

Updated FAQs

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Sent: March 29, 2021 2:35:25 PM PDT
Attachments: COVID-19 FAQ_Mar29-21.pdf

Here are the new FAQs. Updates are highlighted as per usual.

Call if you have any questions.

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BC PUBLIC SERVICE COVID-19 RESPONSE FAQs

Updated March 29, 2021

WHO TO CONTACT:

- For work-related questions not addressed in the FAQ, contact the Workplace Health & Safety branch (BC Public Service Agency) using [MyHR](#).
- For non-medical-related questions about COVID-19 including community protection and reporting options, call 1-888-COVID19 (1-888-268-4319). Service is available from 7:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. seven days a week.
- Call 811 or your primary care provider for personal medical advice following exposure or if you are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19.
- For general health-related questions from Canadians, call 1-833-784-4397. Service is available from 7:00 a.m. to midnight EST.

For general information on COVID-19, see the BC Centre for Disease Control online resources at <http://covid-19.bccdc.ca/>.

If you think you may have symptoms, the BC Centre for Disease Control's self-assessment tool can help you determine if you need further assessment or testing for COVID-19: <https://covid19.thrive.health>.

The most current information related to the BC Public Service's response to COVID-19 (including this document) is available [on the MyHR website](#).

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Part 1: Vaccinations

1. Where do I find out about the COVID-19 immunization programs?

The COVID-19 vaccine rollout, including available vaccines, their application and the sequencing of administration is part of the provincial pandemic response and is planned and managed by Public Health. Updates to provincial planning are expected with changes to vaccine supply and the details will be posted to [BCCDC](#) and on the [Immunization Plan for British Columbia page](#).

Vaccination planning by Public Health will continue to be impacted by the predictability and volume of approved vaccines being delivered, and by the number of additional vaccine types authorized for use by Health Canada.

COVID-19 vaccines are being developed and authorized for use in preventing severe illness and death from COVID-19 infection. Increasing participation levels in vaccination are an important part of the public health plan to end the pandemic. The BCCDC provides the most [up to date information](#) regarding vaccines.

2. How will COVID-19 vaccination change workplace safety plans?

Workplace safety plans and Public Health protective measures, when followed, are successful in providing protection from COVID-19 transmission in our workplaces. The practices each reduce the risk of transmission and, as layers, together minimize the risk of COVID-19. These practices include staying home when sick, screening for symptoms, wearing masks, sanitizing, and most importantly keeping two metres distance from one another. COVID-19 vaccination, which is shown to be highly effective, provides a further layer of protection for individuals from COVID-19 infection and severe illness.

These layers of protection will remain an important workplace practice and permit safe delivery of services to clients with unknown immunity status.

The current Public Health vaccination strategy is focused on prioritizing vulnerable individuals and by age demographics, so vaccination levels in the BC Public Service workforce will vary over time. Workplace Safety plans and public health practices will continue to maintain workforce protections as the immunization plan is completed or until there is a change in Public Health direction.

3. **[UPDATED]** When will essential workers get a vaccine?

On March 18, 2021, Public Health updated the COVID-19 BC Immunization Plan to include *priority front line workers* who work in specific industries. The vaccination schedule for priority front line workers will be determined on a regional health authority basis balancing a number of factors including vaccine availability and other regional virus outbreak concerns.

Priority front line workers are from workplaces or industries that have a history of workplace COVID-19 transmission, ongoing exposures, workers who work with vulnerable populations or workplaces where it's difficult to maintain prevention measures such as physical distancing and using personal protective equipment.

While the public service is considered essential, most of our positions and workplaces won't meet Public Health's criteria because we can protect most staff with barriers, distancing, mask use and PPE where appropriate.

The March 18, 2021 updated COVID-19 BC Immunization Plan is here:
https://news.gov.bc.ca/files/03.18.2021_COVID_Immunization_Plan.pdf

4. When will I get vaccinated?

The BC Provincial Health Officer has released the [Immunization Plan for British Columbia](#). Vaccinations for COVID-19 are underway in BC and the Immunization Plan contains four phases.

The focus in phases 1 and 2 is to protect those most vulnerable to severe illness. This is happening from now until the end of March.

After phase 1 and 2, immunization begins in the general population in phases 3 and 4. Vaccines will primarily be distributed by age, starting with the oldest. People with certain underlying conditions will also be included.

Eligibility for vaccination for individual BC Public Service workers is based on the criteria for each phase. When you are eligible to get vaccinated will likely be part of phases 3 and 4.

Everyone who would like a vaccine and who is eligible to receive one will have the opportunity to be vaccinated. Learn about the four phases of the [COVID-19 Immunization Program](#). You can also find information about [vaccine eligibility here](#).

5. Will the Public Service be running vaccination clinics like yearly flu clinics at our workplaces?

No. The currently approved vaccines will be provided at 172 mass vaccination clinics arranged in communities and pharmacies across British Columbia.

6. Will I be able to take leave to get my vaccination?

Yes, leave for medical appointments under your collective agreement or the leave of absence with pay for excluded employees applies to get your vaccination. Please discuss your need for leave with your supervisor. For more information, please see Leave for Medical and Dental Appointments on [MyHR](#), your collective agreement or the Terms & Conditions for Excluded Employees & Appointees:

[BCGEU Article 20.11](#)

[BCNU Article 20.13](#)

[PEA Article 24.14](#)

[Unifor Article 8.07](#)

[Terms & Conditions for Excluded Employees & Appointees s. 57](#)

7. Will vaccinations be mandatory for the BC Public Service or for certain positions in the BC Public Service?

No. Vaccination for COVID-19 will not be mandatory for ministry employees in the BC Public Service. By fall 2021, vaccinations will have been made available for all B.C. residents who want one. COVID-19 infection ranges widely in severity of symptoms and given the high level of effectiveness of the vaccine, Public Health is encouraging all British Columbians to learn about the benefits and safety of the vaccine and consider vaccination to protect themselves and to protect others.

8. Do I have to tell my supervisor or my ministry that I have been vaccinated?

No, your vaccination is part of your own confidential medical history. You do not need to share your vaccination status, and your supervisor will not ask you.

9. Considering privacy restrictions, will information such as the number of staff immunized in my workplace be shared?

No, vaccinations are a part of a person's confidential medical history. Your ministry will not ask if you have been vaccinated or gather statistics about the number of staff vaccinated.

10. Once I get vaccinated will I still have to follow COVID protocols in the workplace?

Yes. Our workplaces have been safe since the beginning of the COVID pandemic due to the protocols and protections in place. These include:

- If you are sick, do not come to work
- If you begin to feel unwell at work, go home immediately
- Active daily health checks
- Two-metre physical distancing
- Barriers between staff and or clients
- Reduced workplace capacity
- Cleaning
- Hand hygiene
- Mask use in common areas and where two-metre physical distancing cannot be maintained

Until community (or "herd") immunity is achieved, and community transmission decreases, these protections will stay in place to protect those that are not vaccinated. The BC Public Service will follow the Provincial Health Officer's guidance on when to scale back the protections for our workplaces.

11. Once I get vaccinated will I still have to follow Public Health guidance and orders?

Yes. Staff will have to continue to follow Public Health guidance on self isolation and health monitoring even after being vaccinated. All British Columbians will have to continue to follow Public Health orders and guidance until community immunity is achieved and the Public Health Officer rescinds or changes the orders and guidance.

Part 2: Workplace Safety and Working from Home

12. **[UPDATED]** What is the current direction on returning to the workplace and remote work?

On March 29, 2021, the Provincial Health Officer announced increased measures to address the continued growth in COVID-19 cases in B.C. These included direction for employers to continue to actively support remote working options wherever operationally possible.

In keeping with our commitment to align the BC Public Service pandemic response with the Provincial Health Officer's direction, where operationally feasible the BC Public Service strongly recommends employees work from home on a full-time basis until further notice. While working from home remains voluntary, all supervisors are expected to support employee requests to work from home unless there is a clear operational reason why the employee must be in their regular workplace.

Those who have worked in your regular workplaces throughout the pandemic due to operational requirements can continue to do so safely because of the safety plans in place. For those who will continue to be in the workplace, all the safety plans and measures we have put in place remain in effect and must be followed.

The Provincial Health Officer's order also requires daily health checks for all employees attending a workplace anywhere in the province. A guide for supervisors on how to conduct screening and the health check questions are available [on MyHR](#).

The Provincial Health Officer also emphasized that employees should minimize social interactions with co-workers before, during and after work in keeping with the direction to reduce social interactions in our communities.

13. **[UPDATED]** Does the recommendation to work from home mean the workplace safety plans in place are no longer valid or adequate?

No, our workplaces remain safe – as they have been for those working in their regular workplace throughout the pandemic. Our support for continued remote working supports the measures introduced by the Provincial Health Officer to reduce the spread of the virus in our communities. Fewer people in the workplace, where possible, only strengthens the measures we have in place.

The workplace safety measures put in place by ministries are based on guidelines developed by the BC Public Service Agency that align with current orders and direction of the Provincial Health Officer and WorkSafeBC. We will continue to adapt these measures as needed. The Provincial Health Officer has specifically cited the measures taken in BC Public Service workplaces as an example of the type of effective safety plans that employers can use to ensure employee safety.

Following public health guidance on physical distancing, personal and workplace hygiene practices in the workplace provides protection for public and staff from the transmission of coronavirus. In an office setting or a worksite where the employer has implemented COVID-19 safety controls, the risk of exposure is much lower. This is different than an uncontrolled setting such as a store or

public transit where physical distancing cannot be maintained on a sustained basis, and the health status of other individuals is not certain. If all those in the workplace closely follow the safety requirements in place, it will remain safe to be in the workplace and the risk of exposure to COVID-19 will remain low. Anyone who is sick must stay home, and everyone in the workplace must follow required physical distancing and hygiene measures.

14. [NEW] I am hearing about COVID-19 variants here in B.C. Is there anything my workplace should do differently?

COVID-19 variants spread the same way as the original COVID-19 virus. The same COVID-19 protocols will protect you in the workplace e.g. physical distancing, barriers, washing your hands, and staff staying home when you aren't feeling and the use of PPE where required.

Because variants may be better at spreading and infecting people, it is critical that we all follow our workplace COVID-19 protocols and public health guidance at all times.

Workplace Health and Safety is following the variants closely and will update the [COVID-19 Workplace Assessment Tool](#) and any [safe work procedures](#) as required.

15. Are masks now required in BC Public Service workplaces for clients or the public?

On November 24, under the Emergency Program Act an order was issued regarding face coverings in indoor public spaces. The November 24 order covers high-traffic public settings where people who do not know each other often interact.

Under the [November 24 order](#), all British Columbians 12 years of age or older are required to wear a face covering that covers the nose and mouth unless they are unable to wear one due to health concerns. The order applies to many public indoor spaces, including:

- Retail stores, including liquor and cannabis retail operations.
- Courthouses.
- Common areas in office buildings such as hallways, elevators, public bathrooms and lobbies.

During the current period of heightened community transmission, masks must be worn in these publicly accessible indoor areas by clients and staff (when able). Workplaces must develop client mask/face covering procedures to be included in their COVID-19 Workplace Assessment Tool (COVID-19 safety plan) and associated training. An update to the COVID-19 Workplace Assessment Tool can be found on the [Tools & Resources for Managing COVID-19 in the BC Public Service](#) page. The mask/face covering requirement will be prominently communicated in client-facing signage and at entries to public service workplaces, and workplaces should maintain a supply of non-medical masks to provide to clients if requested.

Ministries provide essential services to the public that they cannot receive anywhere else. Efforts have been made to shift to virtual service, or other types of services that limits contact where possible. Clients will not be denied service if they are not wearing a mask as long as other protections against the transmission of COVID-19 are in place.

The most effective protection from COVID-19 transmission in the workplace is physical distancing or physical barriers between individuals. In client service settings they offer superior protection to masks and don't rely on both staff and client to properly wear a mask. Barriers and physical distancing also allow protection for workers to serve clients who are unable to wear masks or where masks may interrupt communications.

Staff should speak with their supervisor about their ministry's procedures for staff to support client mask wearing and the ministry procedures to manage unmasked clients seeking services.

16. Do BC Public Service Staff have to wear a mask in the workplace?

The Provincial Health Officer issued guidance to workplaces for workers to wear masks when two-metre physical distancing can't be maintained and in lobbies, hallways, stairwells, corridors, bathrooms, break rooms, kitchens auditoriums, and gyms. Masks are not required in meeting rooms as long as two-metre physical distancing can be maintained. Masks must also be worn by staff while transiting indoor public spaces to comply with the November 24 Solicitor General's order.

As part of the provincewide orders, the Provincial Health Officer has directed all workplaces to review their current COVID-19 Safety Plan (COVID-19 Workplace Assessment Tool) for effectiveness and to ensure protocols are in place to prevent staff from congregating in common areas such as lunchrooms.

All workplaces must develop client mask/face covering procedures to be included in their COVID-19 Workplace Assessment Tool and review their Assessment. An update to Assessment Tool can be found on the [Tools & Resources for Managing COVID-19 in the BC Public Service](#) page. It should be completed and added to the current workplace assessment.

Non-medical masks or face coverings are not a replacement for physical distancing or physical barriers in reducing the risk of transmission of COVID-19 in the workplace. Physical distancing is the most important control for the transmission of COVID-19 and should be maintained whenever possible, even if you are wearing a mask.

As has been recommended throughout the pandemic, if workplace activities require individuals to work within two metres of another person on a sustained basis, and barriers are not possible, ministries are encouraged to contact MyHR for support with specific workplace procedures and masking requirements.

A guide for workplace mask use is available on the [Tools & Resources for Managing COVID-19 in the BC Public Service](#) page.

17. Do we have to review our COVID-19 Safety Plan (COVID-19 Workplace Assessment) as a result of the Provincial Health Officer's Orders?

As noted in the [COVID-19 Workplace Guidelines for BC Public Service Managers & Supervisors](#) all workplaces should regularly review the effectiveness of their [COVID 19 Workplace Assessment Tool](#) (COVID-19 Safety Plan). The PHO has ordered all workplace have to review their plan to:

- Ensure the plan protects employees from the transmission of COVID-19
- Meet WorkSafeBC requirements.
- Include protocols are in place to prevent staff from congregating in common areas such as lunchrooms
- Include mask requirements for public and staff

Your workplace plan must be updated to reflect where masks must be worn in the workplace by clients and staff. Masks do not replace other COVID-19 protocols such as physical distancing, barriers and reduced occupancy limits, which must remain in place.

An update to Assessment Tool can be found on the [Tools & Resources for Managing COVID-19 in the BC Public Service](#) page. It should be completed and added to the current workplace assessment. Ensure that you record the date of your review and actions and train all staff in any changes or updates.

18. How can physical distancing be practiced in the workplace?

Physical distancing is an important way we can all help limit the spread of COVID-19 in the community. The recommendation for physical distancing is that people stay at least two metres apart and avoid prolonged close personal contact. COVID-19 is transmitted by an infected person coughing or sneezing droplets and someone breathes them in. Typically, droplets travel less than two metres. The droplet can also land on hard surfaces that we touch and then we touch our faces.

Ways to practice physical distancing in the workplace include:

- Following the new workplace capacities and posted protocols.
- Avoid shaking hands, wash your hands thoroughly, and stay home if you are sick.
- If you're having a conversation with someone in their office or cubicle, stay at the door to increase the distance.
- Use virtual meeting tools rather than face-to-face conversations.
- If meeting with a group, use the largest room available and physically distance two metres from each other. Observe the posted maximum COVID-19 occupancy for the room.
- Sit at least two metres apart in mobile workspaces.
- Use automatic door openers to avoid touching door handles.
- Wipe down shared surfaces in mobile workspaces, meeting rooms and common areas.
- When working with clients, where possible keep the two-metre distance by standing back slightly at a service counter if necessary.
- Don't share food, plates or cutlery in staff rooms.
- Ensure staff room dishes are well cleaned.
- Don't leave items on staff room counters and tables overnight so janitorial staff can properly wipe down the entire surface.

19. What is the concern regarding workplace kitchen and social activities?

The Provincial Health Officer reported on November 19 about exposures in social work situations that demonstrate work colleagues can be at risk of dropping their protective habits when they are around colleagues or co-workers. Work associated activities such as carpooling, driving together to

get a takeout lunch, or sitting together while having a work break can all pose a risk of coronavirus exposure.

As we tackle coronavirus transmission together, these incidents remind us of the need to be cautious when socializing and be extra attentive to physical distancing when near our colleagues who are not in our personal bubbles. Other risks to avoid include sharing food or beverages or common utensils.

20. How can we work with clients or the public to maintain physical distancing?

- Put up signs at entrances to remind clients that they should not attend the office or re-book their appointment if they are sick, have a cough, have difficulty breathing or have not completed a 14-day self-isolation after international travel.
- Have signs asking people to reduce the number of people in elevators to maintain physical distancing.
- Use signs to encourage social/physical distancing in lobbies and waiting rooms.
- When working with clients, where possible keep the two-metre distance by standing back slightly at a service counter if necessary.
- When booking in-person meetings, add a reminder for clients about physical distancing and to reschedule if they feel unwell.
- Try to do virtual or phone meetings wherever possible.
- Set up meeting rooms with reduced capacity and use the table or chairs to create two metres between participants.
- Rearrange or remove some of the waiting room furniture to allow for physical distancing.
- Use tape to mark out two metres spacing on the floor for line ups and counter service.
- If clients appear unwell, ask them if they would reschedule.
- Ask clients to cover up if they are coughing or sneezing using their elbow or a tissue.
- Create the recommended two metres distance between yourself and clients at counters and in interview or meetings rooms.

