

MANAGING COVID-19 AT YOUR BUSINESS

Encourage Vaccination

The best way to control COVID-19 is by getting fully vaccinated and receiving a booster shot when you are eligible. Encourage your employees to get a COVID-19 vaccine. ([How to get vaccinated for COVID-19 - Province of British Columbia \(gov.bc.ca\)](#)). Some employers provide incentives such as prize draws and cash rewards to those who get fully vaccinated.

Employees in most businesses are not required to be vaccinated under the current Provincial Health Officer Orders. Employers may choose to implement a vaccine mandate (require full vaccination) at their workplace.

Masking In Common Areas

At a workplace that is open to the public e.g. a service business, employees are required to wear masks in areas where the public has access. The only time the mask can be removed is when employees are in a location where the public does not access. Operators are required to post signage at the entrance of their business, notifying that face coverings are required to be worn.

A physical barrier can be used in place of a mask provided that it blocks the transmission of droplets between the worker and other workers, or the worker and a visitor. A face shield is not a substitute for a mask as it has an opening below the mouth. Businesses are encouraged to have employees mask in common areas such as entrances, meeting rooms, hallways and whenever they are within 2m.

COVID-19 Safety Plan

As of January 7, 2022, workplaces are required to re-activate their COVID-19 Safety Plans per the Provincial Health Officer's [Workplace Safety Order](#). Plans must be current and reflect guidance and orders from the Provincial health Officer. This replaces the previous requirement for employers to have communicable disease prevention plans in their workplaces. While communicable disease plans and COVID-19 Safety Plans share some of the same fundamental principles, COVID-19 Safety Plans are formal, written plans with more rigorous controls and are more appropriate for periods of elevated risk, such as the one currently faced by BC workplaces by the Omicron variant. Workplaces are responsible for ensuring that all employees understand their workplace's COVID Safety Plan. Please refer to the WorkSafeBC guidance website below for more information and resources to assist you in re-activating the COVID-19 Safety Plan. A template can also be found on the WorkSafeBC webpage.

WorkSafe BC guidance: [COVID-19 prevention - WorkSafeBC](#)

Sick Policy

Employees should be encouraged to complete daily health checks and should not be coming to work when they are sick. Encourage your employees to stay home and get tested for COVID-19 ([BC COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool \[thrive.health\]](#)). As well, if an employee becomes sick at work, they should be supported to leave the workplace immediately and their work area should be cleaned and sanitized. A doctor's note is not required for a worker to return to work.

Contact Tracing

Not all positive cases of COVID-19 will be contacted by public health, only those in identified high consequence groups will be contacted. Therefore, if someone at your workplace tests positive, they need to follow the direction provided by the BCCDC: [If You Have COVID-19 \(bccdc.ca\)](https://www.bccdc.ca). Business operators will only be contacted by public health if we believe there is a reason to investigate a COVID-19 cluster at your business.

Lunchrooms

Lunchrooms provide a place for employees to gather and take a break together. Unfortunately they also provide a great venue for COVID-19 to spread. Occupancy limits should be posted at the lunchrooms to prevent overcrowding.

Provide 2m distancing between chairs and encourage employees to not move the chairs closer than this. Masks should be worn in the lunchroom when employees are not eating or drinking. To limit the number of people accessing the room at one time, you may wish to stagger lunch breaks or provide multiple locations for staff to take a break. Shared foods should be discouraged at the workplace as this can provide a vehicle for viral spread. If food from home is to be provided, employees are encouraged to prepackage it in individual servings instead of having people serve themselves.

Cleaning

How often a worksite needs to be cleaned is dependent on the type of business. In all businesses, common touch surfaces should be cleaned and sanitized at least 2 times a day. Common touch surfaces include light switches, door knobs, handrails, coffee makers and faucets. A sanitizer approved by Health Canada to be effective against COVID-19 should be chosen ([Hard-surface disinfectants and hand sanitizers \(COVID-19\): List of disinfectants with evidence for use against COVID-19 - Canada.ca](https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/diseases/covid-19/faq/faq-disinfectants-hand-sanitizers-covid-19.html)).

At Large Worksites, Divide Staff Into Cohorts

In large worksites, minimize staff rotation/movement between different parts of the worksite or between different teams. As well, you should try to avoid staff from different parts of the worksite taking breaks together. This reduces the number of employees exposed if a case is introduced, and can also help to stop an outbreak.

Transportation

If you know that your employees carpool or take employer-run transportation to work, take this into account when planning staff assignments. For employer-run transportation, symptom screen before employees board and ensure everyone wears a mask and can maintain physical distance while inside the vehicle. As well, employees must mask in the vehicle.

Gatherings

Encourage your staff to minimize their social gatherings outside of the worksite and keep their personal gatherings as small as possible. As a business owner, you can also be a role model for your employee and community in your personal life and encouraging your employees to do the same. Information regarding latest restrictions can be found here: [Provincial and regional restrictions - Province of British Columbia \(gov.bc.ca\)](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov2/provincial-restrictions).