



# City of Vancouver **Communicable Disease Plan**

*Effective April 8, 2022*

## Overview

Communicable diseases are diseases that can be transmitted from person-to-person or through another vector (path) such as insects or animals. Examples of communicable diseases include COVID-19, measles, pertussis (whooping cough), norovirus and influenza. For a list of communicable diseases, please refer to Appendix i.

At the City, we are committed to the health and safety of our employees and the public we serve. Our goal is to foster a positive communicable disease attitude in the workplace through disease prevention (i.e. hand washing, cough etiquette, and routine practices) and endeavor to respond to events using evidence-based information to address communicable disease events. This Communicable Disease Plan (CDP) provide layers of prevention measures and workplace safety control levels to:

- reduce the likelihood of communicable diseases;
- prevent the spread of communicable diseases; and
- respond to communicable disease events should one occur.

This plan focuses on general risk reduction principles and includes workplace measures that are to be maintained at all times. It is important for operations to have site / operational-specific plans to address communicable diseases as may be required based on tasks they perform.

To reduce the risk of transmission, a planned preventative effort requires cooperation from all City employees, contractors, volunteers and members of the public/visitors.

The level of risk of certain communicable diseases, including COVID-19, may increase from time to time, or on a seasonal basis. Organizational Health and Safety will monitor and review communicable disease-related information issued by our regional medical health officer and provincial health office. Organizational Health & Safety will review orders, guidance, notices, and recommendations issued by the Medical Health Officer or the Provincial Health Officer. During incidents of elevated risks or in the event of a communicable disease, the City will implement additional safety measures as advised by Public Health. Organization and / or operational-specific site safety measures will provide additional measures and / or instructions for staff in the event of elevated risks.

WorkSafeBC and Public Health are key partners. The City works collaboratively with these organizations.

In this Communicable Disease Plan we have measures, controls and instructions to mitigate the risk of communicable diseases and to respond to communicable disease events. Any time you have any questions or concerns or learn of a communicable disease event, reach out to the appropriate safety professional for your work area:

- Engineering – Safety Superintendent
- VFRS – Assistant Chief Occupational Health, Safety and Wellness
- All other City Operations – Occupational Health and Safety Specialist

## Hazard identification and risk assessment (HIRA)

Certain work areas may be at an elevated risk of a communicable disease event. These work areas must have site or event-specific additional measures in place. At specific work locations, a plan based on hazard identification and risk assessment is intended to ensure that the transmission risk of communicable disease is minimized at workplaces to the extent practicable or where possible. For more information on hazard identification and risk assessments, refer to the [City's Hazard Reporting and Risk Assessment program](#).

### Outbreak – Understanding the Risk

Preventing communicable disease involves ongoing measures to reduce the risk of communicable disease transmission. It also involves implementing additional measures when advised to do so by Public Health during periods of elevated risk.

## Hierarchy of Controls – Summary for Communicable Diseases

Safety controls are categorized into a hierarchy from most effective to least effective controls.

1. **Elimination:** Remove the hazard from the workplace or (limit exposure) by:
  - a. Encouraging employees to take vaccinations in accordance with Public Health recommendations
  - b. Staying home when sick (employees should monitor their health and symptoms)
  - c. Physical distancing or respecting personal space
  - d. Managing crowds
  - e. Cleaning and disinfecting high-touch surfaces
  - f. Cleaning and disinfecting surfaces when people who are sick leave the workplace
2. **Engineering controls:** Contain the hazard or reduce the risk with:
  - a. Barriers
  - b. Well maintained ventilation systems
  - c. Access to wash stations or placement / installation of hand sanitation stations
3. **Administrative controls:** To encourage new habits from employees and/or clients:
  - a. Implement appropriate crowd controls
  - b. Promote vaccinations for communicable diseases
  - c. Promote safe cough and sneezing methods
  - d. Promote frequent hand washing or sanitizing