21. I supervise an employee who has indicated they cannot or don't want to return to the workplace. How do I address this?

If there is an operational requirement for the employee to be in the workplace, the supervisor, with the assistance of the PSA if needed, must determine whether there is a duty to accommodate and must assess the employee's situation in light of the information, including medical information, they are able to provide as to why they cannot work at the workplace. The supervisor should have a discussion with the employee about their circumstances, including their limitations and restrictions, and should discuss safety procedures at the worksite. If this discussion does not resolve the employee's concerns, the supervisor should contact MyHR for assistance. For further information see the Managers' Guide to Reasonable Accommodation on MyHR [linked here](#).

In cases where the employer is not required to make an accommodation, ministries may consider alternative work arrangements depending on operational requirements and the employee's individual circumstances.

22. A worker with a chronic health condition has asked about returning to the workplace. What do I advise them?

The BCCDC advises that people with certain chronic health conditions may consider protective self-separation. People with chronic health conditions are at a higher risk of developing more severe illness from COVID-19. These conditions include heart disease, high blood pressure, lung disease, diabetes and cancer. Also included are people with weakened immune systems from a medical condition (e.g. HIV, chronic liver or organ transplant) or treatment, such as chemotherapy or immunosuppressive medications.

Supervisors are expected to be flexible and support requests for remote working where operationally feasible. If there is an operational requirement for the employee to be in the workplace, employees should be informed of new or updated workplace safety procedures before the return to the worksite. This allows employees with chronic conditions to evaluate the level of risk for their condition, and their confidence in protecting themselves in the workplace. With COVID-19, personal protective practices (distancing and hand hygiene) offer protection. These employees should be permitted to return to the workplace if they chose.

Employees are required to provide relevant and appropriate information to support a request for accommodation. Supervisors will often require information such as medical restrictions, limitations and prognosis as part of the accommodation process. Employees are not typically required to provide supervisors with their medical diagnosis. With complex accommodations, where further clarifying information is required, supervisors should contact MyHR for guidance. Supervisors can also implement accommodations arising from the pandemic based on information that has previously been provided to the ministry for a consistent purpose. (See the Managers' Guide to Reasonable Accommodation on MyHR for additional information).

23. Managing employee's workplace needs can involve collecting medical information. How is this protected?

In responding to employee's request for an accommodation, the supervisor, with assistance from MyHR, may require information or clarification from the employee's healthcare providers. Employees are required to provide relevant and appropriate information to support their request for accommodation. In providing this information, the employee is consenting to the employers use of this information for the purposes of responding to their accommodation request. Supervisors, with assistance from MyHR, should ensure that information requests are constructive and respectful of employee privacy and maintain confidentiality.

The long-term practice is for employees to provide this information to supervisors with doctors' notes and letters, or the supervisor's (non-confidential) portion of the Medical Certificate (former StT02 form). Supervisors should maintain this information in a secured location in the employee's workplace supervisory file (as per [section 30](#) of the *Freedom of Information & Protection of Privacy Act* (FOIPPA), s. 19(1) of [Information Management Act](#) and [Government Core Policy, Information Security Policy](#)). Information provided by employees in support of communicating the employee's pandemic related medical limitations and restrictions should be handled in the same secure manner. The sharing of any information about an employee should only occur on a need to know basis and only with those authorized to receive it under FOIPPA.

24. An employee requests to remain at home as someone in their household has a chronic health condition and they are worried about transmitting COVID-19 to them. Is there a medical basis for this concern?

Supervisors are expected to be flexible and support requests for remote working where operationally feasible. If there is an operational requirement for the employee to be in the workplace, the supervisor should have a discussion with the employee about their circumstance and review the safety procedures and standard hygiene precautions in the workplace and how they are designed to protect staff from COVID-19. In addition, in controlled settings where employees with symptoms are not to come to work and clients are dealt with at a physical distance or with a barrier in place, this further reduces the risk of COVID-19. Employees should be informed of new or updated workplace safety procedures before the return to the worksite.

All employees should practice regular hand hygiene to minimize the risks of transmission which includes when leaving work and when arriving home.

When these measures are followed, there are several opportunities to stop the spread of infection and this should alleviate the concerns regarding the medical risk of transmission from the workplace.

Where this does not resolve the employee's concerns, the supervisor should continue to address this by following the steps in question #7 and the supervisor should contact MyHR for assistance.

25. Is it likely that building ventilation systems are a route of transmission for COVID-19?

The Public Health Agency of Canada states that the coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2), the virus that causes COVID-19, is not known to spread through ventilation systems or through water.

Full knowledge of how the coronavirus that causes COVID-19 spreads is continually developing as new research and information becomes available.

The virus spreads primarily through respiratory droplets and particles that an infected person discharges when they breathe, talk, sneeze or cough. Droplets then fall to the ground or other surfaces within 1-2 metres; smaller particles may travel through the air for longer distances and for a few minutes before falling to the ground.

While the evidence is that there is little to no risk of aerosol viral transmission causing COVID-19 illness, the American Society of Heating Refrigerating and Air Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) posted a statement in August 2020 on their site that airborne SARS-CoV-2 transmission is "sufficiently likely that airborne exposure to the virus should be controlled." The Public Health Agency of Canada and the US Center for Disease Control also updated their information on coronavirus transmission acknowledging the "potential" of airborne transmission in specific circumstances. See below for more information.

What public health officials do know is that the most significant mechanisms of virus transmission are direct person-to-person contact, being within 2 metres of an infected person for more than 15 minutes, and through your hands by touching your face (especially your nose, mouth and eyes).

These primary transmission mechanisms have informed the prevention practices we have been following at home, in the community and in buildings and workplaces – physical distancing, washing your hands and not touching your face, along with additional administrative and engineering controls as required.

Following ASHRAE's guidance to "control" airborne exposure to SARS-CoV-2, the primary control is to "avoid the hazard". This means ensuring that any person experiencing any symptoms of any illness, i.e. not only COVID-19 symptoms, should stay at home. ASHRAE has also recommended that building HVAC systems be checked and maintained to industry standards to ensure healthy indoor air quality. The Real Property Division oversees and manages HVAC systems for public service workplaces and is following and adhering to the guidance of ASHRAE and WorkSafe BC.

These prevention and maintenance practices will generally prevent virus transmission and keep people safe from infection. Using these practices to date, the BC public service has not experienced any workplace building transmission of SARS-CoV-2.

26. Is the coronavirus transmitted in the air?

In July 2020, some scientists requested that the World Health Organization (WHO) consider the possibility of airborne transmission. Since that time, the WHO along with the Public Health Agency of Canada has acknowledged emerging evidence that airborne transmission of the coronavirus is possible and may contribute to infection:

SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, spreads from an infected person to others through respiratory droplets and aerosols created when an infected person coughs, sneezes, sings, shouts, or talks. The droplets vary in size from large droplets that fall to the ground rapidly (within seconds or minutes) near the infected person, to smaller droplets, sometimes called aerosols, which linger in the air under some circumstances.

The relative infectiousness of droplets of different sizes is not clear. Infectious droplets or aerosols may come into direct contact with the mucous membranes of another person's nose, mouth or eyes, or they may be inhaled into their nose, mouth, airways and lungs. The virus may also spread when a person touches another person (i.e., a handshake) or a surface or an object (also referred to as a fomite) that has the virus on it, and then touches their mouth, nose or eyes with unwashed hands.

Source: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/health-professionals/main-modes-transmission.html>

The evidence contributing to this statement is from indoor locations where there are crowds and inadequate ventilation and where infected persons spend long periods of time with others and without physical distancing and other controls.

The evidence is not definitive, however, and public health experts have said that more studies are urgently needed to investigate such instances and assess their significance for transmission of COVID-19.

COVID-19 is most commonly transmitted between people through close contact with COVID-positive people and indirectly via contaminated objects or surfaces. The BC Centre for Disease Control summarizes coronavirus transmission this way:

Respiratory diseases, like influenza and COVID-19, are spread by liquid droplets that come out of the mouth and nose when a person coughs, sneezes, and sometimes, when a person talks or sings. These droplets usually land one to two metres away, but they can land on another person if they are close by. Diseases can spread if droplets with the virus enter the body through the eyes, nose or throat.

Source: <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/about-covid-19/how-it-spreads>

Workplace COVID-19 Safety Plans include the control measures of two-metre physical distancing, hand washing and covering your nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing. These controls and practices, along with other controls, continue to be effective methods for preventing COVID-19 transmission in the workplace.

This FAQ will be updated as more data on this topic becomes available.

27. Can employees working from home take IT equipment and office furniture home if needed to allow them to work effectively?

Employees may temporarily take monitors, keyboards and other easily transported IT peripheral devices they need to work effectively at home. Similarly, with their supervisor's agreement, employees may take their work chairs home. Employees are expected to transport this equipment themselves and must exercise care to prevent both injury to themselves and damage to any government assets. In cases where employees are not able to transport the equipment themselves, they are requested to discuss the move arrangements with their supervisors. Branches are responsible for tracking any equipment employees take home and ensuring their return when employees return to their usual work arrangements.

Except for chairs, employees cannot take desks or other furniture home. If an employee requires a height-adjustable desk or other furniture as part of an accommodation agreement, the employee should be required to continue to work in the office as usual. Our workplaces remain safe for those employees continuing to work onsite. With more employees working from home, those who are in their regular workplaces are able to practice effective physical distancing measures and we have enhanced cleaning of workplaces to support employee safety.

Consistent with existing telework policies, the employer does not reimburse costs for utilities or office supplies employees use when choosing to work from home.

28. I have worked from home for significant periods of time in 2020 due to COVID-19. Will my supervisor/manager sign Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) form T2200 so that I may claim home-office related expenses on my 2020 tax return?

The federal government recently announced that for the 2020 tax year it is simplifying the process and requirements related to claiming home-office related expenses on an employee's tax return.

Specifically, the [Canada Revenue Agency \(CRA\) has established an information page](#) advising that you are eligible to claim a deduction for home office expenses for the period you worked from home, if the CRA's eligibility criteria are met.

Eligible employees may apply for deductions using the new temporary flat rate method or the detailed method. Using the temporary flat rate method ([CRA form T777S](#)) means there is no requirement for you to have your supervisor sign CRA forms or to keep any supporting documentation. Eligible employees using the detailed method are required to have their supervisor sign CRA form T2200S and must keep any documents supporting their deductions.

CRA form T2200 obligates a supervisor to confirm that teleworking is a condition of employment. In the BC Public Service, teleworking has been optional during the pandemic and therefore CRA form T2200 does not apply for most employees and in most cases should not be signed by supervisors. However, supervisors are authorized to sign CRA form T2200S, which allows the employee to use the detailed method to calculate their home office expenses (see what expenses are eligible by reviewing [CRA form T777S](#)) but does not rely on telework being a condition of employment.

For more details, [see the information page created by the CRA](#). If you have additional questions about eligibility or any other aspect of this process, please [contact the CRA](#) directly or consult with a tax professional. The employer does not provide tax advice.

29. What are the considerations needed when planning for a work event or large meeting while there is the potential for exposure to COVID-19?

The Provincial Health Officer has ordered that all events being planned with over 50 people should be cancelled. This does not mean workplaces with more than 50 people need to close (see above for more on practicing physical distancing and other protection measures in the workplace). However, indoor in-person gatherings are strongly discouraged.

In-person events or meetings should only proceed if absolutely necessary to enable to essential work. Even small meetings should only happen in-person where physical distancing, cleaning and other hygiene measures can be applied. Wherever possible, virtual meeting options should be used. Anyone who is sick should stay home and not attend any event in person. Additional guidance can be seen [here](#).

30. How do we implement COVID-19 workplace safety controls in Leading Workplace Strategy (LWS) designed settings?

Adapting to the new maximum staffing levels simply requires flexibility and spacing. While some adjustments to shared work surfaces are needed, the more fluid design of these spaces also allows more options to preserve the required physical distancing. Many of the practices outlined in the [new workplace safety guidelines](#) are applicable in an LWS work environment.

Safety in the workplace during this time of Covid-19, whether in a LWS environment or one that is traditionally planned, is highly dependent on prevention precautions such as ensuring physical distancing, hand-washing, sanitization of surfaces, staying away from work if feeling unwell,

avoiding touching the face, etc. These are not space dependent but are reliant on employees' individual behaviours.

Part 3: Employee Exposure and Self-Isolation

31. I have an employee who has tested positive for COVID-19. What does this mean for coworkers? Do we need to close that workplace?

Any employee who is sick with COVID-19 symptoms must stay home and away from others.

Public Health is notified of all positive tests immediately and contact tracing will begin by speaking to the COVID-19 positive employee. This review will identify the nature of contacts in the community, social or work locations in the 48 hours prior to becoming symptomatic. If Public Health staff identify any close contacts during this review, those individuals will be contacted directly by Public Health and given self-isolation advice. Public Health will only contact the workplace if there is a concern about transmission of the virus in the workplace or difficulty contacting individuals. In all cases, not hearing from Public Health official means the risk of transmission is low and no further notifications or actions are required. Cleaning requirement can be determined by using the COVID-19 Exposure Control and Cleaning Protocols on MyHR.

In terms of co-workers, determine the level of interaction with the employee. Workplace COVID protocols including daily active screening, distancing and hygiene significantly reduce the risk of associated transmission in the workplace. Low-risk exposure to a confirmed COVID-19 case includes walking by the person or briefly being in the same room with two metres distance. If low risk, the co-workers can continue usual activities, including daily self-checks for symptoms and practice good hand hygiene and social distancing in public, at home and at work.

Be prepared to provide information to Public Health officials about the workplace if they contact you.

If a COVID-19 positive individual was in the workplace while symptomatic or Public Health has contacted the workplace, supervisors are encouraged to communicate when this has occurred while protecting the identity of the individual, and to convey any identified cleaning protocol that was undertaken. Your ministry strategic human resource unit has resources to assist with messaging, or you can contact MyHR.

If there are further safety questions about managing the worksite and operations, please contact MyHR.

32. I supervise an employee who has developed mild symptoms, but they are not sure if it is COVID-19. They are wondering if they should come in to work or go get tested. What should I do?

Individuals who are sick should not be coming to work and potentially spreading disease to others.

Since April 23, testing guidelines have been updated to include testing any individuals with new respiratory or systemic (more generalized) symptoms compatible with COVID-19, however mild.

This universal approach to testing symptomatic individuals is an important part of monitoring the impact of changing public health recommendations.

You can ask the employee if they have used the BC COVID-19 Self Assessment Tool at <https://bc.thrive.health/covid19/en>, and if not, this should be encouraged. This tool has been updated to include mild symptoms and provides advice to find the test collection centre in their area. The employee can also still contact 8-1-1 to find the nearest centre or for directions in another language.

Negative test results can be obtained by phone, text, or online at <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/testing/test-results>.

33. What does “close contact” mean?

Individuals will be identified as a close contact by Public Health staff following evaluation of new cases and tracing contacts. Employees who have been advised they are close contacts should stay away from the workplace, follow Public Health staff’s direction and discuss work arrangements with their supervisor.

For Public Health monitoring, a close contact is defined as a person who:

- Provided care for the case, including healthcare workers, family members or other caregivers, or who had other similar close physical contact without consistent and appropriate use of personal protective equipment, OR
- Who lived with or otherwise had close prolonged* contact (within 2 metres) with a probable or confirmed case while the case was ill, OR
- Had direct contact with the infectious body fluids of a probable or confirmed case (e.g. was coughed on or sneezed on) while not wearing recommended personal protective equipment.

*As part of the individual risk assessment, public health will consider the duration of the contact’s exposure (e.g. a longer exposure time likely increases the risk), the case’s symptoms (coughing or severe illness likely increases exposure risk) and whether the exposure occurred in a health care setting.

34. When do I need to ask an employee for an STO2 form or doctor’s note?

In the circumstance of COVID-19 related absences, an STO2 form or certificate is not required for sick pay. Discussion between employee and supervisor can often resolve questions about prognosis.

On a temporary basis for other conditions, an STO2 may be required only for safety sensitive occupations or other essential services employees to enable the employer to meet their legislated obligations to plan and manage a safe return to work. The STO2 form permits management of clearance to safety sensitive occupations and assists managing the workforce with advice regarding prognosis. The STO2 form also provides consent for the clinical team at Occupational Health Programs to work with employees on safe and sustainable return to work programs.

If the “Physician’s Confidential Portion” of the medical certificate is provided to the supervisor, this should be forwarded to Occupational Health and Rehabilitation, BCPSA. 707 – 808 Nelson Street, Box 12183, Vancouver, BC V6Z 2H2

35. I supervise an employee who is sick with a fever and new respiratory symptoms (e.g. cough, runny nose). There is no travel history and no history of exposure to someone who was ill and travelled. What should I do?

The employee should self-isolate and not be in the workplace in order to minimize the risk of infection to others. The employee should be advised to use the BC COVID-19 Self- Assessment Tool which will provide recommendations with COVID -19 testing. The employee should be placed on sick leave unless they are able to work from home.

Ending self-isolation:

- For employees who test positive for COVID-19, public health will be involved with contact tracing, management, and advice for when to end self isolation.
- For employees who test negative for COVID-19 and have symptoms of illness, they are to continue to isolate until their symptoms resolve.

There are caveats. Returning travelers to Canada must continue to isolate for 14 days from arrival back in B.C. Close contacts of COVID-19 cases confirmed by public health must continue to self-isolate for 14 days from last contact with the case. Work settings where clients are resident may have other return to work policies.

