

COVID-19 Safe Work Procedures – Client in-person reporting

Purpose

Safe Work Procedures for COVID-19 and droplet borne viruses will help reduce the risk of exposure during work activities. This procedure may not address all the circumstances that may put a worker at risk of contracting or transmitting COVID-19 while conducting in-person, in office meetings with clients. If you're conducting work activities that are not reflected in this procedure, please speak to your supervisor to ensure appropriate safe work practices are being followed. If a safe work practices is not available for the required work task submit an [AskMyHR](#) service request using the category Myself (or) My Team or Organization > COVID-19.

Mode of COVID-19 Transmission

COVID-19 is spread in droplets that are expelled from the body when an infected person coughs, sneezes, talks, and breathes. Droplets travel a short distance through the air (less than two metres) and can be deposited on inanimate surfaces or in the eyes, nose, or mouth. Scenarios that create an increased risk include:

- Exposure to potentially infectious respiratory droplets via close contact (within two metres) with a COVID-19 positive person experiencing respiratory symptoms (e.g., sneezing, coughing).
- Transfer of the virus via direct physical contact (e.g., touching contaminated skin/hands) with a COVID-19 positive person.
- Contact with an inanimate object, such as contaminated surfaces and objects, which can serve as the vehicle for transmission of the COVID-19 virus. This includes contaminated blood and bodily fluids (BBF). Follow your workplace specific BBF protocols for clean up (e.g., call CBRE).

A low risk of contracting COVID-19 from exposure to feces has been established. Workplaces that have identified a risk of exposure to feces will follow the controls in their blood and bodily fluids exposure control plan to reduce likelihood of contracting the disease.

Signs & Symptoms of COVID-19

Common symptoms are fever, tiredness and a dry cough. Some patients may have aches and pains, nasal congestion, runny nose, sore throat, vomiting or diarrhea. These symptoms are usually mild and begin gradually. They are similar to a cold or flu and may take up to 14 days to appear.

The [BC COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool](#) is available for anyone that develops symptoms and can be used to help determine if you need further assessment or testing for COVID-19.

Standard Precautions for COVID-19 in the Workplace

Standard Precautions are a group of infection-prevention practices that apply to all workers, regardless of suspected or confirmed COVID-19 cases encountered. Standard Precautions for COVID-19 or any flu-like illness include:

- Physical distancing: keeping 2 meters of space between staff or clients when possible;
- Cough and sneeze etiquette;
- Not touching your face;
- Hand washing/sanitizing;
- Staying home when sick and self-isolation if required or directed to do so.

Resources

Refer to the following links for up-to-date general information on COVID-19:

- [BC Center for Disease Control \(BCCDC\)](#)
- [Public Health Agency of Canada \(PHAC\)](#)

Refer to the following link for specific questions related to the BC Public Service's response to COVID-19:

- [MyHR BC Public Service Agency \(BCPSA\)](#)

Safe Work Plan

All existing Safe Work Procedures from the workplace's Occupational Health and Safety Plan must still be followed.

In planning for in-person client reporting (without a full barrier such as a secure interview room), the following should be considered at a minimum:

- Staff will review the workplace's COVID-19 Safety Plan which outlines standard precautions, hygiene practices, and how to ensure two-metre physical distancing is maintained whenever possible;
- Staff will ensure necessary PPE and cleaning/disinfecting products are available to support this safe work procedure;
- Staff will discuss with their supervisor and list any additional protective measures that may be unique to the activities being performed;
- If working with others (e.g., additional staff, practicum student, client support worker), ensure COVID-19 safety will be discussed and that all staff involved are taking necessary precautions.

Pre-Screening Clients for Appointments

When booking appointments to meet with clients, inform the client of the current COVID-19 outbreak and ask the client the following questions via telephone:

- Have you travelled outside of Canada within the last 14 days?;

- Have you or any member of the household had close contact with a confirmed or probable case of COVID-19?;
- Is there anyone in their home with a fever and/or a cough or shortness of breath who has travelled to anywhere outside of BC and/or Canada in the 14 days before they were ill?;
- Have you been advised by health personnel to self isolate?

If the answer is yes to any of these questions, schedule a virtual meeting and advise the local manager in case further action is required.

If the answer is no to all of these questions, book the appointment and advise the client of COVID-19 safety protocols at the worksite including that they will be:

- Asked a series of health screening questions upon their arrival; and
- Required to abide by the safe work practices of the worksite including hand hygiene practices, maintaining physical distancing, and wearing a mask if physical distancing cannot be maintained.

If a client reports unscheduled, ask them the health screening questions from the *Upon Arrival of Client* section.

Preparing the Meeting Space

The following steps should be undertaken by the employee before the client is brought into the secure area:

- Arrange the meeting in an approved client interview space where physical distancing can be maintained; interview spaces are approved through the workplace assessment process and may require a removable plexiglass barrier in addition to physical distancing. If a plexiglass barrier is not required by the workplace assessment, staff may still choose to use it.
- Ensure the client chair is, at minimum, 2 metres away from area in which staff will be working;
- If being used, ensure the plexiglass barrier is in the correct position;
- Remove items from the work surface that encourage the client to touch surfaces (e.g., business cards, toys, decorative objects).

