



PANDEMIC EXPOSURE CONTROL PROGRAM

Returning to Safe Operations

SAFETY PLAN

COVID-19

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INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The City of Nelson is committed to providing a safe and healthy workplace for all of our staff. A combination of measures will be utilized to minimize worker exposure to COVID-19, including the most effective control technologies available. Our work practices and procedures will protect not only our workers, but also other workers or members of the public who enter our facilities. All employees must follow the procedures outlined in this plan to prevent or reduce exposure to COVID-19.

Policy

The City of Nelson will strive to find ways to control or eliminate exposure to COVID-19 by developing and implementing proper controls, safe work procedures and educating and training its workers. The City will follow direction and controls as specified by the World Health Organization, BC Centre for Disease Control, the local Health Authority's Medical Health Officer and WorkSafeBC.

Scope

This program applies to all City of Nelson staff and public who could be at risk of exposure to COVID-19.

Definitions

BCCDC: British Columbia Centre for Disease Control

COVID-19: A mild to severe respiratory illness that is caused by a [coronavirus](#). It is transmitted chiefly by contact with infectious material (such as respiratory droplets), and is characterized especially by fever, cough, and shortness of breath and may progress to pneumonia and respiratory failure. Also known as SARS-CoV-2 or the coronavirus.

Influenza: A common respiratory disease caused by a highly contagious virus that changes slightly from year to year (also known as the flu). Flu-like illness also have the same type of symptoms as influenza that has a known or unknown origin.

MHO: Medical Health Officer

N95 Respirator: A personal breathing device (respirator) that provides a barrier to protect workers from a variety of communicable diseases (airborne and droplet).

Pandemic: An epidemic over a wide geographical area or even throughout the world.

PHO: Provincial Health Officer

Physical/Social Distancing: Maintaining two meters/six feet between people.

WHO: World Health Organization

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE): Specialized clothing or equipment worn by an employee for protection against infectious materials. PPE should serve as a last resort, not to replace any other risk control and infection control measures.

RESPONSIBILITIES

If you have symptoms of COVID-19, or may have been exposed to the virus, contact your Supervisor or HR to discuss prior to reporting to work.

Management

- Ensure that the materials (for example, gloves, masks, alcohol-based hand rubs and washing facilities, physical barriers) and other resources such as worker training materials required to implement and maintain the plan are readily available where and when they are required.
- Select, implement and document the appropriate site-specific control measures.
- Ensure supervisors and workers are educated and trained to an acceptable level of competency.
- Ensure workers use appropriate personal protective equipment.
- Conduct a periodic review of the plan's effectiveness. This includes a review of the available control technologies to ensure that these are selected and used when practical.
- Ensure a copy of the exposure control plan is available to workers, visitors and the public.
- Close facilities or limit services to the public if warranted and/or as directed by the applicable health authority.
- Ensure workers maintain physical distancing where practicable (two meters/six feet apart) while completing their work safely.
- Ensure only a limited number of people are able to enter City owned buildings in keeping with the orders provided by the Provincial Health Officer.
- Communicate with signage, occupancy limits and effective hygiene practices including who is restricted from entering the premises.

Supervisors

- Ensure workers are adequately instructed on the controls for the hazards at the location.
- Ensure workers use proper respirators where the risk dictates the necessity, for which they have been fit tested, and the results are recorded.
- Direct work in a manner that eliminates or minimizes the risk to workers.
- Send workers home if they are ill with symptoms associated with COVID-19 and/or have been diagnosed by a medical practitioner to have the flu.
- Ensure physical distancing is maintained where practicable.

Workers

- Know the hazards of the workplace.
- Follow established work procedures as directed by the employer or supervisor.
- Use of required PPE as instructed.
- Report any unsafe conditions or acts to the Supervisor.
- Know how and when to report exposure incidents.
- Leave work if suffering from flu symptoms and stay home until the symptoms are gone. Once symptom free check with your supervisor or Human Resources before returning to work
- Ensure that physical distancing is maintained.

Human Resources

- Provide information, policies and procedural guides to workers on COVID-19.
- Keep copies of any records or concerns related to COVID-19.
- Maintain training and return to work logs for all employees.
- Act as a resource for any workers with questions or concerns.

