



COMMUNICABLE DISEASE PLAN  
JANUARY 2022

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## 1.0 Overview

### Purpose

The purpose of this guidance document is to provide District of Summerland staff with important information that is required to help prevent communicable disease.

### Public Health Directives

The Provincial Health Officer is the senior public health official for B.C. and is responsible for monitoring the health of the population across the province, providing independent advice to the ministers and public officials on public health issues.

The responsibilities of the Provincial Health Officer (PHO) are outlined in the *Public Health Act* and include the following:

- provide independent advice to the ministers and public officials on public health issues;
- monitor the health of the population of B.C. and advise on public health issues and on the need for legislation, policies and practices;
- recommend actions to improve the health and wellness of the population of BC;
- deliver reports that are in the public interest on the health of the population and on government's progress in achieving population health targets;
- establish standards of practice for and conduct performance reviews of Medical Health Officers; and
- work with the BC Centre for Disease Control and Prevention and BC's Medical Health Officers across the province to fulfill their legislated mandates on disease control and health protection.

Employers must be prepared to implement or maintain additional measures at times when the risk of communicable disease in their region or workplace is elevated, as advised and directed by the Provincial Health Officer. Public Health's specific guidance for a particular communicable disease will be followed where their information differs from this document.

### WorkSafeBC Directives (Workers Compensation Act/OHS Regulation Requirements)

WorkSafeBC is a provincial agency dedicated to promoting safe and healthy workplaces across BC. They partner with workers and employers to prevent work-related injury, disease, and disability. Their services include education, prevention, compensation and support for injured workers, and no-fault insurance to protect employers and workers.

WorkSafeBC helps businesses meet their obligations under the *Workers Compensation Act* and the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation. All employers in British Columbia have an obligation under the *Act* to ensure the health and safety of workers and other parties at their workplace.

To assist employers in the fundamental components of communicable disease prevention, WorkSafeBC has developed [Communicable disease prevention: A guide for employers](#). This guide describes a four-step process to help employers reduce the risk of communicable disease in their workplace, which involves understanding the level of risk in the workplace, application of the fundamentals and

implementing appropriate measures, communicating policies and protocols to all workers, and updating measures and safeguards as required.

Workers have three key rights:

- the right to know about hazards in the workplace;
- the right to participate in health and safety activities in the workplace; and
- the right to refuse unsafe work.

The District of Summerland has established the following communication plan:

### Recognize Hazards/Assess Risks

Every District of Summerland workplace is unique. Department heads must regularly assess all the hazards within their operations, taking appropriate steps to eliminate or control the associated risk. This process is referred to as a risk assessment.

Within the District of Summerland, there are many routine situations where staff will have contact with customers, coworkers, and the physical environment itself (surfaces, doors, equipment etc.). During times of outbreaks, these encounters could give rise to contact with communicable diseases, if not controlled adequately.

All departments must think about the risks in their workplace and take steps to control them. Such controls will include adhering to current public health orders, if applicable, public health advice, as well as implementing best practices to keep your employees and customers safe.

When selecting a safeguard or a combination of safeguards, always start at the top of the hierarchy outlined below to control the hazards. Choose a less effective safeguard only when more effective solutions are impracticable and continuously monitor to ensure they are providing the best level of protection to workers.

The hierarchy of controls (in order of their effectiveness):

**Elimination or substitution:** Has the employer fully considered eliminating or postponing work tasks that may create a risk of exposure?

**Engineering controls:** Are engineering controls, such as physical barriers, practicable?

**Administrative controls:** Has the employer fully considered how work practices can be altered to minimize exposure, such as physical distancing or enhanced cleaning protocols?

**Personal protective equipment (PPE):** This last form of protection should only be considered after careful consideration of the previous control measures.

## 2.0 Stay Home When Your Sick

### What Employees and Employers Should Know

When sick, all employees should stay home and follow public health recommendations. Employees are recommended to call the 811 Provincial Health Information and Advice phone line and follow any given direction.

Additional information regarding public health recommendations can be found at:

- [Healthlink BC - Disease Prevention](#)
- [BCCDC Communicable Disease Control Manual](#)

### **If you become sick at work**

Workers who have symptoms upon arrival to work or become ill during the day should promptly separate themselves from other workers, inform their supervisors and go home.

An important way to reduce the spread of communicable diseases is to keep sick people away from those who are not sick.

Employees are to stay home if they are sick until symptoms have improved, as per direction from the 811 Provincial Health Information and Advice phone line. The following link are available to seek additional information regarding COVID-19 and guidelines for self-monitoring and self-isolation:

- [BCCDC on COVID-19](#)
- [BCCDC on Self-Isolation and Self Monitoring](#)

## **3.0 Hygiene/Cleaning**

### **Personal Hygiene/Cleaning**

Depending on the communicable disease, it's possible for people to become infected if they touch contaminated surfaces and then touch their nose, mouth, or eyes. The most reliable way to prevent infection from surfaces is to wash your hands. Washing your hands often and practicing good hand hygiene will reduce the chances of getting or spreading germs. Washing your hands with soap and hot water for at least 20 seconds is most effective. This is because soap actively destroys the surface of some viruses and a soapy lather really reduces the number of germs left on your skin. Alcohol-based hand rubs can be used to disinfect your hands when soap and water are not available.

