

PHS WORKSAFEBC SAFETY PLAN: CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

PHS Community Services Society is committed to providing a safe, healthy and supportive workplace to ensure every member of our team has the knowledge, skills, abilities and safe work environment to make a positive difference in the lives of members of our highly marginalized communities.

PHS Community Services Society is required to develop a COVID-19 safety plan that outlines policies, guidelines and procedures that have been put in place to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission. We have been developing and adapting our COVID-19 response since March 2020.

In developing our response and associated safety plan, our goals are to:

1. Prevent the virus from entering our facilities, whether brought in by visitors or workers
2. Protect workers and residents when they interact with each other
3. Adhere to all public health orders and regulatory requirements
4. Support the mental and physical well-being of all our staff and residents
5. Support managers to lead and manage staff working through the pandemic

PHS Community Services Society was deemed an essential service and has been operating in order to protect and support the residents of our sites in the Victoria and Vancouver.

Following guidance from public health experts and our clinical team, we have developed several resources such as this COVID-19 Safety Plan. It's focused on our staff team to ensure we have a safe workplace and that we interact with stakeholders in a safe manner. The purpose of this plan is to outline the policies, guidelines and procedures we have put in place to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission. We will continue to reassess and adjust as needed and we will always make the health and well-being of our employees, residents and other stakeholders a priority.

We have assessed the risks at our work sites, implemented protocols to reduce risk, developed policies to manage the workplace and developed communications and training plans for our employees.

We have had several phases of this safety plan that has evolved with the public health guidance. This **document is current as of Feb. 2022.**

We have three areas of emphasis:

- 1. Control our environments:**
 - a. Workplace risk mitigation
 - b. Working from home when possible
 - c. Physical distancing
 - d. Signage in the workplace
 - e. Employee education/training
- 2. Communicate with workers**
 - a. Dedicated COVID-19 bulletin boards
 - b. Meetings to update managers enabling them to relay information to project staff
 - c. Frequent communication from senior management through email
- 3. Clean and disinfect:**

- a. Regular cleaning
- b. Additional cleaning by residents/peers
- c. Additional hygiene signage posted

PHS's Response

1. Interventions:

- a. Monitoring public health guidance to create a workplace response
- b. Educated employees on the Coronavirus and personal protection
- c. Educated managers on what they need to know about COVID-19
- d. Developed a PPE procurement team
- e. Provided workers with PPE
- f. Implemented a remote working plan
- g. Implemented additional cleaning protocols
- h. Implemented modified Overdose Intervention response
- i. Installed hand sanitizer stations at more points within our buildings
- j. Cancelled all large gatherings in our meeting rooms
- k. Moved services to online or phone
- l. Cancelled non-essential travel
- m. Converted meal program to individual disposable packaging
- n. Contacted employees who had traveled and explained risk of potential exposure and the importance of self-isolation
- o. Liaised with public health authorities
- p. Introduced COVID-19 leave
- q. Installed protective barriers
- r. Increased signage on physical distancing and hygiene
- s. We have a Working Alone policy in place and managers follow-up with, and check on staff working from home
- t. Workers are trained in non-violent crisis intervention and how to defuse conflict

2. Staff Requirements:

a. Personal:

- i. Employees understand that they must wash their hands often, and always after coughing, sneezing, or blowing their noses. Directions are to wash with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or, if soap and water are not available, to use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- ii. Employees are required to wear PPE as per the applicable protocol.

b. Workplace etiquette (for those working in the office):

- i. Physical distancing: when possible, employees maintain physical distancing while at their workstations. They know they must ensure adequate space is provided for exiting common areas such as walking routes, meeting rooms, washrooms, elevators and stairwells

c. General Hygiene:

- i. We have reviewed the information on cleaning and disinfecting surfaces
- ii. We have enough handwashing facilities on site for all our workers
- iii. Handwashing stations are visible and easily accessed
- iv. We have procedures that specify when workers must wash their hands and we have communicated good hygiene practices to workers