For employees who don’t have test results (declined testing, don’t wish to disclose results), they can return to their routine activities, including work, once the following criteria are met:

- At least 10 days have passed since onset of symptoms; AND
- Fever has resolved without the use of fever-reducing medication; AND
- Symptoms (respiratory, gastrointestinal, and systemic) have improved.

Coughing after recovery may persist for several weeks and does not mean the individual is infectious and is not required to self-isolate. Health care providers and other employees in residential settings should check with their supervisor about different return to work procedures.

36. I supervise an employee who tells me they have been medically advised to stay home as they are sick with a communicable disease. Are they eligible for sick leave?

Yes. If an employee has been advised by a medical professional to remain at home on self- isolation or isolation because they are sick (or in hospital for treatment), they are eligible for sick leave.

37. A family member (partner, relative, child) of a worker becomes sick with an illness but has not been COVID tested yet and has not been identified by public health as a close contact. The worker lives in the same household as the family member but has no symptoms. Can the worker continue to attend work, or are they required to self isolate until the family member is tested and results are negative?

If the worker is asymptomatic, they can continue to attend work and are not required to self-isolate; the asymptomatic worker would continue with preventative health practices such as hand washing, distancing, and self-monitoring for symptoms. If the worker subsequently develops symptoms, they should not attend work, get assessed and, if necessary, tested.

If the symptomatic family member's test comes back COVID positive, Public Health will be involved and provide advice to the worker regarding self-isolation and not to attend work.

38. A family member (partner, child, relative) of a worker has been recommended to stay home for 14 days since they have been identified by Public Health as a close contact of a COVID positive case. The worker lives in the same household as the family member. Can the worker continue to attend work, or do they need to self isolate as well?

If the family member is asymptomatic and the worker is also asymptomatic, the worker can continue to attend work and does not need to self isolate. However, if the family member becomes ill, the family member will need to be medically assessed and tested since they are a close contact. While the symptomatic family member is being tested and waiting for their results, it is reasonable for the worker to also self isolate pending the outcome of the test results.

If the symptomatic family member, who is a close contact, has a positive COVID test result, Public Health will be involved in contact tracing and the asymptomatic worker will be given advice on self isolation and not to attend work. Even if the worker is asymptomatic, if they have been medically recommended to self-isolate, they must not return to the worksite for the 14-day self-isolation period. If the employee is able to work remotely, this should be explored with their supervisor.

If the symptomatic family member, who is a close contact, turns out to have a negative COVID test result, the asymptomatic worker can continue to attend work and self monitor for symptoms, but does not need to self isolate.

39. In the situation outlined in the previous question, what does this mean for co-workers? Do we need to close that workplace?

The employee is self-isolating as a precaution, is not showing symptoms and therefore the co-workers only need to continue with current COVID-19 public health recommendations for all British Columbians, such as hand hygiene, social distancing, and staying home if sick.

Routine cleaning of surfaces is advised. Workplaces do not need to close early just so that routine cleaning can be done. Most people become ill from being in close contact with someone who showed symptoms such as coughing and sneezing, therefore transmitting the virus through droplets. In the case above, the employee is not coughing or sneezing and the risk to co-workers is low.

BCCDC reports there are a few instances of disease transmission before a person is showing significant symptoms. The recommended infection control practices of physical distancing, regular hand washing and not touching ones' face protect against this type of exposure.

In terms of surfaces that may have virus on it, routine cleaning with disinfectant kills the virus. In addition, if one happened to touch a contaminated surface, washing your hands kills the virus. Not touching your face with your hands can also stop your likelihood of picking up the virus.

40. I can't work from home, but I am nervous about coming to work and being exposed to COVID-19. What can I do?

The best thing we can all do is follow the steps recommended by the Provincial Health Officer to protect ourselves and others: wash your hands regularly and thoroughly, avoid touching your face, clean surfaces, and practice physical distancing measures.

See questions in Part 1 above for more information on how this can be done in your workplace and talk to your supervisor about your concern. If you follow these recommendations and the exposure control procedures for your workplace, the risk of contracting COVID-19 even through passing documents and other items back and forth between workers or clients is low.

If you commute to work on public transit, physical distancing and hand washing are effective preventative measures.

41. I have an employee who wants to self-isolate. The employee doesn't have any COVID-19 symptoms, hasn't travelled out of Canada, and hasn't been directed by a medical professional to self-isolate. What are the options?

The workplace safety guideline appendices provide a guideline for discussing return to work with employees. An open conversation about the barrier to return to work is important. It may arise from daycare, public transit concerns, family issues or apprehension. It is recommended supervisors use a coaching approach to support employees in problem solving the situation.

See other answers in this guide to manage the situations that are identified. If you need assistance in managing issues related to self-imposed isolation, contact MyHR.

42. I have an employee who will be coming back to work after recovering from an active COVID-19 infection. That employee feels well and is not having any further symptoms. What should I do?

An ST02 or doctors note is not required.

Employees who have mild respiratory symptoms that can be managed at home can return to their routine activities, including work, once the following criteria are met:

- At least 10 days have passed since onset of symptoms; AND
- Fever has resolved without use of fever-reducing medication; AND
- Symptoms (respiratory, gastrointestinal, and systemic) have improved.

Coughing may persist for several weeks and does not mean the individual is infectious and must self isolate.

Health care workers (nurses, doctors, care aides) and employees working in group living settings who recovered from COVID-19 infection may require specialized direction for return to work.

43. I supervise an auxiliary employee who was required to self-isolate. Are they eligible for weekly indemnity benefits?

Yes, all auxiliary employees are eligible for weekly indemnity benefits up to a maximum of 15 weeks under the same circumstances as an employee eligible for COVID-19 related STIP. This is the case for COVID-19 related absences even if the auxiliary employee has not accumulated 400 hours of auxiliary seniority or has lost their auxiliary seniority.

In addition, auxiliary employees will not have the one-week benefit waiting period for COVID-19 related absences. This means that employees are eligible for weekly indemnity benefits immediately and will receive the benefit as quickly as possible.

44. When an employee tells their supervisor that they have been exposed to COVID-19 and they have no symptoms, does that employee need to self-isolate?

It is important to understand how the employee knows the source is a confirmed COVID-19 case. Cases can only be defined by a positive COVID-19 swab test or determined by a health care professional based on the pattern of symptoms, exposure history, and severity of illness.

Low risk exposures to a confirmed COVID-19 case include walking by the person, or briefly being in the same room. No precautions are recommended. Exposures that are not close contacts (see above) are recommended to self-monitor daily. Instructions on self-monitoring are available from the BC Center for Disease Control <http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Info-Site/Documents/Self-monitoring.pdf>. The person would only self-isolate and contact Public Health if they become symptomatic. Close contacts to an established COVID-19 case will be asked by Public Health to self-isolate and self-monitor daily.

If this arises while the employee is in the workplace, seat them alone in a board room or away from others while you contact MyHR for advice.

45. I have an employee who attended a public event where another attendee was subsequently confirmed as having COVID-19 infection with testing. Should my employee be required to self-isolate and do other staff in the same work location need to take any precautions?

No. If the employee does not have symptoms, they do not need to self-isolate. The employee can self monitor for symptoms for 14 days. Staff in the same work location as the employee do not need any additional precautions. As usual, hand washing, not touching faces, cleaning of commonly touched surfaces, cough/sneeze etiquette, and staying home if one is sick should be promoted at every opportunity.

The exception is when the public event is part of an investigation of a cluster or outbreak lead by public health and if there is a medical recommendation for all attendees to self-isolate. Public health officials will be involved with COVID-19 positive case management and contact tracing.

Part 4: Employee Exposure Related to Travel

46. With current public health orders and direction, can employees undertake work-related travel?

Effective November 19, 2020 until further notice, the Provincial Health Officer directed that non-essential travel within B.C. should be limited. Virtual meeting options should be used in place of travel wherever possible, and only essential work-related travel is permitted. Essential work-related travel includes training, site visits and meetings that cannot be done virtually. All travel must have COVID safety protocols in place.

Employees who choose to take personal international travel unrelated to work after August 5, 2020 will not be eligible for STIIP or Weekly Indemnity Benefits for their self-isolation period.

47. My domestic partner, spouse or family returned from travel outside of Canada on or after March 12, 2020 and they do not have any symptoms. Do I need to self-isolate for 14 days if I have not travelled myself?

No, the self-isolation order after travel is designed to stop the potential spread of COVID-19 should a returning traveler have had an exposure from abroad. Employees that have not travelled can continue to participate in the workplace and as usual should self-monitor for the development of COVID-19 symptoms.

If the partner, spouse or family member then develops illness within the 14 days of self-isolation, the employee should leave the workplace and contact their supervisor. If operationally feasible, modified work can be offered otherwise the employee will be placed on sick leave for a 14-day self-isolation period. Public health officials will have further advice for family members and the employee.

48. An employee refuses to comply with the PHO/Federal Minister of Health [order](#) to self-isolate for 14 days following travel. They insist they can return to the workplace. How do I advise them?

In March 2020 an Emergency Order under the Quarantine Act was implemented that requires any person entering Canada by air, sea, or land to quarantine (self-isolate) themselves for 14 days whether or not they have symptoms of COVID-19.

Further restrictions for travellers arriving in Canada have been put in place in February 2021. Employees should be directed to check the Government of Canada's website <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/latest-travel-health-advice.html> and the BC Provincial Health Officers' site <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/about-bc-s-health-care-system/office-of-the-provincial-health-officer/current-health-topics/covid-19-novel-coronavirus> for the latest quarantine and travel requirements.

Employees are expected to comply with all federal and provincial requirements and will not be permitted to return to work until quarantine and all requirements have been met. Employees who

choose to take personal international travel unrelated to work after August 5, 2020 will not be eligible for STIIP or Weekly Indemnity Benefits for their self-isolation period.

If the employee becomes ill during isolation, they should contact 811 or their health care provider to manage their symptoms and describe their travel history. Staff will only be eligible for STIIP or Weekly Indemnity Benefits while unable to attend work due to COVID-19 after their 14-day isolation period has ended.

Employees can also contact Public Health in their local health authority about quarantine and their health. The employee should inform the supervisor if they are going to be absent more than 14 calendar days and in advance of any return to work.

Contact MyHR if you have questions about the application of the order to employees who are essential workers.

49. I have an employee entering self-isolation following return from travel, or who was medically recommended to self-isolate for 14 days due to possible COVID-19 exposure. What options can the employer offer?

For employees returning from international travel, if you are satisfied your employee can effectively work from home, you should authorize this arrangement. This does not include the initial three-day quarantine in a federally approved facility since the employee will not have a work computer and secure internet access.

If the employee is returning from international travel that commenced before August 5, 2020 and cannot work from home, the employee is eligible for STIIP or Weekly Indemnity Benefits.

If the employee is returning from international travel commenced after August 5, 2020, and cannot work from home, they are not eligible for STIIP or Weekly Indemnity Benefits and must take applicable leave.

FW: Executive Message from Lori Wanamaker: BC Public Service COVID-19 Update

From: Blackstock, Alyson PSA:EX
s.15
To: Eso, Mike <Mike.Eso@bcgeu.ca>
Sent: March 29, 2021 2:37:00 PM PDT
Attachments: image002.png, image004.png, image003.png, image001.png
See below

Alyson Blackstock, A/Assistant Deputy Minister

Employee Relations Division | BC Public Service Agency
First Floor, 810 Blanshard Street | Victoria, BC | V8W 2H3 | 250-893-2980|
AskMyHR: www.gov.bc.ca/myhr/contact
Phone: 250.952.6000 | Toll Free 1.877.277.0772

From: Executive Update PSA:EX <ExecutiveUpdate@gov.bc.ca>

Sent: March 29, 2021 2:33 PM

Subject: Executive Message from Lori Wanamaker: BC Public Service COVID-19 Update

BC Public Service COVID-19 Update

Good afternoon,

Today the Provincial Health Officer (PHO) announced a series of updates to her orders to address the concerning trend of increased COVID-19 transmission across B.C. Among today's updates is a strengthened recommendation that all office-based workplaces support full-time remote working where possible.

The BC Public Service has supported remote working on a voluntary basis since the pandemic began, and thousands of you have been working from home throughout. In recent months, some of you have also slowly begun returning to your regular workplaces now and then. However, with the PHO's direction today, we now strongly recommend all employees who can work remotely do so on a full-time basis until further notice.

If you have been working from home full-time, then nothing changes for you today and we ask you to keep doing so. If you have been coming into the office part-time, I encourage you to instead revert to full-time remote working if possible. And if you have been in the office full-time but are not operationally required to be there, I encourage you to shift to working from home for at least a few weeks.

You can expect further updates from your executive on how this applies in the context of your ministry. While working from home remains voluntary, it is strongly encouraged wherever operationally possible. I appreciate that it isn't an option for many of you as you maintain vital frontline services and other supports. I can assure you that our workplaces remain safe as long as we all continue to follow the measures we have in place. As has been the case throughout the pandemic, you can find the most current information on our [BC Public Service pandemic response](#) on the MyHR website.

Thank you for your professionalism and dedication to the people we serve. I know this continues to be a stressful time for so many of us, personally and professionally. Don't forget to take time to care for your mental well-being at the same time we all take steps to ensure we protect our physical health. We will get through this together, as a province and as a public service, if we all redouble our commitment to doing our part to care for ourselves and one another.

Sincerely,
Lori Wanamaker
Deputy Minister to the Premier,
Cabinet Secretary and Head of the BC Public Service



Where ideas work

FW: COVID-19 Update for Supervisors: Workplace Assessments and Daily Health Check Tool

From: Blackstock, Alyson PSA:EX
s.15
To: Eso, Mike <Mike.Eso@bcgeu.ca>
Sent: April 19, 2021 4:03:36 PM PDT
Attachments: image003.png, image001.png, image003.png, image001.png
FYI – as we discussed last week.

Alyson Blackstock, Assistant Deputy Minister, Employee Relations

| Employee Relations Division | BC Public Service Agency
First Floor, 810 Blanshard Street | Victoria, BC | V8W 2H3 | 778-698-7912 | 250-893-2980 |
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Phone: 250.952.6000 | Toll Free 1.877.277.0772

From: Employee News PSA:EX <EmployeeNews@gov.bc.ca>
Sent: April 16, 2021 2:51 PM
Subject: COVID-19 Update for Supervisors: Workplace Assessments and Daily Health Check Tool

COVID-19 Update for Supervisors: Workplace Assessments and Daily Health Check

Good afternoon,

Important updates have been made to COVID-19 workplace protocols. The information below is provided to help support you as a supervisor.

Updated COVID-19 Assessment Tool

The Provincial Health Officer (PHO) directed all employers to update their workplace COVID-19 Safety Plans and COVID-19 Workplace Assessment Tool. The PHO identified COVID-19 transmissions occurring in workplace lunch and break rooms and during social activities in workplaces across the province.

There is a new [Common Area and Lunchroom Assessment Tool](#) available on MyHR and all BC Public Service workplaces must review it and update their workplace assessments accordingly. The update reviews lunchrooms, common equipment areas, such as photocopier and file rooms and washrooms. If your workplace has change rooms or a gym, take note of the new requirements included in the update.

With an increase in COVID-19 variants and the latest guidance from the PHO, reassessing these areas is critical to protecting the health and safety of employees. If you have any questions or need assistance with reviewing your COVID-19 workplace assessment, please contact workplace health and safety via [Ask MyHR](#).

Updates have also been made to:

- [COVID-19 Safe Work Procedures for Changerooms and Showers](#) (Updates made throughout)
- [Lunch and Breakroom Etiquette](#) (Updates made throughout)
- [Daily Health Check for BC Public Service Workplaces](#) (Updated to include information about the new online tool)
- [Supervisor's COVID-19 Checklist](#) (New)

New Online Daily Health Check

As required by the PHO, employees working in government offices must complete a Daily Health Check before entering the workplace. A new online [Daily Health Check tool](#) has been launched to simplify the process. The health check can be completed using a mobile device, home or work computer and does not require VPN or IDIR access. The use of the new online tool is optional and each ministry will have their own preference for completing the daily health check, so please check with your executive team or Strategic HR team to confirm the recommended method for your ministry.

On the website, employees answer the four health check questions, provide their email address and contact information for their supervisor or designated health check screener. The application sends an email to confirm the employee has responded to the health check and if they can or cannot attend the workplace.

No private data is stored on the website and the answers to the questions are not tracked or shared with the supervisor or designated screener. If employees choose not to use the online health check, they must still review the [Daily Health Check for BC Public Service Workplaces](#) guide and email their supervisor or delegate before entering a government office.

COVID-19 Supervisor Calls

To help support supervisors updating COVID-19 assessments and complete health checks, there are three drop-in calls scheduled. The meetings also provide updated information on:

- Current PHO orders and guidance and how they affect your workplace
- COVID-19 variants
- Vaccinations and leave
- Daily health checks
- Coaching employees on following COVID-19 protocols

The meetings include time for your questions. The material presented is the same at all sessions.

Schedule

- Wednesday, April 21, 3 to 4 pm
- Friday, April 23, 1 to 2 pm
- Tuesday, April 27, 1:30 to 2:30 pm

Meeting Details

- Join by computer or mobile Teams apps: [Click here to join the meeting](#)
- Join by phone: +1 778-401-6289, Conference ID: **s.15**
- **Note:** Since these are drop-in calls, a meeting invite will not be sent out. Please add the dates and joining details to your calendar.

Thank you for your continued support in keeping our employees and workplace safe and healthy. For any questions, please refer to the [COVID-19 FAQs](#), or submit questions to [Ask MyHR](#).

Sincerely,
Workplace Safety
BC Public Service Agency

*Note: This email is being distributed in batches. If a supervisor colleague mentions they have not received it yet, let them know theirs is on the way.