- e. Communicate to monitor health and stay home when sick with a communicable disease
  - f. Ensure shared tools, equipment and workstations are cleaned or sanitized after use at times of elevated risk
  - g. Communicate and install signage of expected actions of employees and clients
  - h. Promote awareness and availability of mental health supports
  - i. Educate employees by training or Safety Talks
4. **Personal protective equipment (PPE):** Reduce risk by equipment worn by an employee when as required for certain work tasks:
- a. N95 Respirators when required as PPE for a given work function
  - b. Disposable ASTM F2100 Level 1 medical masks when required as PPE for a given work function
  - c. Droplet protection – eye, face shields or sealed goggles
  - d. Gloves
  - e. Gowns

## IMMUNIZATIONS

According to Vancouver Coastal Health, immunizations protect us from serious and potentially fatal infections and diseases like polio, diphtheria, measles and rubella. Immunizations also make it harder for disease to spread, helping build a circle of protection around an entire community. Visit the [VCH Communicable Disease Control website](#) for the latest immunization news and resources to stay safe from vaccine-preventable diseases.

Further BCCDC reported, “Getting immunized against COVID-19 by getting all recommended doses of the vaccine is the most effective way to protect yourself and others from COVID-19.” Vaccination is a more reliable measure of protection than the immune response from natural infection.

The City offers hepatitis vaccines at no cost to workers who are at risk of occupational exposure to the virus. The City requires appropriate work areas to plan for the required hepatitis vaccines.

An employee’s vaccination status is private. Employees must not ask co-workers about their vaccination status.

## SELF- MONITORING / STAY HOME WHEN SICK

Employees must self-monitor for symptoms of illness and must not come into the workplace if they are ill with a communicable disease or displaying symptoms consistent with communicable diseases. Especially if the worker has new or worsening of pre-existing symptoms and symptoms of COVID-19 described by [BCCDC list of COVID-19 symptoms](#), which may include:

- Fever or chills, cough (either new, or worsening/exacerbation of chronic cough),

- loss or change of sense or smell or taste, difficulty breathing, sore throat, loss of appetite, extreme, fatigue or tiredness, runny nose, sneezing, headache, body or muscle aches, diarrhea, nausea or vomiting.

### What to do if sick

**If employees** report having flu-like symptoms before or while at work:

- Ask them to stay home or send them home to self - isolate and seek medical consultation if they are experiencing new or worsening symptoms.
- Always follow BCCDC's guidance on 'If you have COVID-19'.
- Clean and disinfect workstation and any areas or tools.

It is important to respect the privacy of all employees and ensure all information is kept confidential. Do not share information about an employee's condition with other employees.

The City has various benefits to support employees to take care of their health. We encourage employees to be aware of the benefits and supports available to them. [Learn about your benefits including health plans, medical and other leaves from work and assistance with life events.](#)

**If clients or other persons** develops symptoms of illness at our workplace, then appropriate infection control precautions should be taken while the person is preparing to leave our workplace. Follow the Hierarchy of Controls and infection control precautions, including use of:

- Appropriate hand hygiene
- Cleaning and disinfection of surfaces soiled with bodily fluids
- Using a separate room for the person who is ill with the door closed, where appropriate
- Wear a mask if they are experiencing respiratory symptoms.

### HAND HYGIENE (Hand washing and sanitizing)

One of the most effective measures we can take to prevent infection is to wash our hands regularly and avoid touching our face. Practice hand hygiene for at least 20 seconds. Instructions are:

1. Wet your hands with running water (warm or cold)
2. Apply soap
3. Lather and scrub your hands with soap, covering all surfaces including the palm and backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails for at least 20 seconds
4. Rinse your hands well under clean, running water
5. Dry your hands using a clean towel
6. Use a towel to turn off the tap (in public spaces)

If you are using alcohol-based hand rub, ensure your hands are not visibly soiled, apply about a loonie-sized amount of sanitizer and rub all surfaces of your hands until completely dry, about 20 seconds.