Upon Arrival of Client

Health Screening Questions

From the front counter or in a secure interview room, ask the client the following health screening questions from the BCCDC online assessment:

- 1. Are you experiencing any of the following?**
 - Severe difficulty breathing (e.g. struggling to breathe or speaking in single words);
 - Severe chest pain;
 - Having a very hard time waking up;
 - Feeling confused; or
 - Losing consciousness;

- If yes, stop the appointment. Tell the client to go to emergency immediately or call 9-1-1.
- Respectfully ask the client to cover their mouth and nose with a tissue and practice physical distancing;
- Provide a disposable mask for them to use until they get to a hospital or are under medical care;
- Inform your supervisor so any necessary cleaning protocols can be implemented.

2. Are you experiencing any of the following?

- Mild to moderate shortness of breath;
- Inability to lie down because of difficulty breathing;
- Chronic health conditions that you are having difficulty managing because of difficulty breathing;
- If yes, stop the appointment. Tell the client to contact their doctor or call 8-1-1, Health Link BC, and speak to a nurse;
- Respectfully ask the client to cover their mouth and nose with a tissue and practice physical distancing;
- Provide a disposable mask for them to use until they get home;
- Inform your supervisor so any necessary cleaning protocols can be implemented.

3. Are you experiencing any of the following?

- Cold, flu, or COVID-19 like symptoms, **even mild ones**;
- Have you travelled to any countries outside Canada (including the United States) within the last 14 days?;
- Did you provide care or have close contact with a person with a confirmed COVID-19?;
- If yes, stop the appointment. Tell the client to get tested for COVID-19 and self-isolate for at least 14 days;
- Respectfully ask the client to cover their mouth and nose with a tissue and practice physical distancing;
- Provide a disposable mask for them to use until they get home;
- Inform your supervisor so any necessary cleaning protocols can be implemented.

If the client answers no to all of the above questions, proceed with the meeting.

General Health Protocols

- Explain that physical distancing boundaries and use of PPE is for the protection of the client as well as the staff;
- Request the client practice cough and sneezing etiquette;
- Do not allow the client to bring guests into the meeting space;
- Ask the client to wash their hands or use provided hand sanitizer before coming into the meeting space. If they refuse, do not allow the client into the secure area of the office. You may proceed with the interview in a secure interview room if available.

Escorting the client to the meeting space

- Ensure a 2-meter physical distance is maintained with the client while escorting them to the meeting space. If you can maintain a 2-metre distance a face mask is not required.
- If a 2-meter physical distance cannot be maintained while escorting the client to the meeting space:
 - wash or sanitize your hands then don a face mask, touching only the strings, making sure they are correctly positioned and adjusted. Refer to the Safe Work Protocol for Non Medical (cloth) masks from the available [Safe Work Procedures](#).
 - Do not touch your face or the mask until it is time to take the mask off.
 - A plastic face shield may be used in addition to a mask, if desired. Use of a face shield is not required.
 - Instruct the client to sanitize hands with provided hand-sanitizer and don their own mask.
- **If the client begins to cough and sneeze and does not use or refuses physical distancing and good hygiene practices, ask them to leave and immediately inform your supervisor.**

During the meeting

- Approved interview spaces will allow for the maintenance of a 2-meter physical distance between clients and staff. Ensure this 2-meter physical distance is maintained at all times.
- If a plexiglass barrier is being used, ensure the barrier is in the correct location. Remain on the opposite side of the barrier from the client at all times.
- Staff may choose to wear a face mask or face shield during the meeting, although neither are required as long a 2-metre physical distance is maintained.
- The risk of contacting COVID 19 from handling documents is low. If handling documents from clients is necessary, refer to *Handling Documents in the Office and Field* from the available [Safe Work Procedures](#);
- Provide recipient their own pen if documents need to be signed. Disinfect used pens;
- **If the client begins to cough and sneeze and does not use or refuses physical distancing and good hygiene practices, ask them to leave and immediately inform your supervisor.**

After the meeting

- At the end of the meeting you may ask the client to use a provided sani-wipe or disinfectant to disinfect the client side of the interview space. This step is optional as interview rooms are subject to enhanced cleaning protocols;
- Escort the client out of the meeting area and offer the provided hand sanitizer for the client to use;
- Clean the staff portion of the work area and disinfect surfaces or objects in the meeting area following the [General Cleaning Procedures](#) from the available [Safe Work Procedures on MyHR](#);

- If in use, properly doff/take off face mask and dispose in an open garbage container with bag liner. Tie the bag closed when you are done and put it in the kitchen garbage as this is emptied daily;
- Wash hands for at least 20 seconds or, when soap and water is not available, use hand sanitizer.

Compliance

If the controls in this ES Safe Work Protocol are implemented, staff trained, and ongoing monitoring of the effectiveness of the controls is established, Community Corrections will be complying with the Provincial Health Officer's guidance and WorkSafeBC requirements for a COVID19 workplace safety plan that employers assess the risk of and mitigate the transmission of COVID-19.

Are You Performing Other Work Activities?

If you're performing other work activities not covered here, please review the full list of [COVID-19 Safe Work Procedures](#) on MyHR.

For assistance with additional procedures, submit an [AskMyHR](#) service request using the category Myself (or) My Team or Organization > COVID-19.