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Please note: replies to this email will go to Employee News, and will be forwarded to the relevant executive members as appropriate.

FW: Executive Update from Lori Wanamaker: B.C.'s Restart Plan and the BC Public Service

From: Blackstock, Alyson PSA:EX
s.15
To: Eso, Mike <Mike.Eso@bcgeu.ca>
Sent: May 25, 2021 4:47:57 PM PDT
Attachments: image004.png, image003.png
FYI

Alyson Blackstock, Assistant Deputy Minister, Employee Relations

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From: Executive Update PSA:EX <ExecutiveUpdate@gov.bc.ca>

Sent: May 25, 2021 3:59 PM

Subject: Executive Update from Lori Wanamaker: B.C.'s Restart Plan and the BC Public Service

B.C.'s Restart Plan and the BC Public Service

Good afternoon.

Today, the Premier announced [B.C.'s four-step plan](#) to guide the province out of the pandemic over the months ahead. As we start to see the positive impact of the vaccination campaign, this is an encouraging step and gives us all some confidence that we can look forward to a more positive summer if we all continue to do what's asked of us for just a little longer.

For the BC Public Service, the restart plan does not mean any immediate change in how we are working. While the Provincial Health Officer is lifting the recommendation to work from home, if you have been working remotely you can continue to do so at this time. If you choose to return to the workplace, you can do so. Note that existing safety protocols remain in place and must continue to be followed until further notice.

Assuming the pandemic outlook and the restart plan progress as anticipated, we will look to the start of Step 3 of the plan as a transition point for the public service. The restart plan has July 1 as a target date for Step 3, and at this point we will encourage employees to return at least part-time on a voluntary basis through the summer. We will communicate more about this transition prior to July 1, but to be clear we do not plan to require a return to the workplace at this time. The BC Public Service Agency will work with ministries to ensure workplaces are ready and able to accommodate those who return, adapting our safety measures where needed to remain aligned to updated public health and WorkSafeBC direction in the weeks ahead.

The restart plan for Step 3 anticipates workplace capacity limits being lifted on July 1, meaning we could welcome back everyone to their regular workplace. But we are choosing to take this voluntary approach through the summer while we finalize a new long-term model for how we work.

We have been working during the unique circumstance of a public health emergency since March of last year. While it has been a prolonged experience, it was always temporary and it appears we are finally nearing the end. Along the way, we have learned a great deal about the flexibility and resilience of the public service. The priority for the BC Public Service as an employer now is to draw on those lessons – including the experiences many of you have shared with us – to shape a sustainable model for how we work that effectively balances our obligations to the public, our accountabilities as an employer, and our desire to offer a positive employee experience.

We are aiming to introduce this new model in time for the planned transition to Step 4 of the restart plan in early September. If you haven't already done so, I encourage you to participate in the [online engagement activity](#) underway until the end of this week. It has been great to see the level of participation to-date and there are still a few more days to review and rate the many thoughts and ideas shared by colleagues across the public service. This will help inform the approach we take for the fall and, again, you can expect further updates between now and September.

Beyond the impact to how we work, I know the restart plan also has significant implications for so many of you in supporting communities and stakeholders in the months ahead. This is the next step in a remarkable cross-government effort by the entire public service since the onset of the pandemic. Your efforts are deeply appreciated by our entire executive team and by government. Thank you for continuing to demonstrate the true strength, resilience and professionalism of the public service for the benefit of all British Columbians.

Sincerely,

Lori Wanamaker
Deputy Minister to the Premier,
Cabinet Secretary and Head of the BC Public Service



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Please note: replies to this email will go to Employee News, and will be forwarded to the relevant executive members as appropriate.

RE: Executive Message from Lori Wanamaker: BC's Restart Step 3

From: Blackstock, Alyson PSA:EX
s.15
To: Eso, Mike <Mike.Eso@bcgeu.ca>
Sent: July 2, 2021 12:26:16 PM PDT
Attachments: image001.png, image003.png, COVID-19 FAQ_July2.pdf

No problem. Here it is.

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From: Eso, Mike <Mike.Eso@bcgeu.ca>
Sent: July 2, 2021 12:14 PM
To: Blackstock, Alyson PSA:EX <Alyson.Blackstock@gov.bc.ca>
Subject: RE: Executive Message from Lori Wanamaker: BC's Restart Step 3
Importance: High

[EXTERNAL] This email came from an external source. Only open attachments or links that you are expecting from a known sender.

Got it thanks – the link to the Q and As does not seem to work for me. Can you send this separately?

From: Blackstock, Alyson PSA:EX <Alyson.Blackstock@gov.bc.ca>
Sent: Friday, July 2, 2021 10:59 AM
To: Eso, Mike <Mike.Eso@bcgeu.ca>
Subject: FW: Executive Message from Lori Wanamaker: BC's Restart Step 3

FYI – see the note below with links to the updated FAQs.

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From: Executive Update PSA:EX <ExecutiveUpdate@gov.bc.ca>
Sent: July 2, 2021 10:50 AM
Subject: Executive Message from Lori Wanamaker: BC's Restart Step 3

BC's Restart Step 3

Good morning,

Yesterday the province officially moved into Step 3 of [BC's Restart plan](#). Progression through BC's Restart plan is proof of the positive impact B.C.'s vaccination campaign and other safety measures have on our collective fight against COVID-19.

In [Step 3 of BC's Restart plan](#), restrictions in areas such as travel, personal gatherings and office capacity have eased. While BC Public Service workplaces are ready to adapt workplace safety measures to align with Step 3, including increased workplace capacity, we will continue to take a gradual and thoughtful approach in how we transition workplaces. This allows employees who have continued to work in regular workplaces and on the frontline throughout the pandemic time to adapt and evaluate service changes. Understandably, feelings of excitement and anxiety, or both, are natural.

The Public Service Agency is providing support to ministries to help ensure staff safety as workplaces move into Step 3. This includes working closely with WorkSafeBC to transition from Workplace COVID-19 Safety Plans to Communicable Disease Plans, focusing on preventative measures such as handwashing and personal hygiene practices, cleaning, staying home when sick and what to do if there is an increase in local COVID-19 transmission.

To answer questions about our transition to Step 3, the [COVID-19 Information for BC Public Service Employees](#) webpage is updated, including updates to the BC Public Service COVID-19 Response FAQ. This webpage is your up-to-date resource for information about COVID-19 workplace guidelines.

Separate to this transition to Step 3, [as mentioned in my email last week](#), your corporate executive team and I are finalizing the details for what our post-pandemic flexible work model will look like. Stay tuned for more information in the coming weeks. In the interim, our approach through the summer remains the same. Employees working from home may continue to do so and those wishing to return to workplaces are supported and encouraged to return.

Thank you for your continued flexibility as we shift through the stages of BC's Restart plan. I applaud everyone's collective efforts as we safely take another step toward putting this pandemic behind us.

Take care and stay safe in the heat.

Sincerely,

Lori Wanamaker

Deputy Minister to the Premier,

Cabinet Secretary and Head of the BC Public Service



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peoples. The BC Public Service is deeply committed to [true and lasting reconciliation](#) with Indigenous peoples in B.C.

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BC PUBLIC SERVICE COVID-19 RESPONSE FAQs

Updated July 2, 2021

WHO TO CONTACT:

- For work-related questions not addressed in the FAQ, contact the Workplace Health & Safety branch (BC Public Service Agency) using [MyHR](#).
- For non-medical-related questions about COVID-19 including community protection and reporting options, call 1-888-COVID19 (1-888-268-4319). Service is available from 7:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. seven days a week.
- Call 811 or your primary care provider for personal medical advice following exposure or if you are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19.
- For general health-related questions from Canadians, call 1-833-784-4397. Service is available from 7:00 a.m. to midnight EST.

For general information on COVID-19, see the [BC Centre for Disease Control online resources](#).

If you think you may have symptoms, the BC Centre for Disease Control's [self-assessment tool](#) can help you determine if you need further assessment or testing for COVID-19.

The most current information related to the BC Public Service's response to COVID-19 (including this document) is available [on the MyHR website](#).

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Part 1: Vaccinations

The Provincial Health Officer recommends British Columbians receive both COVID-19 vaccinations as soon as can be scheduled to control COVID-19 and the evolving variants in circulation.

1. Where do I find out about the COVID-19 immunization programs?

The COVID-19 vaccine rollout, including available vaccines, their application and the sequencing of administration is part of the provincial pandemic response and is planned and managed by Public Health. Updates to provincial planning are expected with changes to vaccine supply and the details will be posted to [BCCDC](#) and on the [Immunization Plan for British Columbia page](#).

COVID-19 vaccines are being developed and authorized for use in preventing severe illness and death from COVID-19 infection. Increasing participation levels in vaccination are an important part of the public health plan to end the pandemic. The [BCCDC](#) provides the most up-to-date information regarding vaccines.

2. How will COVID-19 vaccination change workplace safety plans? [UPDATED]

Receiving both doses of the COVID-19 vaccination is shown to be highly effective and significantly reduces the community risk of COVID-19 in British Columbia. In Step 3 of BC's Restart plan, COVID-19 safety plans are no longer required in workplaces. Some public health practices that have protected workplaces through the pandemic continue to offer additional layers of protection. These include staying home when sick, screening for symptoms, good handwashing practices and being careful about social contact.

As many restrictions are lifted in Step 3, public service workplaces are evaluating and beginning transition away from some of the physical setup changes put in place during the pandemic. Dr. Henry has written to employers with [advice](#) through this transition.

High levels of public health monitoring help identify any need to change communicable disease prevention plans. The BC Public Service follows the direction of Public Health and complies with WorksafeBC on how to manage communicable disease risk.

3. How will essential workers get a second vaccine? [UPDATED]

Public Service employees who received an early vaccination continue to participate in the provincial vaccination clinic program for their second dose. If you haven't already, [register online](#) to make sure you get notified for your second vaccination.

The [Immunize BC Plan](#) is updated frequently with the most current information about vaccination, including arranging second doses.

4. When will I get vaccinated? [UPDATED]

B.C.'s [COVID-19 Immunization Plan](#) has four phases. The focus in the early phases was to protect those most vulnerable to severe illness.

Public Health officials are now encouraging all British Columbians 12 and over to get fully vaccinated as the key strategy to ending the pandemic restrictions in B.C. The second dose is recommended to boost personal immunity, including protection from circulating variant strains of COVID-19.

B.C. is currently in Phase 4 of the immunization plan. All British Columbians 12 and older are eligible to register for vaccination. Registration links and scheduling information are available on the [vaccination website](#). Those who received their first vaccination before April 6 are required to [register online](#) to be notified for their second dose.

All eligible British Columbians who want to receive the vaccine were able to receive their first dose before July 1, 2021. Due to improved vaccine supplies in B.C., Public Health is also advancing the second dose vaccination due dates. Updated vaccine due dates are available on the [Health Gateway application](#).

5. Will the Public Service be running vaccination clinics like yearly flu clinics at our workplaces?

No. The currently approved vaccines are provided at vaccination clinics arranged in communities and pharmacies across British Columbia.

6. Will I be able to take leave to get my vaccination?

Yes. All employees may take reasonable time off as paid leave to get the COVID-19 vaccine or to take their dependent children to get the COVID-19 vaccine. The leave does not need to be entered into Time and Leave.

All employees may take reasonable time off as unpaid leave to take someone considered a close relative, whether by blood or not, who needs the employee's assistance to get the COVID-19 vaccine.

Please discuss scheduling your leave with your supervisor. Provide as much notice as possible to your supervisor so they can consider and address any operational impacts before approving your leave. Supervisors are encouraged to support employees who require leave to get the COVID-19 vaccine or assist dependents in getting the COVID-19 vaccine and should be flexible in approving the leave.

Please contact [Ask MyHR](#) with any questions.

7. Will vaccinations be mandatory for the BC Public Service or for certain positions in the BC Public Service? [UPDATED]

No, COVID-19 vaccinations are not mandatory for employees.

COVID-19 infections range widely in severity of symptoms. Given the vaccine's high level of effectiveness and the low level of side effects, Public Health is encouraging all British Columbians age 12+ to learn about the benefits and safety of the vaccine. Receiving the vaccine protects you and those around you. Full vaccination is also a key recommendation from Public Health to prevent the spread of COVID-19 variant strains in the province.

Both doses of the COVID-19 vaccine are available for all B.C. residents age 12+ who want to get vaccinated. Public Health is also recommending mask wearing for individuals age 12+ who are not vaccinated or are less than 14 days after their second dose of the two dose vaccines.

8. Do I have to tell my supervisor or my ministry that I have been vaccinated?

No. Your vaccination is part of your own confidential medical history. You do not need to share your vaccination status, and your supervisor will not ask you.

9. Considering privacy restrictions, will information such as the number of employees immunized in my workplace be shared? [UPDATED]

No. Vaccinations are a part of a person's confidential medical history. Your ministry will not ask if you have been vaccinated or gather statistics about the number of staff vaccinated.

Public Health testing, contact tracing and achieving a high level of vaccination in the province have proven to reduce the level of exposure risk.

10. Once I get vaccinated will I still have to follow Public Health guidance and orders? [UPDATED]

Yes. Employees must continue following Public Health guidance on self-isolation and health monitoring even after being vaccinated. Low levels of COVID- may continue in the community for some time. Public Health is actively testing, conducting contact tracing and making recommendations to prevent any further spread of infection.

During Step 3 and Step 4 of BC's Restart plan, local Public Health monitoring may identify new risks. All British Columbians must continue to follow Public Health orders and guidance until community immunity is achieved and the Provincial Health Officer rescinds or changes the orders and guidance.

Part 2: Workplace Safety and Working from Home

11. Do I need to do a workplace Daily Health Check? **[NEW]**

In Step 3, anyone who is symptomatic should stay home and follow testing guidance. COVID-19 will continue to circulate at low levels with greater risk in those with lower immunity.

As vaccine based immunity develops in those receiving vaccination, Workplace Health and Safety recommends continuing workplace Daily Health Checks as a layer of protection for those in the workplace. This recommendation will be re-evaluated as the province prepares to enter Step 4.

12. What is the current direction on returning to the workplace and remote work? **[UPDATED]**

On May 25, 2021, Lori Wanamaker, Head of the BC Public Service, provided an update regarding remote work arrangements. The province moving to Step 3 of BC's Restart plan and the removal of office occupancy limits does not change this guidance. Employees choosing to return to the workplace throughout the summer can do so after discussing it with their supervisor and must follow existing workplace communicable disease plans.

Employees who have continued to work in their regular workplace throughout the pandemic due to operational requirements can continue to do so safely. There is a much lower level of community COVID-19 transmission and workplace infection control practices are in place.

Public Service workplaces are maintaining physical barriers during the transition to Step 3, as [recommended](#) by Dr. Henry. Maintaining the barriers will be evaluated regularly as the province moves through Step 3. There will be future updates as the province moves closer to Step 4.

Other safety protocols such as handwashing, checking for symptoms before attending work and staying home when symptomatic continue.

13. I am hearing about COVID-19 variants here in B.C. Is there anything my workplace should do differently? **[UPDATED]**

COVID-19 variants spread the same way as the original COVID-19 virus. The same COVID-19 protocols will protect you in the workplace, such as physical distancing, barriers, washing your hands and staying home when not feeling well.

Public Health is accelerating first and second doses of COVID-19 vaccinations and is recommending vaccination for all eligible British Columbians to prevent the further spread of COVID-19 and its variants. Complete vaccination (current vaccines require two doses) provides the highest level of personal protection and helps protect all of us in British Columbia from variant strains of COVID-19.

Workplaces are continuing infection control and hygiene practices to decrease the risk of infection.

Public Health continues to monitor and provide weekly updates, reporting on evolving COVID-19 trends in health regions. During Step 3 and Step 4 of BC's Restart plan, local Medical Health Officers across BC will provide guidance and recommendations as needed to continue preventing the spread of COVID-19.

14. Are masks required in BC Public Service workplaces for clients or the public?

[UPDATED]

On November 24, under the Emergency Program Act an order was issued regarding face coverings in indoor public spaces. The November 24 order covers high-traffic public settings where people who do not know each other interact. This order has been rescinded as the province moves into Step 3.

On June 29, 2021, the Provincial Health Officer recommended anyone who received their second vaccine dose less than 14 days ago should continue to wear a mask in public settings. In BC Public Service workplaces, mask wearing is a personal choice. Employees can manage their risk and the risk to those around them by wearing masks.

The mask and face covering recommendations are will be posted in client-facing areas and at entries to public service workplaces. Workplaces should maintain a supply of non-medical masks to provide to clients if requested.

Ministries provide essential services to the public they cannot receive anywhere else. Efforts have been made to shift to virtual service or other types of services to limit contacts where possible. Clients will not be denied service on the basis of mask wearing. With high levels of vaccine participation in B.C. and other controls available such as physical barriers, asking clients for proof of vaccination status is not necessary.

The most effective protection from COVID-19 transmission in the workplace is physical distancing or physical barriers between individuals. In client service settings, they offer superior protection to masks and don't rely on both the employee and client to properly wear a mask. Barriers and physical distancing also allow protection for workers to serve clients who are unable to wear masks or where masks may interrupt communication.

Employees should speak with their supervisor about their ministry's procedures to support client mask-wearing and the ministry procedures to manage unmasked clients seeking services.

15. Can BC Public Service employees wear a mask in the workplace? [UPDATED]

On June 29, 2021, Public Health guidance changed the recommendation for wearing a mask. Wearing a mask is still recommended for individuals who are less than 14 days after their second vaccination dose.