For a more detailed process, view the [World Health Organization \(WHO\) video on handwashing or hand sanitizer use](#).

Operations, both administrative and field, are required to maintain access to hand washing or hand sanitizer. Hand sanitizer is available from approved City suppliers for delivery or from City stores by pick-up.

Real Estate Facilities Management (REFM) will maintain hand-sanitizing stations at City Hall entrance points and City Council. Signage and other communications will support hand washing or sanitization behaviors of clients and staff.

### **Cough and sneeze etiquette**

The City will post signage and use other communications to educate or remind employees and clients to cough and sneeze safely into their arms or elbow.

## **BUILDING VENTILATION MAINTENANCE**

REFM maintains a preventative maintenance program for HVAC systems in City-owned buildings. REFM maintains contracts with landlords and will respond to HVAC concerns in leased buildings occupied by City staff. Other measures to improve circulation could be implemented, such as opening windows.

Follow appropriate procedures for ventilation repairs through REFM as may be required. Complete a [Facility Work Request](#).

### **Barriers for droplet control**

Operations will make assessments on whether to keep barriers as permanent fixtures against future communicable disease events and other hazards or to remove the barriers.

## **RESPECT PERSONAL SPACE**

Situations of crowding need to be avoided and managed. Employees are encouraged to work with their supervisors to address any concerns they may have. It is important that we respect each person's personal space.

Although preset capacity limits for our buildings is not required, operations are to manage potential areas of crowding and maximize available workspaces to allow staff to feel more comfortable and allow for physical distancing.

In conjunction with safety measures, occupancy limits must adhere to the [Alignment of Occupancy limits between Building and Fire By-Laws](#).

## CLEANING AND DISINFECTION

REFM and the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation maintain routine cleaning systems and requirements to regularly clean facilities. Maintenance of these systems is expected and systems are ready to expand when public health directs additional cleaning requirements.

All employees are accountable for cleaning high-touch tools or surfaces in their immediate work environment, which include vehicles.

### Elevated risks: cleaning and disinfecting infected surfaces

During communicable disease outbreaks or reported infections, enhanced cleaning of high touch points following public health and/or WSBC recommendations. For example, if an employee leaves the workplace with symptoms of communicable diseases, then the workstation surface should be cleaned following enhanced procedures. The City will adhere to Public Health and/or WSBC guidance where applicable for a communicable disease occurrence. Contact your Safety Specialists and OHS Superintendents or for VFRS Assistant Chief Occupational Health, Safety and Wellness for guidance when you learn of a communicable disease in your work area.

### Non-City supplied cleaning items

Staff are reminded to not bring cleaning products from home. Only City-approved and City-provided cleaning supplies are to be used. Staff are to continue to use the designated cleaning spray supplied by the City for cleaning regularly handled City equipment, tools, vehicles or workstations during periods of elevated risks.

Mixing cleaning products can create chemical reactions to form new toxic compounds that can affect the lungs or skin. Never mix cleaning supplies.

All safety product instructions must be followed. If you have any questions related to cleaning or the use of cleaning products, please speak to your supervisor.

## MASKS

Masks are welcome to be worn in the work environment by the public or staff based on personal preference and personal protection. Resources for employees on the [selection and use of masks](#) can be printed and shared or used as an educational resource for staff.

Masks must continue to be worn when required as PPE for certain work tasks.

## STRESS, ANXIETY AND MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS

Psychological safety risks are always present and the recommendation is to practice self-care. Emotional stress, anxiety or concern is natural under periods of community disease events. The unseen risk of a microbial pathogen commonly creates greater anxiety levels than a clearly

visible hazard like a fire or a plume of smoke. Anyone who feels they are experiencing negative mental health implications should seek assistance as soon as possible. There are many resources available on self-care on the [City's Currents Mental Health and Wellness](#) page or contact Homewood Health, the City's Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP) at 1-800-663-1142.

