

Youth and Ecological Restoration (YER) COVID-19 Safety Plan

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September 13, 2020

This Planning tool is intended to guide employees and youth through a 6-step safety process. Each step has checklists with items that you need to address before resuming operations.

Employers are not required to submit plans to WorkSafeBC for approval, but in accordance with the order of the provincial health officer for BC, this plan must be posted at the worksite.

At the time of writing this document British Columbia is on Phase 3 of returning to safe operation.

The Provincial Health Officer (PHO) provided foundational principles that assist in guiding how the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) collaboratively plan for in-person connections for children and youth in care and their families. Based on the current epidemiology of COVID-19 in BC, and the fact that children are at a much lower risk of developing or transmitting COVID-19, in-person connections can occur while considering the health and safety of children, youth and adults.

We will consider the principles set out by the PHO. These principles include:

- Staying informed, being prepared and following public health advice.
- Staying home when sick; i.e. do not attend a visit if you have symptoms of COVID-19.
- Practicing good hygiene –hand hygiene, avoid touching your face and respiratory etiquette.
- No handshaking or hugs outside of your family (siblings, parents, extended family, person of significance to the child/youth), or those you live with (foster parents, caregivers).
- Maintaining physical distancing (e.g. small numbers of contacts and keeping a safe distance) outside your family (siblings, parents, extended family, person of significance to the child/youth) or those you live with (foster parents, caregivers).
- Increasing cleaning of frequently touched surfaces at home and work.

MCFD COVID Practice Bulletin #4 on June3, 2020 has included four scenarios to keep COVID transmission low:

1. In-person connections that have been occurring through an exception since March 26, 2020 can continue through regular case planning rather than through exception and may increase, depending on the unique circumstances of the child/youth, family or caregiver.
2. In-person connections for children and youth in care with their families that were occurring prior to COVID-19 can resume provided public health principles to reduce spread of COVID-19 can be followed.
3. When there are circumstances impacting the ability to facilitate in-person connections for children and youth in care with their families (including COVID related health and safety concerns, contracted service providers capacity to support etc.), social workers will explore mitigation strategies in collaboration with the child/youth's care team, including the resource worker, parent(s) and caregivers and in consultation

with their Team Leader (supported by Consultant/Analyst/Director of Practice as needed) to mitigate any concerns related to COVID-19 so that the in-person connection can occur. If the issues are related to the availability of contracted services, please ensure that you connect with the contract manager to explore options/alternatives.

4. When there are exceptional circumstances, where in-person connections are not possible for children and youth with their family because of COVID-19 related health and safety concerns; and there are no available mitigation strategies, these circumstances will need further review by MCFD Director of Operations (DOO) or Delegated Aboriginal Agency (DAA) Manager.

Step 1. Assess the risks at your workplace

The virus that causes COVID-19 spreads in several ways. It can spread in droplets when a person coughs or sneezes. It can also spread if you touch a contaminated surface and then touch your face.

The risk of person-to-person transmission increases when many people contact the same surface and when those contacts happen over short periods of time.

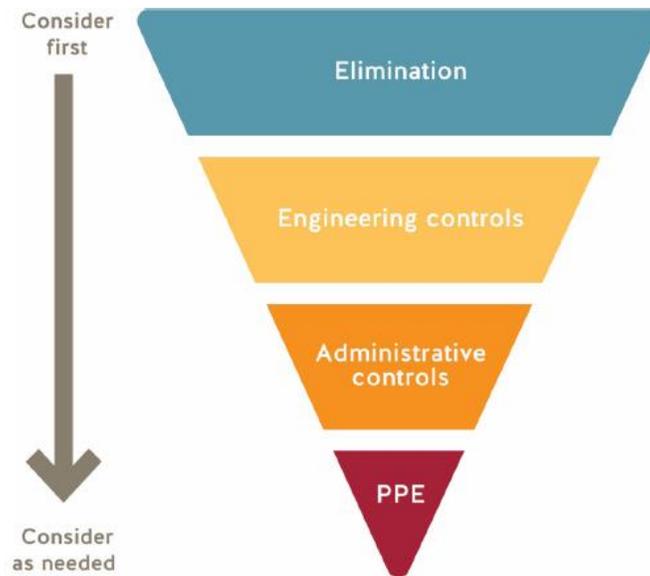
Workers and supervisors are involved in assess the risk in your workplace.

Identify areas where there may be risks, either through close physical proximity or through contaminated surfaces. The closer together workers are and the longer they are close to each other, the greater the risk.

