
July 6, 2021

BULLETIN

PHASE 3 RESTART – TRANSITIONING AWAY FROM COVID-19 SAFETY PLANS

As part of Step 3 of BC's Restart Plan, employers are being encouraged to begin transitioning from COVID-19 Safety Plans to developing Communicable Disease Plans and incorporating ongoing disease prevention into the workplace.

To support employers in this important transition, effective July 1, 2021, a [new WorkSafeBC guideline](#) addresses requirements for the ongoing prevention of communicable diseases in the workplace. The guideline sets out employers' obligations to protect employee health in the workplace in relation to communicable diseases such as COVID-19, norovirus, and influenza. Specifically, employers must ensure that the following measures for communicable disease prevention are in place at *all times*:

- Policies to support staff with symptoms: workers must not be permitted to remain at the workplace if they are experiencing symptoms of communicable disease;
- Hand-hygiene facilities: ensure that hand-hygiene facilities are available, including maintenance of washroom facilities;
- Clean environment: maintain routine cleaning of the workplace;
- Building ventilation (HVAC systems): building ventilation systems must be in good operating condition, and in compliance with air quality and ventilation requirements pursuant to sections 4.70 – 4.90 of the OHS Regulation
- Supporting vaccination: be supportive of workers in receiving vaccinations for COVID-19 and other vaccine-preventable diseases; be mindful of workers who cannot be vaccinated, for medical or other reasons; and consider privacy and human rights laws when implementing vaccination policies in the workplace.

Public Health may issue additional guidance or orders during times of elevated risk. Employers must continually monitor and review published guidance by Public Health and the BC Centre for Disease Control relevant to the employer's industry, region, or workplace, in relation to transmission of communicable diseases. Where Public Health advises of an elevated risk of communicable disease transmission that is relevant to the employer's industry, employers must assess the risk in the workplace, be prepared to follow the disease prevention measures advised by Public Health, and communicate these measures to employees.

In addition to the above measures, some employers with occupational exposure will be further required to develop and implement exposure control plans under section 6.34 of the OHS

Regulation. While this is mostly applicable to health care professions, WorkSafe BC also *identifies municipal workers with outside jobs* as occupations that may face occupational exposure.

Local governments should ensure that the above recommended measures for communicable disease prevention are in place at the workplace at all times, and continue monitoring published guidance for additional measures.

WorkSafeBC's guidance documents can be accessed at the following link:
<https://www.worksafebc.com/en/law-policy/occupational-health-safety/searchable-ohs-regulation/ohs-guidelines/guidelines-for-workers-compensation-act#SectionNumber:G-P2-21>

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