A resource summarizing best practices for [critical incidents, such as refusal of unsafe work](#) can be accessed on our intranet - Currents. The City supports psychological safety and mental health promotion. The City will post signage and use other communications to educate or remind employees and clients to be kind and respectful to each other, and direct employees to City resources to support their mental health.

## COMMUNICATION

The City's Joint Health and Safety Committees are active partners in employee health and safety. Communicable diseases should be a standing agenda item for Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committees. Committees are encouraged to review and recommend improvements to communicable disease controls. Safety Committees may contribute recommendations to further support risk reduction through specific actions taken in City worksites and operations. For example, additional water tanks were put in vehicles for accessible hand washing in the field.

If employees have concerns, they are expected to raise the unsafe situation or condition with their supervisors. Occupational Safety Specialists, Safety Superintendents or for VFRS Assistant - Chief Occupational Health, Safety and Wellness are available to answer questions raised by managers and supervisors.

City signage templates are available on [Currents](#).

## CONTRACTOR SAFETY

City contractors must continue to stay current on, and comply with, all public health and WorkSafeBC requirements including the requirement for a communicable disease plan that came into effect April 8, 2022. Upon request by the City, a contractor must provide the City with a copy of its communicable disease plan.



## Communicable Disease Plan

Owner: Organizational Health & Safety	H.R. – Organizational Health and Safety
Final Approval:	Director Health and Safety
Date Approved:	June 2, 2020
Revision Date:	August 20, 2020
Revision Date:	November 13, 2020
Revision Date:	December 21, 2020
Revision Date:	June 29, 2021 – Conversion to Communicable Disease Plan
Revision Date:	July 20, 2021 – Update of Communicable Disease Plan
Revision Date:	September 2, 2021 – Updated for August 25 mask Public Health Order, grammar corrections and site capacity examples
Revision Date:	January 14, 2022 updated for new title, City policy and changing public health requirements
Revision Date:	February 18, 2022 updated for new City policy and changing public health requirements
Revision Date:	March 4th, 2022 updated for new City policy and changing public health requirements
Revision Date:	March 11th, 2022 updated for changing public health requirements
Revision Date:	March 11th, 2022 updated for changing public health April 8 <sup>th</sup> , 2022 Conversion of Corporate Covid-19 Safety Plan to Communicable Disease Plan.
	<b>Updated – Communicable Disease Plan</b>
Related Publications:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">WorkSafeBC</a> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Worker’s Compensation Act (WCA), Section 21</li> <li>• Occupational Health and Safety Regulation (OHSR) 6.34 Exposure Control Plans</li> <li>• OHSR 5.2 Chemical and Biological Agents</li> <li>• OHS Guideline G-P2-21 Communicable disease prevention</li> <li>• <a href="#">WorkSafeBC Controlling Exposure: Protecting Workers from Infectious Disease</a>. Published Dec 2021. Retrieved March 2022.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <a href="#">BC Centre for Disease Control</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Provincial Government of BC</a></li> </ul>

## Appendix i: Communicable Diseases

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According to WorkSafeBC, common communicable diseases that workers could be exposed to in their workplaces across BC include:

- Chicken pox
- Clostridium difficile (C.difficile)
- Coronavirus diseases
- Hepatitis
- HIV/AIDS
- Legionnaire's disease and Pontiac fever
- Measles
- Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA)
- Mumps
- Norovirus
- Pandemic Influenza
- Tuberculosis (TB)
- Vancomycin-resistant enterococci (VRE)

Zoonotic diseases are infectious diseases transmitted from animal to humans which could include:

- Avian influenza
- Campylobacteriosis
- Hantavirus
- Lyme disease
- Psittacosis
- Q Fever Rabies
- West Nile virus

For more information, visit [worksafebc.com](http://worksafebc.com), [bccdc.ca](http://bccdc.ca) and

[VCH Communicable Disease Control website](#).