In addition to this recommendation, for most office workplace settings where masks are not part of an exposure control plan, wearing a mask is the employee's personal choice. Each individual has personal or family risks to manage and wearing a mask may offer an additional layer of protection.

16. Do we have to review our COVID-19 Safety Plan (COVID-19 Workplace Assessment) because of the Provincial Health Officer's Orders or BC's Restart plan? [UPDATED]

As the province enters Step 3 of BC's Restart plan, British Columbia workplace guidance is shifting to communicable disease plans to provide general guidance. These plans include procedures to protect workplaces from infectious disease risks, including COVID-19 and other illnesses such as seasonal influenza.

The provincial public health emergency continues to be in effect and Public Health teams are actively monitoring and reporting on local disease risks in health regions. If community risk rises, Public Health may have guidelines or restrictions for workplaces.

Active COVID-19 case tracking is also continuing. If there is a workplace exposure, it may lead to specific worksite restrictions.

17. What is the concern regarding workplace kitchen and social activities? [UPDATED]

The Provincial Health Officer reported episodes of COVID-19 transmission in lunch and break rooms and during social activities in workplaces across the province earlier in the pandemic. Work associated activities such as carpooling, driving together to get lunch or workplace social events involving sitting together on breaks without distancing may increase the risk of a COVID-19 exposure. This concern is precautionary as workplaces transition to Step 3.

While there are currently low numbers of new COVID-19 cases, individual employee vaccination status or immunity levels can allow these type of close contact events to carry a level of exposure risk. Public Health encourages individuals to monitor their personal risk status. Since workplace social events are influenced by peer pressure or have an implied expectation to participate, the caution against these events is to allow employees the comfort to limit their exposure.

Work associated events where transmission occurs can result in a Public Health closure of the workplace.

18. Is it likely that building ventilation systems are a route of transmission for COVID-19?

The Public Health Agency of Canada states the coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2), the virus that causes COVID-19, is not known to spread through ventilation systems or through water.

Full knowledge of how the virus spreads is continually developing as new research and information becomes available. The BC Centre for Disease Control currently states:

“COVID-19 is spread by the respiratory droplets an infected person produces when they breathe, cough, sneeze, talk, or sing. If you are in contact with an infected person, the virus can enter your body if droplets get into your throat, nose, or eyes.

Droplets come in a wide range of sizes and they behave differently depending on their size. Larger droplets are heavier, and they usually fall to the ground within two meters. Smaller droplets, also known as aerosols, are lighter and they can float in the air for longer.

Smaller droplets can collect in enclosed spaces when there is not enough fresh air. Indoor accumulation is greater when more people share a space, spend more time together, or exercise, sing, shout, or speak loudly. These conditions can lead to COVID-19 transmission.”

The American Society of Heating Refrigerating and Air Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) recommended that building HVAC systems be checked and maintained to industry standards to ensure healthy indoor air quality. The Ministry of Citizens’ Services Real Property Division oversees and manages HVAC systems for most provincial public service workplaces and is following and adhering to the guidance of AHSRAE and WorkSafe BC.

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, HVAC systems in all government buildings have been maintained and operated to industry standards. For example, maintenance work (e.g. filter changes) operating schedules for building systems (when systems turn on and off) and fresh air intake levels have not been reduced, even with major decreases in building capacity and occupancy.

19. Is COVID-19 transmitted in the air?

Evidence to date suggests that most transmission of the coronavirus that causes COVID-19 disease occurs because of close contact interactions between people (exposure to droplets and aerosols at close range).

According to the [BC Centre for Disease Control](#), “Droplets come in a wide range of sizes and they behave differently depending on their size. Larger droplets are heavier, and they usually fall to the ground within two meters. Smaller droplets, also known as aerosols, are lighter and they can float in the air for longer.”

The virus does not appear to be typically transmitted via aerosols, but may transmit opportunistically in close range, or over a longer distance where there is a high source load of virus in the air, and in poorly ventilated environments where there is insufficient air exchange to properly dissipate accumulating viral particles.

Our workplaces use professionally designed and maintained mechanical ventilation to provide heat, air conditioning and air exchange to all occupied areas of our workplaces, helping mitigate any possible risk of aerosol transmission.

[BCCDC](#) says “smaller droplets can collect in enclosed spaces when there is not enough fresh air. Indoor accumulation is greater when more people share a space, spend more time together, or exercise, sing, shout, or speak loudly. These conditions can lead to COVID-19 transmission.”

For indoor spaces, measures for reducing transmission risk focus on reducing the “three Cs” (close spaces, crowding, close contact) and reducing the duration, intensity, and frequency of contacts with others. These things together reduce the opportunity for viral exposure and the intensity of exposure, should it occur.

20. Will workplaces maintain physical distancing when working with clients in Step 3? **[NEW]**

As BC Public Service workplaces transition to Step 3, a number of COVID-19 controls are being phased out based on the assessed communicable disease risk and workplace readiness. During the transition to Step 3, maintaining the following guidance offers increased protection in the workplace:

- Put up signs at office entrances asking clients to not enter the building and reschedule their appointment if they are sick, have a cough, have difficulty breathing or have been advised to quarantine or isolate following travel
- If clients appear unwell, ask them if they can reschedule or provide them a mask while they are in the common areas of the office
- If clients are coughing or sneezing, ask them to cover up using their elbow or a tissue
- Use signs to direct traffic and remind people of the benefits of physical distancing in lobbies and waiting rooms
- When working with clients, keep a two-metre distance where possible by standing back slightly at a service counter if necessary
- When booking in-person meetings, include a reminder for clients about physical distancing and ask them re-schedule if they feel unwell
- Set up meeting rooms with reduced capacity and use the table or chairs to create two metres between participants
- Evaluate the readiness of bringing back waiting room furniture previously moved to allow physical distancing
- Use tape to mark two-metre spacing on the floor for line-ups at service counters

21. I supervise an employee who has indicated they cannot or don't want to return to the workplace. How do I address this? [UPDATED]

In the May 25, 2021 update from Lori Wanamaker, Head of the BC Public Service, employees were advised returning to the workplace during Step 3 is voluntary. Supervisors are encouraged to remain in communication with employees working remotely and provide updates on the status of the workplace and the number of employees returning.

If there is an operational requirement for the employee to be in the workplace, the supervisor, with the support of the Public Service Agency, will determine if there is a duty to accommodate. They must assess the employee's situation, including medical information and if they are able to provide information as to why they cannot return to the workplace.

Supervisors in this situation should have a discussion with the employee about their circumstances, including their limitations and restrictions and should discuss safety procedures at the workplace. If this discussion does not resolve the employee's concerns, the supervisor should contact MyHR for assistance. For further information see the [Managers' Guide to Reasonable Accommodation](#).

In cases where the employer is not required to make an accommodation, ministries may consider alternative work arrangements depending on operational requirements and the employee's individual circumstances.

22. A worker with a chronic health condition has asked about returning to the workplace. What do I advise them?

The BCCDC advises people with certain chronic health conditions may consider protective self-separation. People with chronic health conditions are at a higher risk of developing more severe illness from COVID-19. These conditions include heart disease, high blood pressure, lung disease, diabetes and cancer. Also included are people with weakened immune systems from a medical condition (e.g. HIV, chronic liver disease or organ transplant) or treatments such as chemotherapy and immunosuppressive medications.

Supervisors are expected to be flexible and support requests for remote working where operationally feasible. If there is an operational requirement for the employee to be in the workplace, employees should be informed of new or updated workplace safety procedures before the return to the worksite. This allows employees with chronic conditions to evaluate the level of risk for their condition, and their confidence in protecting themselves in the workplace. With COVID-19, personal protective practices (distancing and hand hygiene) offer protection. These employees should be permitted to return to the workplace if they chose.

Employees are required to provide relevant and appropriate information to support a request for accommodation. Supervisors will often require information such as medical restrictions, limitations and prognosis as part of the accommodation process. Employees are not typically required to provide supervisors with their medical diagnosis. With complex accommodations, where further clarifying information is required, supervisors should contact MyHR for guidance. Supervisors can also implement accommodations arising from the pandemic based on information that has previously been provided to the ministry for a consistent purpose. (See the Managers' Guide to Reasonable Accommodation on MyHR for additional information).

23. Managing employees' workplace needs can involve collecting medical information. How is this protected?

In responding to employee's request for an accommodation, the supervisor, with assistance from MyHR, may require information or clarification from the employee's healthcare providers. Employees are required to provide relevant and appropriate information to support their request for accommodation. In providing this information, the employee is consenting to the employers use of this information for the purposes of responding to their accommodation request. Supervisors, with assistance from MyHR, should ensure that information requests are constructive and respectful of employee privacy and maintain confidentiality.

The long-term practice is for employees to provide this information to supervisors with doctors' notes or the supervisor's (non-confidential) portion of the Medical Certificate (former StT02 form). Supervisors should maintain this information in a secured location in the employee's workplace supervisory file (as per [section 30](#) of the *Freedom of Information & Protection of Privacy Act* (FOIPPA), s. 19(1) of [Information Management Act](#) and [Government Core Policy, Information Security Policy](#)). Information provided by employees in support of communicating the employee's pandemic related medical limitations and restrictions should be handled in the same secure manner. The sharing of any information about an employee should only occur on a need to know basis and only with those authorized to receive it under FOIPPA.

Part 3: Employee Exposure and Self-Isolation

PREAMBLE **[NEW]**

For anyone who may have been exposed to a COVID-19 case, Public Health makes the decision and calls individuals who require self-isolation or self-monitoring based on the level of risk of COVID-19 exposure and their immunity against infection.

When Public health determines a person who was in contact with a COVID-19 case must self-isolate or self-monitor, they are advised of the duration. It is often 14 days from the last contact with the case, but there may be variations based on individual circumstances and as new guidelines are updated.

24. I have an employee who has tested positive for COVID-19. What does this mean for coworkers? Do we need to close that workplace? **[UPDATED]**

To reduce the risk of exposure to others, employee's who are newly diagnosed with COVID-19 should not come to the workplace.

Coworkers of an employee who has tested positive are notified by Public Health contact tracers when there is a need for them to self-isolate or self-monitor. If Public Health does not call, you do not need to self-isolate or self-monitor.

Through an interview with the person who has contracted COVID-19, Public Health determines the level of risk of COVID-19 exposure to others. Public Health also considers the vaccination status of coworkers (unvaccinated, partially vaccinated, fully vaccinated, prior COVID-19 infection recovery in the last 90 days).

In general, those who are fully vaccinated and are 7 days past receiving their second dose of vaccine are recommended to self-monitor for 14 days. Self-monitoring is also advised when the exposure occurs less than 91 days since recovery from a prior recent COVID-19 infection.

Non-vaccinated coworkers are advised to self-isolate when there is a high risk exposure or close contact with an exposure. This also applies to co-workers that have only received their first shot and have not passed 21 days since their first dose, since they have not yet built up a response to the vaccine.

Self-isolation is also recommended for employees who are considered partially vaccinated when it has been 21 days since they received the first dose of the vaccine and the exposure is a household contact.

Cleaning requirements are determined using the [COVID-19 Exposure Control and Cleaning Protocols on MyHR](#).

Public Health will contact the workplace if there is a concern about COVID-19 transmission in the workplace or if they need assistance with contact tracing details for an employee. Be prepared to

provide information to Public Health about the workplace if they contact you. Also identify any cleaning protocols put into place. Your ministry's Strategic Human Resources (SHR) has resources to assist with messaging or you can contact MyHR.

If there are further safety questions about managing the worksite, contact MyHR.

25. I supervise an employee who has developed mild symptoms, but they are not sure if it is COVID-19. They are wondering if they should come in to work or go get tested. What should I do?

Employees who are sick with COVID-19 or any other illness should not come to work and expose others to infection.

Have the employee use the [BC COVID-19 Self Assessment Tool](#) and ask they follow the guidance. Other resources for determining symptoms include calling 811 or their primary care provider.

If the employee has been told COVID-19 testing is not recommended, manage the situation as you would with any sick leave.

If testing is recommended, the employee receives their test results by phone, text, or on the [BCCDC test results site](#). Manage this situation as you would with any sick leave.

If the test negative but the employee remains unwell, manage as a regular sick leave. If the test is positive, see questions 24 and 32 for guidance.

26. What does "close contact" mean? [UPDATED]

Public Health determines whether an individual meets the requirements of a high-risk exposure or close contact.

For Public Health monitoring, a high-risk exposure or close contact is defined as:

- Anyone who has been within 2 metres of a COVID-19 case for more than 15 minutes cumulatively in a day
- Anyone who is exposed to the infectious body fluids of a case
- Anyone who is a household-like contact, such as:
 - Anyone who lived with someone with COVID-19 before the started isolation
 - Anyone who lives with the case during their isolation period if they are unable to isolate adequately in the household
 - Anyone who has direct physical contact with a case, including the case's caregiver, an intimate partner or a child receiving care from the case, even if not residing in the same household
 - Others, as determined by the Public Health Officer. Factors to consider in determining if someone is a household-like contact include the number of hours or days spent with the case, sleeping arrangement, etc.

- A healthcare worker who provided direct physical care to a case, or a laboratory worker handling COVID-19 specimens without appropriate use of recommended PPE and infection prevention and control practices
- Anyone who has been identified by the local Medical Health Officer as a possible high-risk contact

27. When do I need to ask an employee for an STO2 form or doctor's note?

In the circumstance of COVID-19 related absences, an STO2 form or certificate is not required for sick pay. Discussion between employee and supervisor can often resolve questions about prognosis.

On a temporary basis for other conditions, an STO2 may be required only for safety sensitive occupations or other essential services employees to enable the employer to meet their legislated obligations to plan and manage a safe return to work. The STO2 form permits management of clearance to safety sensitive occupations and assists managing the workforce with advice regarding prognosis. The STO2 form also provides consent for the clinical team at Occupational Health Programs to work with employees on safe and sustainable return to work programs.

If the Physician's Confidential Portion of the medical certificate is provided to the supervisor, this should be forwarded to Occupational Health and Rehabilitation, BCPSA, 707 – 808 Nelson Street, Box 12183, Vancouver, BC V6Z 2H2

28. I supervise an employee who tells me they have been medically advised to stay home as they are sick with a communicable disease. Are they eligible for sick leave?

Yes. If an employee has been advised by a medical professional to remain at home to isolate because they are sick (or in hospital for treatment), they are eligible for sick leave.

29. I can't work from home, but I am nervous about coming to work and being exposed to COVID-19. What can I do? [UPDATED]

Workplaces have been following COVID-19 Safety Plans and are now implementing Communicable Disease Prevention Plans following WorkSafeBC guidance. There are high levels of vaccination in British Columbia and very low levels of community transmission of the COVID-19.

With measures such as symptomatic employees staying home when sick, hand washing, routine cleaning of surfaces and vaccination rates continue to increase, BC Public Service workplaces remain safe. Employees have the option to wear mask if they choose to.

If there are increased levels of risk locally, regionally, or within a workplace, the local Medical Health Officer or Provincial Health Officer will advise the employer on measures needed to manage the risk.

Talk with your supervisor if you have concerns about the risk of workplace exposure.

30. I have an employee who wants to self-isolate. The employee doesn't have any COVID-19 symptoms, hasn't travelled out of Canada, and hasn't been directed by a medical professional to self-isolate. What are the options?

The workplace safety guideline appendices provide a guideline for discussing return to work with employees. An open conversation about the barrier to return to work is important. It may arise from daycare, public transit concerns, family issues or apprehension. It is recommended supervisors use a coaching approach to support employees in problem solving the situation.

See other answers in this guide to manage the situations that are identified. If you need assistance in managing issues related to self-imposed isolation, contact MyHR.

31. I have an employee coming back to work after recovering from an active COVID-19 infection. That employee feels well and is not having any further symptoms. What should I do? [UPDATED]

An ST02 or doctors note is not required. Public Health will provide the employee with guidance on when it is safe to end isolation and resume their usual activities.

Employees who have mild respiratory symptoms that can be managed at home can generally return to their routine activities, including work, once all of following criteria are met:

- At least 10 days have passed since onset of symptoms
- Fever has resolved without use of fever-reducing medication
- Symptoms (respiratory, gastrointestinal, and systemic) have improved

Coughing may persist for several weeks and does not mean the individual is infectious or must continue to self-isolate.

In some instances, Public Health may recommend 20 days based on the disease severity, among other factors. Talk to the employee about their individualized return to work plan.

Health care workers (nurses, doctors, care aides) and employees working in group living settings who recovered from COVID-19 infection may require specialized direction for return to work.

32. I supervise an auxiliary employee who was required to self-isolate. Are they eligible for weekly indemnity benefits?

Yes, all auxiliary employees are eligible for weekly indemnity benefits up to a maximum of 15 weeks under the same circumstances as an employee eligible for COVID-19 related STIIP. This is the case for COVID-19 related absences even if the auxiliary employee has not accumulated 400 hours of auxiliary seniority or has lost their auxiliary seniority.



Where ideas work

In addition, auxiliary employees will not have the one-week benefit waiting period for COVID-19 related absences. This means that employees are eligible for weekly indemnity benefits immediately and will receive the benefit as quickly as possible.

Part 4: Employee Exposure Related to Travel

33. With current federal and BCCDC recommendations, can employees undertake work-related travel within Canada? **[UPDATED]**

Yes. as of July 1 under BC's Restart Plan, Canada-wide travel is allowed for work and recreational purposes. When travelling, follow the same Public Health guidance you use at home to prevent COVID-19 and plan ahead by checking the places you are going are ready to welcome you.

For international travel, the Government of Canada and the Province of British Columbia currently recommend avoiding non-essential travel outside of Canada until further notice.