- v. Staff are aware that frequent handwashing and good hygiene practices are essential to reduce the spread of COVID-19
- vi. We have implemented cleaning protocols for all common areas and surfaces, examples: washrooms, vehicle interiors, shared tables, desks, light switches, and door knobs
- vii. When cleaning, workers have adequate training and materials
- viii. Unnecessary equipment has been removed to simplify the cleaning process

d. Cleaning and Disinfectant:

- i. Enhanced cleaning: Our staff have increased the amount of surface and touch point cleaning and residents have been recruited and paid a stipend for frequently cleaning the touch points on their floor
- ii. In addition, cleaning and disinfectant supplies are available to staff for self-cleaning during the day

e. Limiting Travel:

- i. All employees are asked to refrain from non-essential travel. If travel for work is deemed necessary approval must go through senior management

f. Following Working at Home Guidelines When Working Out of the Office:

- i. Employees check in with their managers daily.

h. Health and Wellness:

- i. It is important that everyone focuses on their own health and well-being especially in times such as these. We frequently update our staff with internal emails detailing up to date information about the COVID-19 pandemic
- ii. Employees have access to counselling services
- iii. Employees are reminded to not come to work while sick. If they have symptoms of COVID-19, they are directed to utilize the online self-assessment tool, contact their health care provider, or call 811
- iv. If someone experiences symptoms at work, they will maintain 2 m (6 ft.) distance from others, notify their manager immediately, go home immediately, and contact their health care provider or call 811
- v. Employees who require an accommodation can contact their Human Resources Manager to confidentially discuss their needs
- vi. Information disseminated on vaccination opportunities, including at weekly vaccine clinics at our own site

i. Communications:

- i. Employees are expected to stay informed by keeping up to date with the resources and contact their manager if they have questions

3. Developing Policies

Our workplace policies ensure that workers and others showing symptoms of COVID-19 are not to enter the workplace.

a. Developed Communication Plans and Training:

We have seen a shift in how we work in our offices to ensure the health and safety of all. We ask employees to make a commitment to:

- i. Staying home when sick
- ii. Adhere to all Covid related signage posted at the workplaces including effective hygiene practices

- iii. Ensuring signage has been posted at the main entrance of each building explaining that guests and workers with symptoms may not enter.
 - iv. Ensuring Covid related policies and procedures are being followed and supervisors understand the procedures if a worker should present with symptoms
 - v. Regular reminders issued to Managers to update COVID binders and bulletin board information
- b. Monitor the Workplace and Update Plans as Necessary:**
- i. Plans are in place to monitor risks – we make changes to our procedures as necessary
 - ii. Workers know who to go to with health and safety concerns
 - iii. Workers understand that safety issues are resolved by bringing concerns to the project manager or, if necessary, with their OH&S committee
- c. Assess and Address Risk of Maintaining Operations:**
- i. We have a training plan for new staff and for staff elevated into new roles

RESOURCES

COVID-19 health and safety: Cleaning and disinfecting

- <https://www.worksafebc.com/en/resources/health-safety/information-sheets/covid-19-health-safety-cleaning-disinfecting?lang=en>

Community social services (residential) and COVID-19 safety

- <https://www.worksafebc.com/en/about-us/covid-19-updates/covid-19-industry-information/community-social-services-residential>

Help prevent the spread of COVID-19: Entry check for visitors

- <https://www.worksafebc.com/en/resources/health-safety/posters/help-prevent-spread-covid-19-entry-check-visitors?lang=en>

COVID-19 Safety Plan Template

- <https://www.worksafebc.com/en/resources/health-safety/checklist/covid-19-safety-plan?lang=en>

OHS guideline G3.3 (COVID-19 Safety Plan)

- <https://www.worksafebc.com/en/law-policy/occupational-health-safety/searchable-ohs-regulation/ohs-guidelines/guidelines-part-03#SectionNumber:G3.3>