory in shared public spaces. However, masks are still recommended in indoor public spaces for people who are not yet fully vaccinated. Fully vaccinated means 14- days after receiving the second dose. The BCFSC recommends that masks continue to be used by workers who are not fully vaccinated in the following scenarios:

- When working indoors in close contact with other workers
- When working indoors in a poorly ventilated room with other workers.
- When working indoors with or near a work crew that is not in your 'pod'.

Since it is not always possible for employers to determine which employees are fully vaccinated, some employers may choose to maintain mask requirements indoors until a larger proportion of the population is fully vaccinated. If you are working on a worksite that continues to require masks, you will be required to follow their mask policies.

## **5.0 Responding to Elevated Risk**

The Public Health authorities in BC will continue to monitor the spread of communicable diseases in our province, including COVID-19. The risk of transmission may increase from time-to-time. If this happens, medical health officers or the provincial health officer will advise employers to take additional measures to reduce the risk of communicable disease transmission. These measures may be similar to the COVID-19 prevention procedures that we have been using during the pandemic. Employers are expected to pay attention to information relevant to their industry and region from regional public health officials and the provincial health officer. If necessary, employers are expected to follow guidance if additional communicable disease transmission procedures are required.