34. An employee is questioning international travel restrictions and compliance expectations. How do I advise them? **[UPDATED]**

In March 2020, an Emergency Order under the Quarantine Act was implemented requiring any person entering Canada by air, sea or land to quarantine or self-isolate themselves for 14 days whether or not they have symptoms of COVID-19.

Employees are expected to comply with all federal and provincial requirements and will not be permitted to return to work until assigned quarantine and other requirements have been met. Employees who choose to travel internationally unrelated to work after August 5, 2020 will not be eligible for STIIP or Weekly Indemnity Benefits for their self-isolation period.

If the employee becomes ill during isolation, they should be tested and contact 811 or their health care provider to manage their symptoms and describe their travel history. Staff will only be eligible for STIIP or Weekly Indemnity Benefits while unable to attend work due to COVID-19 after their 14-day isolation period has ended.

Employees can also contact Public Health in their local health authority about quarantine and their health. The employee should inform the supervisor of any estimated period of absence and in advance of return to work.

With expected upcoming changes for travellers, employees should check the [Government of Canada website](#) and the Travel Section of the [BCCDC website](#) for the latest quarantine and travel requirements.

35. I have an employee entering self-isolation following return from travel, or who was medically recommended to self-isolate for 14 days due to possible COVID-19 exposure. What options can the employer offer? **[UPDATED]**

For employees returning from international travel, if you are satisfied your employee can effectively work from home, you should authorize this arrangement. This does not include the

initial three-day quarantine (if recommended) in a federally approved facility since the employee will not have a work computer and secure internet access.

If the employee is returning from international travel that commenced before August 5, 2020 and cannot work from home, the employee is eligible for STIIP or Weekly Indemnity Benefits.

If the employee is returning from international travel commenced after August 5, 2020, and they can't work from home, they are not eligible for STIIP or Weekly Indemnity Benefits and must take an applicable leave.

RE: Corrections Covid-19 issue.

From: Blackstock, Alyson PSA:EX s.15
To: Eso, Mike <Mike.Eso@bcgeu.ca>
Sent: August 11, 2021 9:02:48 AM PDT

I'll get back to you.

Alyson Blackstock, Assistant Deputy Minister, Employee Relations
| Employee Relations Division | BC Public Service Agency
First Floor, 810 Blanshard Street | Victoria, BC | V8W 2H3 | 778-698-7912 | 250-893-2980
AskMyHR: www.gov.bc.ca/myhr/contact
Phone: 250.952.6000 | Toll Free 1.877.277.0772

-----Original Message-----

From: Eso, Mike <Mike.Eso@bcgeu.ca>
Sent: August 10, 2021 5:46 PM
To: Blackstock, Alyson PSA:EX <Alyson.Blackstock@gov.bc.ca>
Subject: Corrections Covid-19 issue.

[EXTERNAL] This email came from an external source. Only open attachments or links that you are expecting from a known sender.

Hi. We are getting feedback about this from members. Is this consistent with the PSA policy for the rest of the public service?

Thanks.

From: Macpherson, Stephanie PSSG:EX
<Stephanie.Macpherson@gov.bc.ca<mailto:Stephanie.Macpherson@gov.bc.ca>>
Sent: Thursday, August 5, 2021 3:10 PM
To: PSSG ACD HQ Staff

s.17

Subject: Covid Protocols and International Travel

Good afternoon.

As British Columbia progresses through its phased approach to re-opening the province, I am writing to provide you with an update on the COVID-19 protocols within the Adult Custody Division.

As you are all aware, British Columbia is currently in Step 3 of the Restart

Plan<<https://can01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww2.gov.bc.ca%2Fgov%2Fcontent%2Fcontent%2Finfo%2Frestart%23step-three&data=04%7C01%7CAlyson.Blackstock%40gov.bc.ca%7Cbab904ba39b147df0b9d08d95c615e74%7C6fdb52003d0d4a8ab036d3685e359adc%7C0%7C0%7C637642395531538663%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWljiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzliLCJBTiI6IklhaWwiLCJXVCi6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=tWkuYHpWNgvBXoLvFv%2By70KhWiUxMyXtfQynbRX0KC0%3D&reserved=0>>; restrictions in the community have been reduced significantly, allowing for normal social connections, and increased capacity for gatherings.

Despite the changes we are seeing in the broader community, it is important for us to remember that our correctional centres are unique settings and that the people we care for are some of the most vulnerable and experience compromised health. Together, we have put forward tremendous effort to establish and uphold our COVID-19 protocols that protect our staff and the individuals in our custody and we must continue to maintain all of these safety protocols to ensure that our environment remains safe for each of you, and the men and women in our care.

Today, I want to address the specific issue of international travel as several questions about this topic have been posed from staff across the province. While cross border travel is now permitted, and the Canadian Border Services Agency has a strategy in place to assess the risk of individuals returning to Canada, a travel advisory<<https://can01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Ftravel.gc.ca%2Ftravelling%2Fadvisories&data=04%7C01%7CAlyson.Blackstock%40gov.bc.ca%7Cbab904ba39b147df0b9d08d95c615e74%7C6fdb52003d0d4a8ab036d3685e359adc%7C0%7C0%7C637642395531548658%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWljiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzliLCJBTiI6IklhaWwiLCJXVCi6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=mWiy3PCOmzPKSFVkotP6VQdYk90qa6qyYD02s%2FUUFFJ0%3D&reserved=0>> remains in effect. The federal government continues to advise that Canadians avoid all non-essential travel outside of Canada as a means of protecting citizens, families, and individuals most at risk of severe illness from COVID-19.

Based on the evidence available, and in consultation with our partners in public health, the Adult Custody Division will continue to require that all staff who have travelled outside of Canada refrain from attending the workplace for a period of 14 days following their return home. As with any other annual leave, this additional 14-day period must be scheduled in advance and be preapproved by the employer. This requirement will remain in effect until we have evidence demonstrating that cross-border travel no longer presents a risk to our correctional centres.

This decision has been made to ensure that we uphold our duty of care for the men and women in our custody and takes into account the complex environments in which we work, and the vulnerability of the individuals we work with. We are committed to maintaining a safe and healthy workplace for each of you and will continue to take all necessary measures to achieve this goal.

If you have questions about our COVID-19 protocols, including those related to cross-border travel, I encourage you to reach out to your leadership team for further discussion and clarification.

Thank you so much for your continued commitment to ensuring the safety of our centres.

Stephanie Macpherson
Provincial Director
Ministry of Public Safety & Solicitor General | BC Corrections | Adult Custody Division
Office 7789743013 | Cell **s.17**

It's all about the people!

I acknowledge my place of work is within the ancestral, traditional and unceded territory of the Coast Salish nations.

[cid:9E7C70F4-3799-450A-825A-BC7CC7B958C7]

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Mike Eso
BCGEU Regional Coordinator,
Vancouver Island.

Re: Workplaces re-opening – get vaccinated

From: Blackstock, Alyson PSA:EX <Alyson.Blackstock@gov.bc.ca>
To: Eso, Mike <Mike.Eso@bcgeu.ca>
Sent: August 12, 2021 12:44:51 PM PDT

Thanks.

Sent from my iPhone

On Aug 12, 2021, at 12:30 PM, Eso, Mike <Mike.Eso@bcgeu.ca> wrote:

[EXTERNAL] This email came from an external source. Only open attachments or links that you are expecting from a known sender.

FYI.

Michael Eso
BCGEU Regional Coordinator
Vancouver Island
2994 Douglas Street
Victoria, BC
V8T 4N4
250.208.6339 Cell

From: BCGEU <communications@bcgeu.ca>
Sent: August 12, 2021 12:12 PM
To: Communications <Communications@bcgeu.ca>
Subject: Workplaces re-opening – get vaccinated

Important Member Communication

View this email in your

browser<[https://can01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fmailchi.mp%2Fbcgeu.ca%2Fworkplaces-re-opening-get-](https://can01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fmailchi.mp%2Fbcgeu.ca%2Fworkplaces-re-opening-get-vaccinated%3F%3Dd3777cb660&data=04%7C01%7CAlyson.Blackstock%40gov.bc.ca%7C62371c5972e042d659dc08d95dc7b514%7C6fdb52003d0d4a8ab036d3685e359adc%7C0%7C0%7C637643934578561872%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWljoIMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzliLCJBTiI6IjEhaWwiLCJXVCi6Mn0%3D%7C1000&psdata=ghprxC2fWY3RcJbXVIKP8gbpEkIbtTJcZXeOHf870TA%3D&reserved=0)

[vaccinated%3F%3Dd3777cb660&data=04%7C01%7CAlyson.Blackstock%40gov.bc.ca%7C62371c5972e042d659dc08d95dc7b514%7C6fdb52003d0d4a8ab036d3685e359adc%7C0%7C0%7C637643934578561872%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWljoIMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzliLCJBTiI6IjEhaWwiLCJXVCi6Mn0%3D%7C1000&psdata=ghprxC2fWY3RcJbXVIKP8gbpEkIbtTJcZXeOHf870TA%3D&reserved=0](https://can01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fmailchi.mp%2Fbcgeu.ca%2Fworkplaces-re-opening-get-vaccinated%3F%3Dd3777cb660&data=04%7C01%7CAlyson.Blackstock%40gov.bc.ca%7C62371c5972e042d659dc08d95dc7b514%7C6fdb52003d0d4a8ab036d3685e359adc%7C0%7C0%7C637643934578561872%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWljoIMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzliLCJBTiI6IjEhaWwiLCJXVCi6Mn0%3D%7C1000&psdata=ghprxC2fWY3RcJbXVIKP8gbpEkIbtTJcZXeOHf870TA%3D&reserved=0)

[[https://can01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fmcusercontent.com%2Fc9125e48200e7a60ad61b323%2Fimages%2F6230510e-7d56-439d-bb65-](https://can01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fmcusercontent.com%2Fc9125e48200e7a60ad61b323%2Fimages%2F6230510e-7d56-439d-bb65-a81b4011737c.jpg&data=04%7C01%7CAlyson.Blackstock%40gov.bc.ca%7C62371c5972e042d659dc08d95dc7b514%7C6fdb52003d0d4a8ab036d3685e359adc%7C0%7C0%7C637643934578561872%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWljoIMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzliLCJBTiI6IjEhaWwiLCJXVCi6Mn0%3D%7C1000&psdata=VwXOKiXqhm1avPUPwusKyr3pmPVB3RPSXr%2B%2FUxve4A%3D&reserved=0)

[a81b4011737c.jpg&data=04%7C01%7CAlyson.Blackstock%40gov.bc.ca%7C62371c5972e042d659dc08d95dc7b514%7C6fdb52003d0d4a8ab036d3685e359adc%7C0%7C0%7C637643934578561872%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWljoIMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzliLCJBTiI6IjEhaWwiLCJXVCi6Mn0%3D%7C1000&psdata=VwXOKiXqhm1avPUPwusKyr3pmPVB3RPSXr%2B%2FUxve4A%3D&reserved=0](https://can01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fmcusercontent.com%2Fc9125e48200e7a60ad61b323%2Fimages%2F6230510e-7d56-439d-bb65-a81b4011737c.jpg&data=04%7C01%7CAlyson.Blackstock%40gov.bc.ca%7C62371c5972e042d659dc08d95dc7b514%7C6fdb52003d0d4a8ab036d3685e359adc%7C0%7C0%7C637643934578561872%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWljoIMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzliLCJBTiI6IjEhaWwiLCJXVCi6Mn0%3D%7C1000&psdata=VwXOKiXqhm1avPUPwusKyr3pmPVB3RPSXr%2B%2FUxve4A%3D&reserved=0)]

Step 4 of B.C.'s Restart plan could start as early as September 7 – though this date could vary by region. Step 4 includes a return to fully re-opened offices and workplaces. Whether your worksite is returning to full capacity or you're returning to in-person work after working from home, our union can help address any health and safety concerns that may arise.

And remember: the best way to ensure your safety on the job is to be fully vaccinated for COVID-19.

Get vaccinated:

B.C.'s most recent COVID-19 surge has been fueled by those who are unvaccinated or have only had one dose. This reminds us that getting vaccinated is the most important tool we have in stopping transmission and bringing the pandemic to an end.

The BCGEU encourages all members who have not yet been vaccinated to do so according to the guidance of their doctor. Every vaccine administered in Canada is safe and effective, as evaluated by Health Canada, and with shorter line-ups it's even easier to get vaccinated. Go here to register, book an appointment and get your vaccine:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/covid-19/vaccine/register><<https://can01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fbcgeu.us9.list-manage.com%2Ftrack%2Fclick%3Fu%3Dc9125e48200e7a60add61b323%26id%3Daec251699e%26e%3Dd3777cb660&data=04%7C01%7CAlyson.Blackstock%40gov.bc.ca%7C62371c5972e042d659dc08d95dc7b514%7C6fdb52003d0d4a8ab036d3685e359adc%7C0%7C0%7C637643934578571864%7CUnknown%7CTWFPbGZsb3d8eyJWljoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzliLCJBTil6lk1haWwiLCJXVCi6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=wkOPwHH83TKIJ7RGDI4dmT07RqGmluH19WUGq7C0%2BLk%3D&reserved=0>>

You can also find vaccine drop-in locations and hours in your community here:

<https://can01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fgov.bc.ca%2FVaxForBC&data=04%7C01%7CAlyson.Blackstock%40gov.bc.ca%7C62371c5972e042d659dc08d95dc7b514%7C6fdb52003d0d4a8ab036d3685e359adc%7C0%7C0%7C637643934578571864%7CUnknown%7CTWFPbGZsb3d8eyJWljoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzliLCJBTil6lk1haWwiLCJXVCi6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=Bl3jqsALqxwu3yLY5vU3RJ6oAB4xuSJAA%2Be8v3Rd04g%3D&reserved=0><<https://can01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fbcgeu.us9.list-manage.com%2Ftrack%2Fclick%3Fu%3Dc9125e48200e7a60add61b323%26id%3D18047392af%26e%3Dd3777cb660&data=04%7C01%7CAlyson.Blackstock%40gov.bc.ca%7C62371c5972e042d659dc08d95dc7b514%7C6fdb52003d0d4a8ab036d3685e359adc%7C0%7C0%7C637643934578571864%7CUnknown%7CTWFPbGZsb3d8eyJWljoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzliLCJBTil6lk1haWwiLCJXVCi6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=X6CAAkGdsSw2hHXi5gmWdH%2F6JdAY0hDe1OO3VizH1Wk%3D&reserved=0>>

Safe workplaces:

Employers have the responsibility to maintain a safe workplace and to ensure workers' privacy rights are respected. This includes having a communicable disease plan in place that enforces appropriate handwashing and personal hygiene practices, appropriate ventilation, and allowing staff to stay home when sick.

Also remember that your right to refuse unsafe work is a legislative right and responsibility of all workers in B.C. and that is no different during the COVID-19 pandemic. Read more about your right

here<<https://can01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fbcgeu.us9.list-manage.com%2Ftrack%2Fclick%3Fu%3Dc9125e48200e7a60add61b323%26id%3Db4bb137de9%26e%3Dd3777cb660&data=04%7C01%7CAlyson.Blackstock%40gov.bc.ca%7C62371c5972e042d659dc08d95dc7b514%7C6fdb52003d0d4a8ab036d3685e359adc%7C0%7C0%7C637643934578571864%7CUnknown%7CTWFPbGZsb3d8eyJWljoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzliLCJBTil6lk1haWwiLCJXVCi6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=%2FcXH5RYRI%2B1mugZa0KvjC0m4f02w0mXThwXLaA4SZOA%3D&reserved=0>>.

Our union has consistently advocated for the appropriate usage of masks and we urge you to continue wearing a mask indoors as an added layer of protection for everyone.

If you have an urgent issue related to COVID-19 or a workplace health and safety issue, please inform your supervisor first. If necessary, contact your Occupational Health and Safety Committee representative, steward or local chairperson.

Step 4 of the Restart plan must be done in a way that prioritizes the safety of B.C.'s workers. And by working together to keep each other safe – by getting vaccinated and following appropriate safety protocols – we can all play an important role in ensuring its success.

In solidarity,
Paul Finch, BCGEU Treasurer

Read more about the re-start plan here: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/covid-19/info/restart><<https://can01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fbcgeu.us9.list-manage.com%2Ftrack%2Fclick%3Fu%3Dc9125e48200e7a60add61b323%26id%3D39aa331215%26e%3Dd3777cb660&data=04%7C01%7CAlyson.Blackstock%40gov.bc.ca%7C62371c5972e042d659dc08d95dc7b514%7C6fdb52003d0d4a8ab036d3685e359adc%7C0%7C0%7C637643934578571864%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWlloiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzliLCJBTil6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCi6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=IDQSMpJeDRx4bgsRZXxwRReuZ3kiLIGfAd3esTalSew%3D&reserved=0>>

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UWU/MoveUP

Get in Touch

Burnaby HQ
604-291-9611 or 1-800-663-1674

Contact your nearest BCGEU Area

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003d0d4a8ab036d3685e359adc%7C0%7C0%7C637643934578581860%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWljojMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzliLCJBTil6lk1haWwiLCJXVCi6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=iwpNWIEHgMiCcHaGkJlu%2FIlgjOxwhD%2BaDZiKdM6jW8%3D&reserved=0>

You're receiving this email because you're a member of the BCGEU. These emails are meant to alert you about matters that could affect your work and worksite. They include updates about collective agreement bargaining, strike votes and notices, member elections to BCGEU locals and contract ratification bulletins.

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Re: FYI. Sorry did not realize this had gone out.