PROGRAM DETAILS

Health Hazards

COVID-19 is a global pandemic and a public health emergency in British Columbia. SARS-CoV-2 is a virus that can cause the respiratory illness COVID-19. This illness can lead to hospitalization and death. The effects of COVID-19 are expected to be much more severe than seasonal influenza because most people will not have any immunity to the virus. Seniors and individuals with underlying health issues (including heart disease, diabetes and lung disease) are at a higher risk of hospitalization and death, but young and healthy people are also at risk.

Symptoms

Covid-19 symptoms are likely to include fever, cough, sneezing, sore throat, difficulty breathing and loss of smell. See *Appendix for additional information*.

Transmission

Exposure to the virus that causes COVID-19 can occur by:

- Breathing droplets in the air that are generated when people cough or sneeze
- Close contact with other people (shaking hands or hugging)
- Touching contaminated surfaces and then touching the face, mouth or food
- Touching contaminated surfaces and then touching another surface may cause the virus to transfer from one surface to another.

COVID-19 can be transmitted even by people who are not displaying symptoms of the disease. People who may be infected with COVID-19 should not come to work. This includes people who:

- Have or have had symptoms of COVID-19 in the past 10 days
- Have travelled outside of Canada within the previous 14 days
- Live with or have been in close contact to someone with COVID-19 (presumed or confirmed) within the past 14 days.

Risk Identification and Assessment

The extent of control measures outlined in this ECP will depend on the level of risk to worker health and safety. An important part of the ECP is to ensure all work groups and tasks are identified and assessed for their level of risk. Appropriate protective measures will vary according to the level of risk and kinds of activities an employee performs.

There are three primary routes of transmission for SARS-CoV-2, all of which need to be controlled. These include contact, droplet, and airborne transmission.

Breathing in Droplets in the Air

BCCDC advises that SARS-CoV-2 is not typically transmitted through airborne transmission, however, if somebody coughs or sneezes they do generate droplets which are airborne for at least a short period of time but do not float in the air and generally fall to the ground within one to two meters. Anybody who is near the individual may risk breathing in these droplets. Physical distancing (maintaining two meters/six feet of distance from other people at all times) will reduce the risk of this occurring.

Close Contact

Close contact refers to physical contact with another person, for example shaking hands or hugging. When people cough or sneeze droplets may deposit on their skin or clothing, especially if they cough or sneeze into their hands. People who are carriers of SARS-CoV-2 may transfer the virus from their hands or clothing to others during close contact.

Surface Contact

Surfaces can become contaminated when droplets carrying SARS-CoV-2 deposit on them, or when they are touched by a person who is infected. Surface contact involves a worker touching a contaminated object such as a table, doorknob, telephone, or computer keyboard or tool, and then touching the eyes, nose, or mouth. Surface contact is important to consider because SARS-CoV-2 can persist for several days on surfaces.

The following risk assessment table is adapted from WorkSafeBC Occupational Health and Safety Regulation Guideline G6.34-6. Using this guideline as a reference, we have determined the risk level to our workers, depending on their potential exposure in the workplace.

Table 1: Risk assessment for pandemic influenza

RISK LEVEL	Low Risk	Moderate risk	High risk
	Workers who typically have no contact with people infected with pandemic influenza	Workers who may be exposed to infected people from time to time in relatively large, well-ventilated workspaces	Workers who may have contact with infected people or with infected persons in small, poorly ventilated workspaces
Hand Hygiene	Yes (washing with soap and water, using an alcohol-based hand rub, or using hand wipes that contain effective disinfectant)	Yes (washing with soap and water, using an alcohol-based hand rub, or using hand wipes that contain effective disinfectant)	Yes (washing with soap and water, using an alcohol-based hand rub, or using hand wipes that contain effective disinfectant)
Disposable gloves	Not required	Not required, unless handling contaminated objects on a regular basis	Yes , in some cases, such as when working directly with pandemic influenza patients
Aprons, gowns, or similar body protection	Not required	Outbreak/transmission dependent.	Yes , in some cases, such as when working directly with pandemic influenza patients
Eye protection – goggles or face shield	Not required	Outbreak/transmission dependent	Yes , in some cases, such as when working directly with pandemic influenza patients
Airway protection – respirators	Not required	Not required unless likely to be exposed to coughing and sneezing	Yes (minimum N95 respirator or equivalent)

Various forms of PPE may be required or provided as an additional form of protection depending on the site or worker comfort.