- We have involved frontline workers, and a supervisor who is the worker health and safety representative.
- We have identified areas where people gather: volunteer group visits, meetings and presentations / walking tours.
- We have identified job tasks and processes where workers are close to one another or members of the public: this can occur in at the workplace, in worker vehicles or at other work locations both indoors and outdoors.
- We have identified the tools, machinery and equipment that workers and youth may share while working including: pens, papers, hand tools, chest waders, rain gear, gum boots, equipment, computers, cameras, vehicle space.
- We have identified surfaces that people touch often such as: door handles, paperwork, tools and equipment.

Step 2. Implementing protocols to reduce Risks

Different protocols offer different levels of protection. Wherever possible use the protocol that offers the highest level of protection. Consider controls from additional levels if the First Level isn't practicable or does not completely control the risk. Controls from various levels will be incorporated to address the risk at our workplace.



Elimination - First level protection.

The risk of person-to-person transmission is increased the closer you come to other people, the amount of time you spend near them, and the number of people you come near. Physical distancing measures help reduce this risk.

Protocols for maintaining physical distance in the workplace

- Limit the number of people in our workplace by implementing work from home arrangements where possible.
- Use of phone calls and email communications as the primary way to communicate with youth and their family, other agencies, partnering community organizations and employees.
- Limit the number of people in our workplace by implementing work from home arrangements where possible. Occupancy limit at home office is two people. Occupancy limit in vehicle is two people.
- Meetings will be held outside whenever possible.
- Changes to work schedules will be made to reduce large groups.
- Changes to how tasks are done to incorporate a 2 meter distance.
- Limiting or prohibiting visitors.
- Review of industry specific protocols on WorkSafebc.com to determine whether any are relevant to you. Protocols for Childcare and Daycamps, Education and Forestry operations have been reviewed and where applicable, have been applied to our workplace.

Before an appointment

- Communicate to parents and caregivers the requirement for them assess their children daily for the presence of symptoms of common cold, influenza, COVID-19, or other infectious respiratory disease prior to drop off.

Workplace operations

- Where possible, employers should consider remote work options for workers who do not require office attendance.
- Avoid meetings or gatherings where physical distances cannot be maintained. Consider using larger rooms, moving meetings outside, or having all or some attendees attend virtually.
- Avoid close greetings like hugs or handshakes and remind students to keep their hands to themselves when possible.
- Picnic outings with use of personal picnic blankets to promote physical distancing.
- Limit the use of communal pens and refrain from exchanging items before and after the appointment (e.g., send receipts, documents, and reports electronically).
- Asking parents to physically distance from other adults during the visit (caregiver, service provider etc.)
- Strive to minimize the number of different community members that interact with youth throughout the day.
- Making sure the child/youth has hand sanitizer and wipes in their backpack and uses them prior to visiting, before entering the vehicle or building and upon returning home.
- Consider creating cohorts of workers who work together and who do not interact with other cohorts. This will assist in reducing transmission throughout the workplace in the event that a staff member becomes ill.
- Where possible, cancel in-person meetings and hold meetings by teleconference, video conference, or email instead.
- If breaching the physical distancing requirement is unavoidable, plan the work task and provide instructions to workers to ensure that time spent in close proximity is minimized.
- Encourage workers to eat outside or at their desk.
- Restrict eating to a clearly identified and dedicated area with handwashing stations, cleaning and disinfectant supplies, and adequate space to maintain the physical distancing requirement.

Transportation

- Non-essential transportation or business travel should be limited and on an exceptional basis only.
- Restrict travel between office and work locations to critical business functions.
- Minimize the use of shared vehicles. If required, follow appropriate disinfection procedures before and after travel for vehicle surfaces such as the steering wheel, gear shift, and door handles.
- Youth should be separated from workers by sitting in the backseat on the opposite side of the car as the driver.
- A face mask is required when a vehicle has more than one person.
- High use areas such as door handles, seat belts will be disinfected after each use.

Building Access

- Post signage (<https://www.worksafebc.com/en/resources/health-safety/posters/help-prevent-spread-covid-19-entry-check-visitors?lang=en>) indicating that employees, contractors, or visitors exhibiting COVID-like symptoms are not allowed to enter the office building.

Visitors / Presentation Guests

- If required, visits to the workplace should be prearranged, staggered, and safety protocols should be communicated before entry into the workplace (e.g., email and/or signage posted to entrance). Keep a record of visitors to the workplace.
- When booking appointments, visitors should be reminded to reschedule if they experience symptoms typical of COVID-19 or are placed on self-isolation.
- Minimize non-essential in-person interaction between workers and visitors (e.g., use of virtual meeting tools, email, or telephone).
- Provide visitor-facing staff with hand sanitizer for their use only.
- Provide opportunities for handwashing or hand sanitizing to guests
- Remove non-essential communal items, such as candy, magazines, and complimentary phone chargers.
- Beverages (coffee, tea, water) should not be offered at this time.
- Physical markers such as tape or chairs may be used to mark of 2 meter distancing between persons at work parties and presentations. Or an entire area may be marked off.
- Provide a safe place for visitors to dispose of used sanitizing wipes and other personal protective equipment.