From: Blackstock, Alyson PSA:EX <Alyson.Blackstock@gov.bc.ca>
To: Eso, Mike <Mike.Eso@bcgeu.ca>
Sent: August 12, 2021 12:46:57 PM PDT

Thanks for letting me know. s.13

Sent from my iPhone

On Aug 12, 2021, at 12:37 PM, Eso, Mike <Mike.Eso@bcgeu.ca> wrote:

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Michael Eso
BCGEU Regional Coordinator
Vancouver Island
2994 Douglas Street
Victoria, BC
V8T 4N4
250.208.6339 Cell

public health order

From: Blackstock, Alyson PSA:EX
s.15
To: Eso, Mike <Mike.Eso@bcgeu.ca>
Sent: August 20, 2021 2:49:55 PM PDT

Please see below as discussed:

PHO: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/health/about-bc-s-health-care-system/office-of-the-provincial-health-officer/covid-19/covid-19-pho-order-vaccination-status-information.pdf>

Facilities covered by the Mental Health Act shows that the Youth Forensic Psychiatric Services Inpatient Assessment Unit and Maples Adolescent Treatment Center are covered.

<https://www.health.gov.bc.ca/library/publications/year/2018/facilities-designated-mental-health-act.pdf>

Alyson Blackstock, Assistant Deputy Minister, Employee Relations

| Employee Relations Division | BC Public Service Agency

First Floor, 810 Blanshard Street | Victoria, BC | V8W 2H3 | 778-698-7912 | 250-893-2980 |

AskMyHR: www.gov.bc.ca/myhr/contact

Phone: 250.952.6000 | Toll Free 1.877.277.0772

FW: Executive Message from Lori Wanamaker: COVID-19 Update

From: Blackstock, Alyson PSA:EX
To: Eso, Mike <Mike.Eso@bcgeu.ca>
Sent: October 5, 2021 11:07:45 AM PDT
Attachments: image003.png, image001.png, image003.png, image001.png

FYI – as discussed.

Alyson Blackstock, Assistant Deputy Minister, Employee Relations
| Employee Relations Division | BC Public Service Agency
First Floor, 810 Blanshard Street | Victoria, BC | V8W 2H3 | 778-698-7912 | 250-893-2980 |
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Phone: 250.952.6000 | Toll Free 1.877.277.0772

From: Executive Update PSA:EX <ExecutiveUpdate@gov.bc.ca>
Sent: October 5, 2021 11:04 AM
Subject: Executive Message from Lori Wanamaker: COVID-19 Update

COVID-19 Update

Good morning,

As you know, throughout the COVID-19 pandemic the BC Public Service aligned its response to the advice and direction of the Provincial Health Officer. We also know that vaccination is the safest, most effective measure to reduce the transmission of the virus in our communities.

Late last week, I met with Dr. Bonnie Henry on the next steps for the BC Public Service to support our provincial fight against COVID-19. Following that conversation, I have decided the BC Public Service will require all employees to provide proof they are fully vaccinated beginning November 22, 2021.

To align with this direction, we will further defer the implementation of telework agreements approved under the flexible work policy to November 22 from the current date of October 12. If you are fully vaccinated and wish to return to the workplace before November 22 and activate your telework agreement, you are encouraged and supported to do so in consultation with your supervisor. But you will not be required to until November 22, and at that time you will be expected to confirm you are fully vaccinated using the B.C. Vaccine Card.

I know there may be a small number of you who are unable to be vaccinated for legitimate reasons. You and your supervisor can work with the BC Public Service Agency to assess potential accommodations in those cases.

An initial set of questions and answers is available on [MyHR](#) today for your reference. Please note you do not need to provide proof of vaccination right now.

I ask that you be patient as we develop additional resources over the days ahead, which we will share along with more details on the policy by November 1.

I know the vast majority of you are already fully vaccinated, just like more than 80 per cent of eligible British Columbians across the province. I have heard from a number of you asking that we introduce a vaccination requirement in our workplaces to enhance the level of safety we already provide. All you will need to do November 22 is show your B.C. Vaccine Card to a designated excluded manager just like you are used to doing to visit your favourite restaurant or access other services and events.

For those who are not yet vaccinated, now is the time and I strongly encourage you to do so. The COVID-19 vaccines are a safe, easy step to protect yourselves, your colleagues, your families and your communities. For information on how to get your COVID-19 vaccination in B.C., visit the [provincial vaccine registration website](#). For information on how to get your B.C. Vaccine Card, visit [Proof of vaccination and the BC Vaccine Card](#).

Our workplaces have been safe throughout the pandemic. As more of you return to those workplaces, ensuring we are vaccinated provides one more layer of safety for all of us. It also shows the commitment of all of us in the BC Public Service to support the provincial effort and work together to get through the pandemic.

Sincerely,

Lori Wanamaker
Deputy Minister to the Premier,
Cabinet Secretary and Head of the BC Public Service



Where ideas work

We acknowledge with respect that the BC Public Service operates throughout B.C. on the traditional lands of Indigenous peoples. The BC Public Service is deeply committed to [true and lasting reconciliation](#) with Indigenous peoples in B.C.

Please note: replies to this email will go to Employee News, and will be forwarded to the relevant executive members as appropriate.

RE: [Test] B.C. Gov announces vaccine mandate for public service workers

From: Blackstock, Alyson PSA:EX
s.15
To: Eso, Mike <Mike.Eso@bcgeu.ca>
Sent: October 5, 2021 2:25:20 PM PDT
Thanks.

Alyson Blackstock, Assistant Deputy Minister, Employee Relations
| Employee Relations Division | BC Public Service Agency
First Floor, 810 Blanshard Street | Victoria, BC | V8W 2H3 | 778-698-7912 | 250-893-2980
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From: Eso, Mike <Mike.Eso@bcgeu.ca>
Sent: October 5, 2021 2:13 PM
To: Blackstock, Alyson PSA:EX <Alyson.Blackstock@gov.bc.ca>
Subject: FW: [Test] B.C. Gov announces vaccine mandate for public service workers
Importance: High

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This is going out now.

Michael Eso
BCGEU Regional Coordinator
Vancouver Island
2994 Douglas Street
Victoria, BC
V8T 4N4
250.208.6339 Cell

From: BCGEU <communications@bcgeu.ca>
Sent: October 5, 2021 2:02 PM
To: Communications <Communications@bcgeu.ca>
Subject: [Test] B.C. Gov announces vaccine mandate for public service workers

Important Member Communication

[View this email in your browser](#)



The head of B.C.'s public service announced today that all B.C. public service workers will be required to provide proof of full vaccination beginning November 22, 2021. The current flexible work arrangement has also been deferred to November

22. We haven't seen the full policy as it has not yet been released, and we are waiting to understand what exemptions and accommodations will be in place. Our union will continue to update members when we have additional information.

Our union supports the right of all workers to safe and healthy workplaces. That's why, from the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the BCGEU has pushed for best practice health and safety measures for communities and workplaces including mandatory masks, physical distancing, remote work arrangements, paid sick leave and vaccines for all who are able. And that's why we will continue to call for a mask mandate to be implemented uniformly in all public service workplaces.

In the meantime, if you have not yet been vaccinated and are eligible to do so, here are links to vaccine clinics in your area:

- [Fraser Health](#)
- [Island Health](#)
- [Northern Health](#)
- [Interior Health](#)
- [Vancouver Coastal Health](#)

For more info about the COVID-19 vaccine: [visit the BC CDC](#).

BCGEU headquarters is located on the unceded territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skxwú7mesh (Squamish) & Səlílwətaʔ (Tsleil-Waututh) peoples. Click [here](#) to learn about the traditional lands that you live on.

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affect your work and worksite. They include updates about collective agreement bargaining, strike votes and notices, member elections to BCGEU locals and contract ratification bulletins.

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Union Zoom meeting re vaccine - Oct 19 6pm

From: Blackstock, Alyson PSA:EX
s.15
To: Eso, Mike <Mike.Eso@bcgeu.ca>
Sent: October 12, 2021 3:09:02 PM PDT
Attachments: image002.png

Hey there. Hope you had a good long weekend.

The following screen shot was shared with me and looked interesting. Might be a bit of a stretch to ask but do you mind if one of my staff joins to listen in? They wouldn't say anything of course – just truly curious about the topic and the more we hear the better.

s.22

Alyson Blackstock, Assistant Deputy Minister, Employee Relations
| Employee Relations Division | BC Public Service Agency
First Floor, 810 Blanshard Street | Victoria, BC | V8W 2H3 | 778-698-7912 | 250-893-2980 |
AskMyHR: www.gov.bc.ca/myhr/contact
Phone: 250.952.6000 | Toll Free 1.877.277.0772

RE: COVID-19 Policy

From: Blackstock, Alyson PSA:EX
s.15
To: Eso, Mike <Mike.Eso@bcgeu.ca>
Sent: October 18, 2021 12:27:36 PM PDT
Thanks Mike.

Alyson Blackstock, Assistant Deputy Minister, Employee Relations
| Employee Relations Division | BC Public Service Agency
First Floor, 810 Blanshard Street | Victoria, BC | V8W 2H3 | 778-698-7912 | 250-893-2980 |
AskMyHR: www.gov.bc.ca/myhr/contact
Phone: 250.952.6000 | Toll Free 1.877.277.0772

From: Eso, Mike <Mike.Eso@bcgeu.ca>
Sent: October 18, 2021 12:13 PM
To: Blackstock, Alyson PSA:EX <Alyson.Blackstock@gov.bc.ca>
Subject: COVID-19 Policy
Importance: High

[EXTERNAL] This email came from an external source. Only open attachments or links that you are expecting from a known sender.

Hello.

As the BC Government develops their approach to mandatory vaccination policy, we wanted to bring the following agreement between Canada Post and CUPW to your attention. As you know, Canada Post is a large national employer with more than 60,000 employees. You will note below that they have agreed on a twice weekly testing option for those employees who are not Covid-19 vaccinated.

We wanted to bring this model to your attending as it may provide a less disruptive approach to dealing with this issue.

Thank you for considering this request.

Excerpts and links to the Canada Post agreement follows.

Michael Eso
BCGEU Regional Coordinator
Vancouver Island
2994 Douglas Street
Victoria, BC
V8T 4N4
250.208.6339 Cell

On October 30, members who are actively at work will need to provide accurate and up to date proof of vaccination by phoning a 1-800 number and attesting that they are either “fully vaccinated” or that they have chosen the rapid test option. Be advised that CPC’s current “practice” document specifies that they may require government issued proof of vaccination indicating the dates.

By choosing the rapid test option, you will be required to self test twice (2x) a week prior to entering your workplace and you will be required to attest to your results by again phoning the 1-800 number.

During the period from October 30 to November 15, 2021, CPC will start mailing rapid testing kits, at no costs to the workers, to the homes of those who have chosen the rapid testing option.

If by October 30, you have not selected one of the above options, you will receive an automated phone call reminding you that this is a requirement to continue attending work.

You will have to indicate your choice to CPC before November 15, or you will not be permitted to enter the workplace and will be placed on Leave Without Pay.

See - <https://www.cupw.ca/en/how-and-when-federal-vaccine-mandate-will-affect-canada-post-workplaces>

FW: Executive Message from Lori Wanamaker: October Update

From: Blackstock, Alyson PSA:EX
s.15
To: Eso, Mike <Mike.Eso@bcgeu.ca>
Sent: October 19, 2021 10:19:18 AM PDT
Attachments: image003.png, image002.png, image003.png, image004.png, image001.png, image002.png

Please see Lori Wannamaker's email below that just went out.

Alyson Blackstock, Assistant Deputy Minister, Employee Relations

| Employee Relations Division | BC Public Service Agency

First Floor, 810 Blanshard Street | Victoria, BC | V8W 2H3 | 778-698-7912 | 250-893-2980 |

AskMyHR: www.gov.bc.ca/myhr/contact

Phone: 250.952.6000 | Toll Free 1.877.277.0772

From: Executive Update PSA:EX <ExecutiveUpdate@gov.bc.ca>

Sent: October 19, 2021 10:15 AM

Subject: Executive Message from Lori Wanamaker: October Update

October Update

Good morning,

The cooler weather is settling in across the province and I know some of you have already seen your first snowfall of the season. This is, of course, our second fall living with the COVID-19 pandemic. My thanks to all of you once again for all you have done to support British Columbians over these many long months.

I have heard feedback from many of you regarding the proof of vaccination policy I announced two weeks ago. Most have expressed your gratitude and support for us taking this step in the BC Public Service. And some of you have shared your very heartfelt concerns.

Many other organizations across the broader public sector have announced similar measures. I am confident the proof of vaccination policy is an important and necessary step to ensure our workplaces remain as safe as possible for each of us and for the public we serve. It is not a decision I made lightly, and we are assessing all the essential considerations as we finalize the policy, which will be shared with all of you by November 1.

This policy is challenging for some and I know individual decisions regarding vaccination are important and personal. I appreciate this topic may also be the cause of some anxiety and concern. If you need counselling support, resources are available through the [Employee and Family Assistance Services](#). But regardless of how any of us may feel about this topic, let's remember to treat each other with respect, professionalism and kindness.

No matter how passionate we feel on this or any topic, none of us are exempt from the expectations set out for all BC Public Service employees in the [Standards of Conduct](#). We all took an oath that commits us to put the public interest ahead of our own personal interests. Vaccination against COVID-19 is without question in the public interest. The vaccines are proven to be safe and effective, and that is an evidence-based determination made by expert colleagues across the public service at the provincial and federal level.

Some of you have raised concerns about details of the policy not being available until November 1, which may influence your decision to get vaccinated. I urge you not to wait. November 22 was chosen because it allows sufficient time since the announcement on October 5 to become fully vaccinated even if you had not received your first dose. The requirement for vaccination was clear, as was the scope of the potential consequences for not meeting that requirement, neither of which are expected to change on November 1. For information on how to get your COVID-19 vaccination in B.C., visit the [provincial vaccine registration website](#).

Quick Items to Note:

- This week we launched a new corporate intranet for the public service – [Compass](#) – which will replace the @Work intranet that has been our primary communications channel for almost 15 years.
- Take the [Anti-Racism Initiatives Experience Survey](#), a public engagement aiming to improve the way B.C. identifies and addresses systemic racism in government policies, programs and services.
- Participate in the [Great British Columbia ShakeOut](#), happening Thursday, October 21 at 10:21 am. ShakeOut is the province's annual earthquake drill, preparing British Columbians for what to do in the event of an earthquake.
- On November 4, the day of the new moon, many Hindu, Jain, Sikh and Buddhist communities are celebrating Diwali. Diwali is a festival of lights with many traditions, including lighting candles and gathering as a family. Happy Diwali to all those celebrating.

- The PECSF campaign is on now until November 5. During the campaign, [donate](#) to your charitable organization of choice.

Thank you, as always, for all the work you are all doing. One thing that hasn't changed throughout the pandemic is how hard you all work on behalf of government and our province. Your efforts remain as valued and valuable as ever.

Lori Wanamaker
Deputy Minister to the Premier,
Cabinet Secretary and Head of the BC Public Service



We acknowledge with respect that the BC Public Service operates throughout B.C. on the traditional lands of Indigenous peoples. The BC Public Service is deeply committed to [true and lasting reconciliation](#) with Indigenous peoples in B.C.

Please note: replies to this email will go to Employee News, and will be forwarded to the relevant executive members as appropriate.

Anti-vaccine Canada-Wide Sickout - Monday October 25th

From: Blackstock, Alyson PSA:EX
s.15
To: Eso, Mike <Mike.Eso@bcgeu.ca>
Sent: October 22, 2021 4:35:24 PM PDT
Attachments: image001.jpg

As discussed.

s.22

FW: Executive Message from Lori Wanamaker: COVID-19 Vaccination Policy for the BC Public Service

From: Blackstock, Alyson PSA:EX
s.15
To: Eso, Mike <Mike.Eso@bcgeu.ca>
Sent: November 1, 2021 10:22:49 AM PDT
Attachments: image003.png, image002.png, image001.png, image002.png, image001.png, image002.png

Please see below. Let me know if there are questions.

Alyson Blackstock, Assistant Deputy Minister, Employee Relations

| Employee Relations Division | BC Public Service Agency
First Floor, 810 Blanshard Street | Victoria, BC | V8W 2H3 | 778-698-7912 | 250-893-2980 |
AskMyHR: www.gov.bc.ca/myhr/contact
Phone: 250.952.6000 | Toll Free 1.877.277.0772

From: Executive Update PSA:EX <ExecutiveUpdate@gov.bc.ca>

Sent: November 1, 2021 10:19 AM

Subject: Executive Message from Lori Wanamaker: COVID-19 Vaccination Policy for the BC Public Service

COVID-19 Vaccination Policy for the BC Public Service

Good morning.

On October 5, I announced the BC Public Service would require its employees to provide proof of vaccination against COVID-19 effective November 22, 2021. At the time, I committed to provide details of this policy by November 1, and those details are now available on the [MyHR website](#).

I know the vast majority of you are already fully vaccinated, along with nearly 90 per cent of all eligible British Columbians. For you, the most significant impact of this policy will be to further enhance the safety of our workplaces and give you peace of mind that those you work alongside also have the protection provided by the safe and effective vaccines available to help us overcome COVID-19.

I also know that for some of you this is challenging, and I assure you we have developed this policy with due consideration to all the factors at play. But above all we have been guided by the BC Public Service's obligations to take all appropriate measures to ensure the safety of its employees and the public we serve.