Risk Control

The Regulation requires us to implement infectious disease controls in the following order of preference (Hierarchy of Controls):

- 1. Elimination**
- 2. Engineering controls**
- 3. Administrative controls**
- 4. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

Elimination of face-to-face contact is the best control possible. This would include closing facilities and reception counters, relying on phone, email or regular mail to answer public questions. Limit meetings and rely on conference calls, mail or messenger tools. Take financial transactions by electronic means rather than cash or cheque at municipal counters.

Engineering controls would be such things as working from inside an enclosure when receiving bill payments in the Finance Division. This will not prevent all exposure so Administrative Controls will be required.

Administrative controls include hand washing, cough/sneeze etiquette and cleaning surfaces after each encounter

Personal Protective Equipment would be the wearing of respirators, coveralls/turnout gear, gloves, goggles and/or face shields.

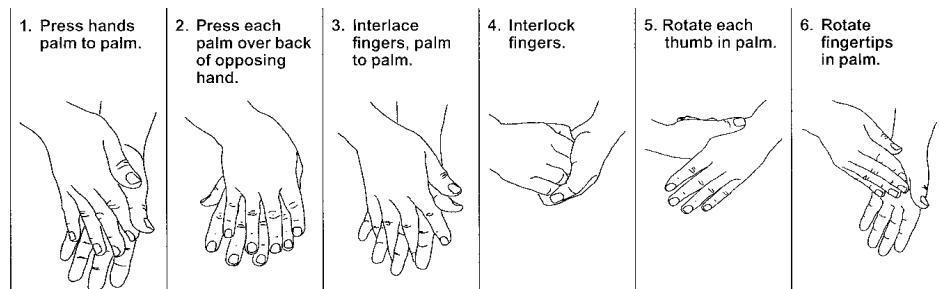
Safe Work Practices

Hand Washing and Hygiene

Hand washing is one of the best ways to minimize the risk of infection. Proper hand washing helps prevent the transfer of infectious material from the hands to other parts of the body – particularly the eyes, nose and mouth – or to other surfaces that are touched.

Wash your hands immediately:

- Before leaving a work area
- After handling materials that may be contaminated
- Before eating, drinking, smoking, handling contact lenses, or applying makeup.



Use soap and warm running water; it does not have to be hot to be effective. **If water is unavailable**, use a waterless hand cleanser that has at least 60% alcohol. Follow the manufacturer's instructions on how to use the cleanser. Wash and rinse your hands for at least twenty seconds. Workers should avoid touching your face, nose, and mouth and avoid rubbing your eyes. Personal hygiene should be maintained, and routine handwashing must take place. Dispose of anything that meets your mouth such as tissues or plastic eating utensils.

Cough and Sneeze Etiquette

Workers are expected to follow cough/sneeze etiquette, which is a combination of measures that minimizes the transmission of diseases via droplet or airborne routes. Cough/sneeze etiquette includes the following components:

- Cover your mouth and nose with a sleeve or tissue when coughing or sneezing
- Use tissues to contain secretions, and dispose of them promptly in a waste container
- Turn your head away from others when coughing or sneezing
- Wash hands regularly

Health Verification/Screening

Workers who develop flu-like symptoms including fever, cough, sneezing and sore throat should immediately report it to their supervisor and go home or remain at home. They should then:

- Complete the self-assessment via [**bc.thrive.health/covid19**](http://bc.thrive.health/covid19)
- Call 8-1-1 and request an appointment so as to be tested as an essential worker
- Refer to COVID-19 Policy # 2030.00.015

Workers may need to isolate for 10 to 14 days at home depending on the outcomes and advice of the above. <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/self-isolation>.

Anyone who may have been working in close proximity to a worker with flu-like symptoms, who was not following the requirements of the social/physical distancing procedure may be required to self-monitor for symptoms.

Social/Physical Distancing

Workers are required to ensure they maintain at least six feet or two meters away from other workers, or members of the public. Large group congregations should be avoided. The City of Nelson will strive to limit groups of workers coming together for training/orientation, lunch, meeting rooms, crew talks, change rooms etc. Workers should not congregate at entrances, work areas, washroom facilities etc. The City will establish and post occupancy limits for all City facilities. The City will make use of virtual meetings or teleconferencing where feasible to limit the number of visitors to the workplace. The City will ensure that tasks that may involve two workers will be conducted with the minimum distancing. Where this is not possible, additional equipment (hoists, lift etc.) will be used to assist with the task. This will ensure that potential transmission can be minimized. In other cases where physical distancing cannot be maintained, physical barriers such as tempered glass will be installed.