Working in areas where the Public may be encountered

- Consider whether or not the task or work could be delayed.
- Consider whether the task be safely done another way.
- Avoid indoor places and places where people tend to gather.
- Wear a mask if work is indoors.
- If work is unavoidable, ensure the 2 meter distancing rule is followed.
- Tape or other physical objects may be used to mark 2 meter distances.

Handwashing

- Handwashing and good hygiene practices are essential to reduce the spread of the virus (<https://www.worksafebc.com/en/resources/health-safety/posters/help-prevent-spread-covid-19-handwashing?lang=en> and <https://www.worksafebc.com/en/resources/health-safety/posters/help-prevent-spread-covid-19-cover-coughs-sneezes?lang=en>)
- Workers and youth will wash hands or sanitize hands:
 - at the beginning of the work day
 - after touching cell phone
 - after touching tools

- after touching vehicle
 - after touching shared objects
 - before and after eating
 - after using the bathroom
 - after coughing or sneezing
 - after any contact with body fluids ie blood or vomit
 - at the end of the work day
- Our workplace has handwashing facilities in the office only. Outside work will have wipes for cleaning and an alcohol based disinfectant that is visible and easily accessed.
 - Let workers and youth know:
 - Cough or sneeze into their elbow sleeve or a tissue.
 - Throw away used tissues and immediately perform hand hygiene.
 - Not touch their eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands.

Cleaning and Disinfecting

The risk of surface transmission is increased when many people contact the same surface, and when those contacts happen in short intervals of time. Effective cleaning and hygiene practices help mitigate this risk.

Our workers will implement effective cleaning and hygiene practices:

- We have reviewed the information on cleaning and disinfecting surfaces with BC Center for Disease Control (<https://www.worksafebc.com/en/resources/health-safety/information-sheets/covid-19-health-safety-cleaning-disinfecting?lang=en>) and those for Public settings: http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Info-Site/Documents/CleaningDisinfecting_PublicSettings.pdf and those for Public Health Guidance for Childcare settings. <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-guidance-k-12-schools.pdf>
- An alcohol based disinfectant will be readily available and used to sanitize hands.
- Disposable wipes or paper towels along with a commercial disinfectant such as Lysol will be readily available and used to disinfect surfaces. (<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/disinfectants/covid-19/list.html>)
- Cover your mouth and nose with a disposable tissue or the crease of your elbow when you sneeze or cough.
- All common areas and high touch surfaces such as tools, equipment, vehicle interiors, shared tables, door handles, etc will be disinfected before work begins and once it ends, as a minimum.
- Chest waders, rubber boots, raingear, etc will be wiped down or sprayed with disinfectant once work is completed. Workers who are cleaning have adequate training and materials.
- We have removed unnecessary tools and equipment to simplify the cleaning process ie shared equipment, utensils, etc.
- We have asked Youth to only bring essential items with them that are clean and laundered.
- Food, drinks or utensils will not be shared.
- Bagged lunches that are provided will be prepared using Foodsafe Guidelines and while wearing a mask.

- Wash or scrub all fruits and vegetables with cold, running, potable tap water before consuming.
- Reusable items such as plates, tupperware, utensils will be cleaned and sanitized after each use.
- Provide a disposal bag for wipes, masks or gloves that were used.
- If household or commercial disinfection products are not readily available, hard surfaces can be cleaned of visible dirt and then disinfected using a mixture of 1-part bleach and 9-parts water.
- Hand Sanitizer will be provided to youth while they work with YER.
- Incorporate end-of-shift wipe downs for shared spaces and items.

Engineering controls - Second level protection.

Barriers, such as plexiglass, to separate people is not possible for outdoor field work. Barriers may be incorporated into the presentation or guided walks portion of the work by using a physical barrier such as a chain link fence to keep 2m physical distancing.

Administrative controls - Third level protection.

Rules and guidelines have been established: such as posted occupancy limits for shared spaces, cleaning practices.

- We have identified rules and guidelines for how workers should conduct themselves in this Safety Plan.
- We have clearly communicated these rules and guidelines to workers and youth through a combination of training and signage.

PPE - Fourth Level protection.