I encourage you to review the material available, so you are fully informed of the requirements and implications of this policy. Key aspects of the proof of vaccination policy include:

- Beginning November 8, your supervisor or another designated excluded manager in your ministry can ask you to provide proof of vaccination using your B.C. Vaccine Card. You must provide that by November 22. Only information required under the policy will be collected, and it will not be shared other than as required to fulfill the requirements of the policy.
- The policy applies to any employee working for the BC Public Service, whether they work onsite in a public service workplace or remotely. An employee who is unvaccinated on November 22 will be placed on unpaid leave for three months. After three months of being placed on leave without pay, employees who have not become at least partially vaccinated may be terminated.
- An employee who is partially vaccinated on November 22 – meaning they have received one dose of vaccine – will have up to 35 days after the date of their first dose to become fully vaccinated or they will be placed on unpaid leave. For information on how to get your COVID-19 vaccination in B.C., visit the [provincial vaccine registration website](#).
- Effective November 8, 2021, employees may request an exemption from the vaccine requirement based on a medical condition or other protected ground as defined under B.C.'s Human Rights Code. Information on the accommodation process is available [on MyHR](#).

We have also updated our existing [Occupational Safety and Health policy](#) to require anyone entering employee-only areas of indoor public service workplaces to also be fully vaccinated effective December 13, 2021. This does not apply to members of the public entering our workplace or interacting with employees to access government services. This longer timeline for non-employees is in recognition of the fact that they will only be made aware of this policy requirement beginning today. Further information will be shared with ministries on how this applies to contractors and other partners in the near future.

As we work through the implementation of this policy, I trust we will all continue to uphold our obligations as public servants and we will all remember to treat one another with kindness, caring and respect. Introducing this policy is not a choice we have taken lightly, and I remain confident it is the right choice for the BC Public Service. Thank you for your professionalism and integrity, now and always.

Lori Wanamaker

Deputy Minister to the Premier,
Cabinet Secretary and Head of the BC Public Service



We acknowledge with respect that the BC Public Service operates throughout B.C. on the traditional lands of Indigenous peoples. The BC Public Service is deeply committed to [true and lasting reconciliation](#) with Indigenous peoples in B.C. **Please note:** replies to this email will go to Employee News, and will be forwarded to the relevant executive members as appropriate.

links

From: Blackstock, Alyson PSA:EX
s.15
To: Eso, Mike <Mike.Eso@bcgeu.ca>
Sent: November 1, 2021 10:40:54 AM PDT

Let me know if there are problems accessing these. They should be all public.

Page with a bunch of links (should be public):

[COVID-19 vaccination policy for BC Public Service employees - Province of British Columbia \(gov.bc.ca\)](#)

Covid policy (policy #25 – public link):

[Core Policy Objectives & Human Resources Policies - Province of British Columbia \(gov.bc.ca\)](#)

Provincial vaccine registration website (link is public):

[How to get vaccinated for COVID-19 - Province of British Columbia \(gov.bc.ca\)](#)

Alyson Blackstock, Assistant Deputy Minister, Employee Relations

| Employee Relations Division | BC Public Service Agency

First Floor, 810 Blanshard Street | Victoria, BC | V8W 2H3 | 778-698-7912 | 250-893-2980 |

AskMyHR: www.gov.bc.ca/myhr/contact

Phone: 250.952.6000 | Toll Free 1.877.277.0772

Page 085 of 120

Withheld pursuant to/removed as

s.13 ; s.15 ; s.17

Page 086 of 120 to/à Page 107 of 120

Withheld pursuant to/removed as

s.13 ; s.17

Letter

From: Blackstock, Alyson PSA:EX
s.15
To: Eso, Mike <Mike.Eso@bcgeu.ca>
Sent: November 18, 2021 2:12:30 PM PST
Attachments: 6804 2021 Nov 17 - S.Smith Vaccination Policy Signed Response.pdf

Attached is a copy of the response.

Alyson Blackstock, Assistant Deputy Minister, Employee Relations
| Employee Relations Division | BC Public Service Agency
First Floor, 810 Blanshard Street | Victoria, BC | V8W 2H3 | 778-698-7912 | 250-893-2980 |
AskMyHR: www.gov.bc.ca/myhr/contact
Phone: 250.952.6000 | Toll Free 1.877.277.0772



Where ideas work

November 16, 2021

CLIFF # 6804

Stephanie Smith
President
BC General Employees' Union
2994 Douglas Street
Victoria, BC V8T 4N4

Dear Stephanie:

Re: BC Public Service Vaccination Policy

Thank you for your letter dated November 2, 2021 in which you raised two issues regarding the BC Public Service Vaccination Policy.

The first issue raised was in respect to your concerns of an "inconsistent application" of the BC Public Service Vaccination policy and the BC Pension Corporation's vaccination policy. To further explore your concerns, the BC Public Service Agency is currently in communication with the BC Pension Corporation about their Vaccination Policy.

The second issue raised in your letter is that the November 22, 2021 date for vaccination needs to be applied to anyone entering staff only areas rather than allowing other employers with contracts in place prior to November 1 to have until December 13, 2021 to confirm to the contract manager that any of their employees working in BC Public Service workplaces are fully vaccinated.

As you are aware, I notified BC Public Service employees on October 5 and 19, 2021 that a proof of vaccination policy was being developed and would be released on November 1, 2021. In addition, in my October 19 email to all BC Public Service employees, I urged employees not to wait until on or after November 1 to be vaccinated and indicated that November 22 was chosen because it allowed BC Public Service employees sufficient time since the announcement on October 5 to become fully vaccinated even if they had not received their first dose. I further indicated to Public Service employees that the requirement for vaccination was clear, as was the scope of the potential consequences for not meeting that requirement, neither of which were expected to change on November 1.

The extended timeline for staff from other employers recognizes that staff from other employers were not notified of the requirement until November 1 and their employees may require more time (beyond November 22) to become fully vaccinated. The December 13 date was selected

.../2

because this allowed for the same amount of notice provided to BC Public Service employees of the requirement to be vaccinated. A shortened timeline may impede the ability of those contractors to deliver their contracted services, which would have negative impacts for both the public and BC Public Service employees.

Our workplaces have been safe throughout the pandemic, including while a number of Public Service employees continued to work at public service worksites. As more employees return to our workplaces, we continue to put in place those measures necessary to keep our employees safe during this stage of the pandemic.

Yours sincerely,



Lori Wanamaker
Deputy Minister to the Premier,
Cabinet Secretary and Head of the BC Public Service

pc: Bobbi Sadler, Deputy Minister, BC Public Service Agency
Alyson Blackstock, Assistant Deputy Minister, BC Public Service Agency
Rueben Bronee, Executive Lead, BC Public Service Agency



November 2, 2021

Via email only Lori.Wanamaker@gov.bc.ca

Lori Wanamaker
Deputy Minister to the Premier
PO BOX 9041 STN PROV GOVT
Victoria, BC
V8W 9E1

Dear Deputy Minister

I am writing to you in your capacity as Deputy Minister to the Premier and head of the Public Service.

The BCGEU has had an opportunity to review the policy released yesterday on the requirement for public service workers to provide proof of vaccination from COVID-19.

Based on this preliminary review, I want to bring two issues to your attention.

First, I'd like to draw your attention to what we see as an inconsistent application of this policy. The BCGEU has repeatedly raised concerns with PSA staff about a policy which the BC Pension Corporation has issued to deal with the same issue. The Pension Corporation has put into place a policy which provides for unvaccinated employees to remain working subject to weekly COVID testing.

Simply put, the BCGEU believes that it is fundamentally unfair for unvaccinated employees within the public service and in the same BCGEU bargaining unit to be treated differently. Quite literally, on one side of the street, unvaccinated employees working at the Pension Corporation will continue to be drawing a pay cheque subject to weekly testing. At the same time, unvaccinated employees in the remainder of the public service are facing leave without pay and potential termination if they do not get vaccinated. This is fundamentally flawed and unfair.

To date, our respective staff have been discussing this issue for some time without resolve.

The BCGEU believes that as the Head of the Public Service it is important that we bring this matter to your attention to ensure that all public service employees are treated in a consistent manner. We anticipate our need to communicate to our membership about this very soon and we would appreciate an early resolve to this issue.

VICTORIA - AREA 1

2994 Douglas St.
Victoria, BC V8T 4N4
Phone: (250) 388-9948 / 1-800-667-1033
Fax: (250) 384-8060 / 1-800-946-0246

We are located on the unceded traditional territory of the Lekwungen people, known today as the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations.

A secondary issue I would like to raise involves the return to office date for public service employees which we understand is scheduled for later this month. The policy released today says that:

"...Staff from other employers with contracts in place prior to November 1 must confirm to the contract manager by December 13 that any of their employees working in BC Public Service workplaces are fully vaccinated...."

While we understand the rationale for this policy, it will mean that unvaccinated staff from other employers will have access to staff only areas of public service worksites. For health and safety reasons, the November 22nd date for vaccination needs to be applied to anyone entering staff only areas.

Thank you for your consideration of these issues. We anticipate we may have other questions or issues once we have had a further opportunity to review the details of the policy. We appreciate the ongoing efforts of yourself and the Public Service Agency staff to jointly work to protect the health and safety of public service workers.

Best regards



Stephanie Smith
President

SS:ME:ST
MoveUP

cc Public Service Bargaining Committee

RE: Letter

From: Blackstock, Alyson PSA:EX
s.15
To: Eso, Mike <Mike.Eso@bcgeu.ca>
Sent: November 18, 2021 3:16:46 PM PST

That's correct. No changes to the dates.

Alyson Blackstock, Assistant Deputy Minister, Employee Relations
| Employee Relations Division | BC Public Service Agency
First Floor, 810 Blanshard Street | Victoria, BC | V8W 2H3 | 778-698-7912 | 250-893-2980
AskMyHR: www.gov.bc.ca/myhr/contact
Phone: 250.952.6000 | Toll Free 1.877.277.0772

From: Eso, Mike <Mike.Eso@bcgeu.ca>
Sent: November 18, 2021 3:16 PM
To: Blackstock, Alyson PSA:EX <Alyson.Blackstock@gov.bc.ca>
Subject: RE: Letter

[EXTERNAL] This email came from an external source. Only open attachments or links that you are expecting from a known sender.

Got it. Thanks.

Also to be clear the return to office date remains unchanged as well?

Michael Eso
BCGEU Regional Coordinator
Vancouver Island
2994 Douglas Street
Victoria, BC
V8T 4N4
250.208.6339 Cell

From: Blackstock, Alyson PSA:EX <Alyson.Blackstock@gov.bc.ca>
Sent: Thursday, November 18, 2021 2:13 PM
To: Eso, Mike <Mike.Eso@bcgeu.ca>
Subject: Letter

Attached is a copy of the response.

Alyson Blackstock, Assistant Deputy Minister, Employee Relations
| Employee Relations Division | BC Public Service Agency
First Floor, 810 Blanshard Street | Victoria, BC | V8W 2H3 | 778-698-7912 | 250-893-2980
AskMyHR: www.gov.bc.ca/myhr/contact
Phone: 250.952.6000 | Toll Free 1.877.277.0772

Public Service COVID-19 Vaccination Regulation

From: Blackstock, Alyson PSA:EX
s.15
To: Eso, Mike <Mike.Eso@bcgeu.ca>
Sent: November 19, 2021 12:00:25 PM PST
Attachments: 284_2021.pdf

Hi Mike,

Attached you will find a copy of the Public Service COVID-19 Vaccination Regulation.

Alyson Blackstock, Assistant Deputy Minister, Employee Relations

| Employee Relations Division | BC Public Service Agency

First Floor, 810 Blanshard Street | Victoria, BC | V8W 2H3 | 778-698-7912 | 250-893-2980 |

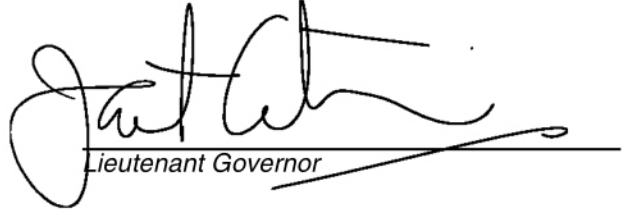
AskMyHR: www.gov.bc.ca/myhr/contact

Phone: 250.952.6000 | Toll Free 1.877.277.0772

PROVINCE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
ORDER OF THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR IN COUNCIL

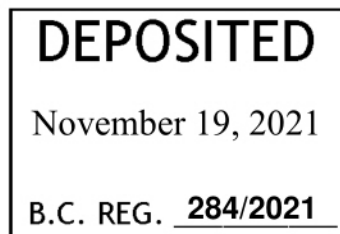
Order in Council No. 627

, Approved and Ordered November 19, 2021


Lieutenant Governor

Executive Council Chambers, Victoria

On the recommendation of the undersigned, the Lieutenant Governor, by and with the advice and consent of the Executive Council, orders that the attached Public Service COVID-19 Vaccination Regulation is made.





Minister of Finance



Presiding Member of the Executive Council

(This part is for administrative purposes only and is not part of the Order.)

Authority under which Order is made:

Act and section: *Public Service Act*, R.S.B.C. 1996, c. 385, s. 25

Other: _____

R10560943

PUBLIC SERVICE COVID-19 VACCINATION REGULATION

Definition

- 1** In this regulation, “**COVID-19 Vaccination Policy**” means the policy entitled “Human Resources Policy 25 – COVID-19 Vaccination” that was issued under section 5 (4) of the *Public Service Act* on November 1, 2021.

Term and condition of employment

- 2** The COVID-19 Vaccination Policy is a term and condition of employment for employees.

Termination deemed to be for just cause

- 3** If an employee is terminated under the COVID-19 Vaccination Policy, the employee is deemed to have been dismissed for just cause.

Boyd, Melissa CITZ:EX

From: Tsui, Korina PSA:EX
Sent: October 5, 2021 2:42 PM
To: BCPSA Agency Senior LR Specialists
Subject: FW: [Test] B.C. Gov announces vaccine mandate for public service workers

Importance: High

FYI

Korina K.H. Tsui, Director, Labour Relations

Labour Relations Branch | Employee Relations | BC Public Service Agency
800 – 865 Hornby Street | Vancouver BC | V6Z 2G3
Phone: 604.360.4169

AskMyHR: www.gov.bc.ca/myhr/contact
Phone: 250.952.6000 | Toll Free 1.877.277.0772

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Where ideas work

From: Blackstock, Alyson PSA:EX <Alyson.Blackstock@gov.bc.ca>
Sent: October 5, 2021 2:25 PM
To: Tsui, Korina PSA:EX <Korina.Tsui@gov.bc.ca>; Phillips, Andrew PSA:EX <Andrew.Phillips@gov.bc.ca>
Subject: FW: [Test] B.C. Gov announces vaccine mandate for public service workers
Importance: High

FYI

Alyson Blackstock, Assistant Deputy Minister, Employee Relations

| Employee Relations Division | BC Public Service Agency
First Floor, 810 Blanshard Street | Victoria, BC | V8W 2H3 | 778-698-7912 | 250-893-2980
AskMyHR: www.gov.bc.ca/myhr/contact
Phone: 250.952.6000 | Toll Free 1.877.277.0772

From: Eso, Mike <Mike.Eso@bcgeu.ca>
Sent: October 5, 2021 2:13 PM
To: Blackstock, Alyson PSA:EX <Alyson.Blackstock@gov.bc.ca>
Subject: FW: [Test] B.C. Gov announces vaccine mandate for public service workers
Importance: High

[EXTERNAL] This email came from an external source. Only open attachments or links that you are expecting from a known sender.

This is going out now.

Michael Eso
BCGEU Regional Coordinator
Vancouver Island
2994 Douglas Street
Victoria, BC
V8T 4N4
250.208.6339 Cell

From: BCGEU <communications@bcgeu.ca>


Sent: October 5, 2021 2:02 PM

To: Communications <Communications@bcgeu.ca>

Subject: [Test] B.C. Gov announces vaccine mandate for public service workers

Important Member Communication

[View this email in your browser](#)



The head of B.C.'s public service announced today that all B.C. public service workers will be required to provide proof of full vaccination beginning November 22, 2021. The current flexible work arrangement has also been deferred to November 22. We haven't seen the full policy as it has not yet been released, and we are waiting to understand what exemptions and accommodations will be in place. Our union will continue to update members when we have additional information.

Our union supports the right of all workers to safe and healthy workplaces. That's why, from the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the BCGEU has pushed for best practice health and safety measures for communities and workplaces including mandatory masks, physical distancing, remote work arrangements, paid sick leave and vaccines for all who are able. And that's why we will continue to call for a mask mandate to be implemented uniformly in all public service workplaces.

In the meantime, if you have not yet been vaccinated and are eligible to do so, here are links to vaccine clinics in your area:

- [Fraser Health](#)
- [Island Health](#)
- [Northern Health](#)
- [Interior Health](#)
- [Vancouver Coastal Health](#)

For more info about the COVID-19 vaccine: [visit the BC CDC](#).

BCGEU headquarters is located on the unceded territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skxwú7mesh (Squamish) & Səlilwətaʔ (Tsleil-Waututh) peoples. Click [here](#) to learn about the traditional lands that you live on.

[Find Key Services Here](#)

- Your Collective Agreement
- Pension Information
- BCGEU News & Events
- Update your contact info

Connect to Us



BCGEU
4911 Canada Way
Burnaby, BC V5G3W3
Canada

[Add us to your address book](#)

Get in Touch

Burnaby HQ

604-291-9611 or 1-800-663-1674

Contact your nearest BCGEU Area Office

You're receiving this email because you're a member of the BCGEU. These emails are meant to alert you about matters that could affect your work and worksite. They include updates about collective agreement bargaining, strike votes and notices, member elections to BCGEU locals and contract ratification bulletins.

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UWU/MoveUP