Cleaning and Disinfecting

Extensive cleaning and sanitizing of work areas, hard surfaces, vehicles, tools, meeting rooms, protective barriers and hard porous surface areas will occur before and after use on a regular basis. Approved disinfectants will be used as recommended by Health Canada. Safety Data Sheets will be made available.

Gloves

City workers may be provided with protective gloves. These should be worn as per job/safe work procedure requirements. This will reduce the likelihood of transmission and may reduce the instance of workers touching their eyes, nose or ears. Gloves should be replaced frequently and disposed of safely.

N95's

The N95 mask is typically worn by workers directly involved in an **aerosol** generating medical procedure (as defined by Health Canada). The Fire Department would be a primary user of an N95 mask as a first responder because their situations and circumstances may be unpredictable. An N95 mask is a protective barrier that is worn on the face, covers at least the nose and mouth, and is used to contain large droplets generated during coughing and sneezing. N95s help minimize the spread of potentially infectious material and are used in cases where other controls cannot be used sufficiently. N95 masks must be fit tested as per the City of Nelson Respiratory Protection Program and any worker being supplied an N95 mask will undergo training prior to using the mask.

NOTE: The City of Nelson Police/Fire Department will have additional responsibilities and/or OG's/protocols as it relates to pandemic response.

NOTE: Additional Safe Work Procedures may be required and created depending on the nature of the risk and/or newly identified tasks where virus transmission could be an issue.

Implementation Plan

In the event of a Phase 4 Pandemic Alert and/or Phase 5/6 Pandemic Alert the following risk control processes will be instituted. Signage may be required on facilities to ensure patrons/customers do not enter facilities if they are experiencing symptoms or have been exposed via travel/contact etc.

Low Risk

- All workers will be instructed in hand washing and cough/sneeze etiquette
- Sick workers will be instructed to remain at home

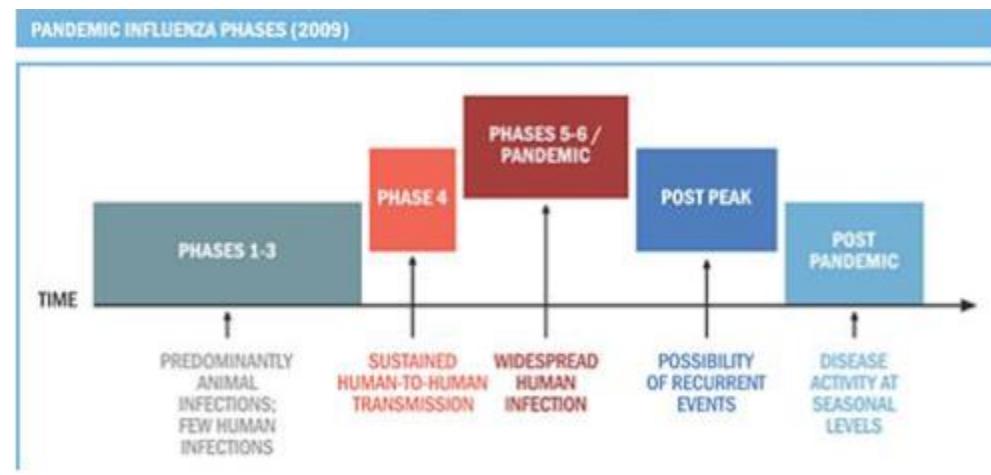
Moderate Risk

- All workers will be instructed in hand washing and cough/sneeze etiquette
- Sick workers will be instructed to remain at home
- Personal protective equipment may be made available if/where required and/or safe distance from patrons (gloves/hand sanitizer etc.) See table 1.

High Risk

- All workers will be instructed in hand washing and cough/sneeze etiquette
- Sick workers will be instructed to remain at home
- Personal protective equipment will be made available
- Mandatory use of all required personal protective equipment
- Standard de-contamination of equipment, clothing and personnel is required.

In the event of a Phase 6 Pandemic the City Emergency Operations Centre may be activated and various work areas may be closed as directed until such time as they recommend the resumption of regular work activities. The City will follow the direction of the local Health Authority and/or BC Centre for Disease Control and/or provincial/federal government.



Record Keeping

The City of Nelson will keep records of instruction and training provided to workers regarding COVID-19, as well as respirator fit tests and first aid records.