If the first three levels of protection are not enough to control the risk, and physical distancing measures cannot be used, consider the use of masks. Masks can reduce the spread of droplets from the wearer, but may not prevent the wearer from inhaling the droplets of others. Ensure masks are selected and cared for appropriately and that workers are using the masks correctly. N95 or fabric masks are suitable and will be provided by the employer (<https://www.worksafefbc.com/en/resources/health-safety/posters/help-prevent-spread-covid-19-how-to-use-mask?lang=en>.)

- We have reviewed the information on using masks. If masks are used then signage will be posted. (<https://www.worksafefbc.com/en/resources/health-safety/posters/help-prevent-spread-covid-19-how-to-use-mask?lang=en>)
- We understand the limitations of masks to protect the wearer from respiratory droplets. We understand masks should only be considered when other control measures cannot be implemented.
- We have trained workers in the proper use of masks, as needed.

Step 3. Develop Policies

Develop necessary policies to manage your workplace, including policies around who can be at the workplace and how to address illness that arises at the workplace, and how workers can be kept safe in adjusted working conditions.

Our workplace policies ensure that workers and others showing symptoms of COVID-19 are prohibited from the workplace:

- Anyone who has had symptoms of COVID-19 in the last 10 days. Symptoms include fever, chills, new or worsening cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, and new muscle aches or headache.
- Anyone directed by Public Health to self-isolate.
- Anyone who has arrived from outside of Canada or who has had contact with a confirmed COVID-19 case must self isolate for 14 days and monitor for symptoms. (<http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/self-isolation>)
- Visitors are prohibited or limited in the workplace.
- First aid attendants have provided Occupational First Aid Attendant (OFAA) protocols for use during the COVID-19 pandemic. (<https://www.worksafebc.com/en/resources/health-safety/information-sheets/ofaa-protocols-covid-19-pandemic?lang=en>)
- We have a working alone policy in place if needed. (<https://www.worksafebc.com/en/health-safety/hazards-exposures/working-alone>)
- We have a work from home policy in place if needed. (<https://www.worksafebc.com/en/resources/health-safety/information-sheets/working-from-home-guide-keeping-workers-healthy-safe?lang=en>)
- Ensure workers have the training and strategies required to address the risk of violence that may arise as customers and members of the public adapt to restrictions or modifications to the workplace. Ensure an appropriate violence prevention program is in place. (<https://www.worksafebc.com/en/health-safety/hazards-exposures/violence>).

Our policy addresses workers or youth who may start to feel ill at work. It includes the following:

- Sick workers and youth should report to first aid, even with mild symptoms.
- Sick workers and youth should be asked to wash or sanitize their hands, provided with a mask and isolated. Ask the worker to go straight home - if they have adult care at home. Consult online self assessment tool here (<https://bc.thrive.health/covid19/en>), or call 811 for further guidelines related to testing and self-isolation).
- If the worker or youth is severely ill, call 911.
- Clean and disinfect any surfaces that the ill worker has come into contact with.

Step 4. Develop Communication Plans and Training

You must ensure that everyone entering the workplace, including workers from other employers, know how to keep themselves safe while at your workplace.

- We have a training plan to ensure everyone is trained in workplace policies and procedures.
- All workers have received the policies for staying home when sick.
- We have posted signage at the workplace, including occupancy limits. (<https://www.worksafebc.com/en/resources/health-safety/posters/help-prevent-spread-covid-19-occupancy-limit?lang=en>) and effective hygiene practices. (<https://www.worksafebc.com/en/resources/health-safety/posters/help-prevent-spread-covid-19-handwashing?lang=en>)
- Supervisors have been trained on monitoring workers and the workplace to ensure policies and procedure are being followed.

Step 5. Monitor your workplace and update your plans as necessary

Things may change as business operates. If a new area of concern is identified, or if it seems like something isn't working, take steps to update your policies and procedures. Involve other workers or health and safety representatives.

- We have a plan in place to monitor risks. We make changes to our policies and procedures as necessary.
- Workers know who to go to with health and safety concerns.
- When resolving safety issues, we will involve other workers and any safety committees.

Step 6. Assess and address risks from resuming operations

If your workplace has not been operating for a period of time during the COVID-19 pandemic, you may need to manage risks arising from restarting your business.

- We have a training plan for new staff.
- We have a training plan for staff taking on new roles or responsibilities.
- We have a training plan around changes to our business, such as new equipment, processes, or products.
- Frontline workers, supervisors, and the Joint health and safety committee (or worker representative).
- Orders have been reviewed (none given for this industry at time of report writing), guidance (Child Care settings, Natural Resources Sector Work Camps, Social Service Providers) have been reviewed and notices issued by the provincial health officer for BC and relevant to our industry. Link to this: <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> MCFD Bulletins have been reviewed.
- This plan will be reviewed annually or as needed and was last updated on September 13, 2020.