Other things to consider:

- Cover your mouth and nose with a disposable tissue or the crease of your elbow when you sneeze or cough instead of your hands.
- Do not share food, drinks, utensils, etc.
- Avoid unnecessary contact
- Consider physical distancing
- Wearing a mask will help protect others around you.

### **Facility, Vehicle and Equipment Hygiene**

#### **When to clean and When to Disinfect**

Cleaning with products containing soap or detergent reduces germs on surfaces by removing contaminants and decreases risk of infection from surfaces.

When confirmed or suspected communicable disease cases are low, cleaning twice per week is enough to sufficiently remove germs that may be on surfaces and help maintain a healthy facility. Staff should clean their own workplaces as appropriate, in addition to any regular cleaning completed by professional cleaning staff.

Disinfecting kills any remaining germs on surfaces, which further reduces any risk of spreading infection.

If there has been a sick person in your facility within the last 24 hours, you should clean AND disinfect the space.

### **Determine What Needs to Be Cleaned**

Consider the type of surface and how often the surface is touched. Generally, the more people who touch a surface, the higher the risk. Prioritize cleaning high-touch surfaces at least once a day. If the space is a high traffic area, or if certain conditions apply, you may choose to clean more frequently or disinfect in addition to cleaning.

### **Consider the Resources and Equipment Needed**

Keep in mind the availability of cleaning products and the personal protective equipment (PPE) appropriate for the cleaners and disinfectants used (as recommended on the product label, product information sheets or Safety Data Sheet).

### **Clean High-Touch Surfaces**

During periods of communicable disease events consider cleaning high-touch surfaces at least **twice** a day or as often as determined is necessary. Examples of high-touch surfaces include: pens, counters, tables, doorknobs, handles, stair rails, elevator buttons, desks, keyboards, phones, etc..

### **Protect Yourself and Other Cleaning Staff**

- Ensure cleaning staff are trained on proper use of cleaning (and disinfecting, if applicable) products.
- Read the instructions on the product label, product information or Safety Data Sheet to determine what safety precautions are necessary while using the product. This could include PPE (such as gloves, glasses, or goggles), additional ventilation, first aid procedures, or other precautions.
- Wash your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds after cleaning. Be sure to wash your hands immediately after removing gloves.
  - If hands are visibly dirty, always wash hands with soap and water.
  - If soap and water are not available and hands are not visibly dirty, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol, and wash with soap and water as soon as you can.
- Special considerations should be made for people with asthma. Some cleaning and disinfection products can trigger asthma.

## Disinfect Safely When Needed

### If you determine that regular disinfection may be needed

- If your disinfectant product label does not specify that it can be used for both cleaning and disinfection, clean visibly dirty surfaces with soap or detergent before disinfection.
- Use a disinfectant product that is effective against the communicable disease.
- **Always follow the directions on the label** to ensure safe and effective use of the product. The label will include safety information and application instructions. Keep disinfectants out of the reach of children. Many products recommend keeping the surface wet with a disinfectant for a certain period (see “contact time” on the product label).
  - Check the product label to see what PPE (such as gloves, glasses, or goggles) is required based on potential hazards.
  - Ensure adequate ventilation (for example, open windows).
  - Use only the amount recommended on the label.
  - If diluting with water is indicated for use, use water at room temperature (unless stated otherwise on the label).
  - Label diluted cleaning or disinfectant solutions.
  - Store and use chemicals out of the reach of children and pets.
  - Do not mix products or chemicals.
  - Do not eat, drink, breathe, or inject cleaning and disinfection products into your body or apply directly to your skin. They can cause serious harm.
  - Do not wipe or bathe people or pets with any surface cleaning and disinfection products.

## 4.0 Ventilation

For all activities that take place indoors, basic principles of good indoor air quality include supplying outdoor air to replenish indoor air, thereby removing and diluting contaminants that naturally accumulate in indoor settings, especially in well-sealed buildings.

### Strategies to optimize ventilation system functionality

- Ventilation systems will be maintained. WSBC requires employers to ensure that heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems are designed, operated, and maintained as per standards and specifications for ongoing comfort for workers ([Part 4 of the OHS Regulation](#)).
  - Preventative maintenance will be conducted (for example, regular filter changes and inspection of critical components). Efforts will be made to make sure the system is properly balanced, which means verifying that the system meets its design conditions for air flow, temperature, pressure drop, noise and vibration.

## 5.0 Promotion of Employee Vaccinations

The District of Summerland will support Public Health messaging for vaccinations against pandemic or communicable diseases and may collaborate with Public Health to offer vaccination clinics in public facilities.

The District of Summerland recognizes the public health benefits of vaccination programs to reduce illness, disability and death from community acquired diseases. Programs may be created to encourage employee participation in public health vaccination programs.

The District of Summerland requires all new employees to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19.

## 6.0 Essential Services

District of Summerland employees who meet the essential service definition as defined by Public Safety Canada may be required to work while exhibiting symptoms. This would only be during extenuating circumstances when essential services are at risk, such as, but not limited to, drinking water, wastewater and drainage infrastructure, electricity, fire protection, interments, solid waste management, Information Technology, finances, vegetation management, fleet maintenance, utility locates, facility maintenance and transportation. Those employees that are considered essential are defined per Public Safety Canada here:

<https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/ntnl-scr/crtcl-nfrstrctr/esf-sfe-en.aspx>