TRAINING

Workers will receive information on the following:

- The risk of exposure to COVID-19, and the signs and symptoms of the disease
- Safe work practices/procedures to be followed, such as hand washing/hygiene and cough/sneeze etiquette
- Reminders on location of washing facilities, including dispensing stations for alcohol-based hand rubs
- Proper use of an N95 respirator if/when required
- How to seek first aid
- How to report an exposure to, or symptoms of COVID-19
- Field Safety
- Working with the public

Training will be in the form of staff bulletins, email communications, procedural guidelines and intranet postings. Should presentations be made available from Public Health or the local Health Authorities, these will be made available to staff where required.

APPENDIX

COVID-19 RISK ASSESSMENT CHART

Note: Risk levels may increase or decrease depending on the nature of the outbreak and/or if there are local community cases of the virus etc. The City will follow direction given by the local Health Authority/BCCDC/WHO/Government Agencies

POSITION	LEVEL OF RISK	CONTROL PROCEDURES
Internal office staff	Low	Regular and effective hand hygiene
Front line customer service staff	Low/Moderate	Regular and effective hand hygiene/PPE if/where required, increased sanitization
First Aid Attendant	Moderate	Regular and effective hand hygiene/PPE if/where required, increased sanitization
Operations Staff	Moderate	Regular and effective hand hygiene/PPE if/where required, increased sanitization
Firefighter/Police (First Responders)	High	Hand hygiene, disposable gloves, turnout gear, goggles and/or face shield, N95 respirator.

COVID-19 Safety Plan

Public Health has advised that the prohibition on gatherings of greater than 50 people refers to “one-time or episodic events” (weddings, public gatherings), and is therefore not intended to apply to workplaces. However, limiting the number of people in a workplace is an important way to ensure physical distancing is maintained.

ELIMINATION

- The City of Nelson has established and posted occupancy limits for common areas such as break rooms, meeting rooms, change rooms, washrooms and elevators.
- The City of Nelson has implemented measures to keep workers and others at least 2 meters apart, wherever possible and practicable.

Measures include:

- Changes to start and stop times (staggering)
- Occupancy limits
- Limiting the number of public allowed to enter a common area at one time
- Providing larger meeting space to allow for appropriate social distancing measures

ENGINEERING

- The City of Nelson has installed barriers where workers can't keep physically distant from co-workers, customers and others
- The City of Nelson has included barrier cleaning in our cleaning protocol
- The City of Nelson has installed the barriers so they don't introduce other risks to workers

Measures include:

- Tempered Glass at all Customer facing counters/desks and high staff traffic areas
- Privacy Panels between staff work areas in close proximity
- Physical distancing markers for public
- Additional sanitizing dispensers for staff & public at high touch areas
- Signage with maximum occupancy number listed

ADMINISTRATIVE

- The City of Nelson has identified rules and guidelines for how workers should conduct themselves
- The City of Nelson has identified rules and guidelines for employees presenting symptoms of COVID-19 or other illness
- The City of Nelson has clearly communicated these rules and guidelines to workers through a combination of training, signage, procedural guidelines and verbal communication
- The City of Nelson has reviewed the information on cleaning and disinfecting surfaces and provided procedural guidelines to all staff
- Our workplace has enough handwashing facilities on site for all our workers.
- We have procedural guidelines for workers regarding hand washing and have communicated these to our workers
- Workers required to clean have had adequate training and materials

Measures Include:

- *Confined Space Entry – Safe Work Procedure 2640.00.0015*
- *Field Worksites – Safe Work Procedure 2640.00.0020*
- *First Aid Attendants – Safe Work Procedure 2640.00.0025*
- *Hand Hygiene – Safe Work Procedure 2640.00.0030*
- *Return to Work Following Leave – Safe Work Procedure 2640.00.0035*
- *Right to Refuse Unsafe Work – Safe Work Procedure 2640.00.0040*
- *Sanitizing Work Surfaces – Safe Work Procedure 2640.00.0045*
- *Soft Opening – Safe Work Procedure 2640.00.0050*
- *Worker Transportation – Safe Work Procedure 2640.00.0055*
- *Working with the Public – Safe Work Procedure 2640.00.0060*
- *Physical Distancing – Safe Work Procedure 2640.00.0065*
- *COVID-19 – Policy #2530.00.015*
- *Working From Home – Policy #2530.00.020*
- *COVID-19 – Spot the Symptoms*

