Arts and cultural facilities:
Protocols for returning to operation

The following content was posted to WorkSafeBC's website on May 22, 2020. For the most current version, please visit worksafebc.com.

These protocols provide guidance to museums, art galleries, and libraries. These employers may also benefit from reviewing other protocols if their workplace includes other work environments such as office space, retail services, or food and drink services. Employers must also ensure they are abiding by any orders, notices, or guidance issued by the provincial health officer, and the appropriate health authority, which are relevant to their workplace.

Developing a COVID-19 safety plan

Employers are required to develop a COVID-19 Safety Plan that outlines the policies, guidelines, and procedures they have put in place to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission. This plan follows the six steps outlined on COVID-19 and returning to safe operation. Employers must involve frontline workers, joint health and safety committees, and supervisors in identifying protocols for their workplace. You do not need a formal plan in place to begin operation, but are expected to develop it while protecting the safety of your workers.

Employers are not required to submit plans to WorkSafeBC for approval, but in accordance with the order of the Provincial Health Officer, this plan **must be posted** at the worksite. During a WorkSafeBC inspection, we will ask employers about the steps they have taken to protect their workers or to see the plan if it has been developed.

One part of developing your COVID-19 Safety Plan is identifying protocols that everyone at the workplace must follow to keep workers safe. We've provided industry-specific protocols below to consider as you develop the plan for your workplace.

These protocols are not a list of requirements; however, they should be considered and implemented to the extent that they address the risks your workplace. You may need to identify and implement additional protocols if the protocols suggested here do not sufficiently address the risk to your workers.
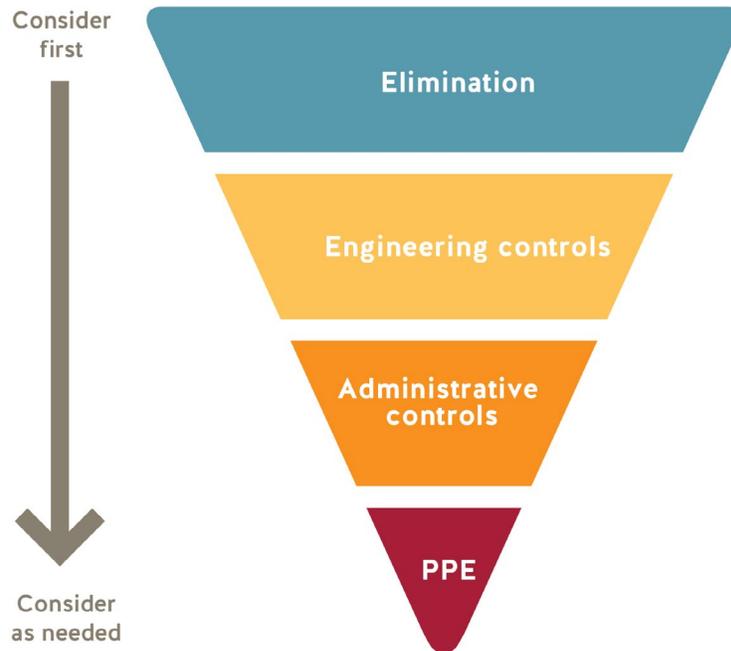
Understanding the risk

The virus that causes COVID-19 spreads in several ways, including through droplets when a person coughs or sneezes, and from touching a contaminated surface before touching the face. Higher risk situations require adequate protocols to address the risk.

- 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 mitigate this risk.

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

Selecting protocols for your workplace

Note that different protocols offer different protection. Wherever possible, use the protocols that offer the highest level of protection and add additional protocols as required.

Consider first

Elimination

Engineering controls

Administrative controls

PPE

Consider as needed

First level protection (elimination): Use policies and procedures to keep people at a safe physical distance from one another. Limit the number of people in your workplace at any one time, and implement protocols to keep workers at least 2 metres from other workers, customers, and members of the public.

Second level protection (engineering controls): If you can't always maintain physical distancing, install barriers such as plexiglass to separate people.

Third level protection (administrative controls): Establish rules and guidelines, such as cleaning protocols, telling workers to not share tools, or implementing one-way doors or walkways.

Fourth level protection (PPE): If the first three levels of protection aren't enough to control the risk, consider the use of non-medical masks. Be aware of the limitation of non-medical masks to protect the wearer from respiratory droplets. Ensure workers are using masks appropriately.

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Protocols for arts and cultural facilities
Museums and art galleries

- Cancel or restrict group visits, guided tours, public programs, and special or private events in excess of 50 people, in accordance with public health officer's prohibition on mass gatherings.

- For groups of fewer than 50 people, ensure there is adequate space in your facility to accommodate the group. See the COVID-19 Safety Plan for guidance on establishing occupancy limits.

- Consider allowing access by appointment to ensure occupancy limits are followed.

- Consider ways to limit the exchange of paper products. Provide information to visitors via websites, provide online ticket sales, and provide digital visitor guides and programs.

- Manage the flow of people by implementing one-way walkways or marking off designated walking areas.

- Provide physical barriers at admissions and gift shop counters. Reuse exhibition materials such as plexiglass display cases to create barriers where the physical distancing requirement cannot be maintained.

- Consider self-guided tours or phone applications based on self-guided tours.

- Develop a system where customers can call docents from their cell phones while on the property to get specific questions answered without the docents and customers having to be face-to-face. Install desk phones at docent stations to facilitate this capability.

- Wash your hands using good hygiene practices after touching common items.

- Install touchless, no-contact audio-visual displays (triggered by physical distance, RFID, or similar technology).

- Prohibit the use of high-touch displays through signage or physical barriers. If they remain in use, consider the following controls:

- Install hand sanitizing stations near displays

- Increase the cleaning frequency of all touch displays

- Restrict or limit personal items being stored in coatrooms, baggage holding areas, etc.

- Control access to entry points for workers, customers, and deliveries. Consider having limited points of entry. If you have more than one door, considering designating doors for entry and exit.

- Provide hand sanitizing stations at all facility entryways for everyone to use.

- Post COVID-19 protocols using signage for both workers and customers throughout facility.

- 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.

- Increase the circulation of outdoor air as much as possible by opening windows and doors.

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Libraries

- Establish an occupancy limit for the library. See the COVID-19 Safety Plan for guidance on establishing occupancy limits. Implement measures to restrict the number of people in the library at one time.

- Encourage the use of other services, such as digital libraries and services like virtual ebooks, digital audiobooks, eLending, and eLearning to reduce the number of people in the library.

- Reconfigure interiors and design public areas to maintain the physical distancing requirement for workers and visitors. This may include:

  » Reducing the number of computer terminals

  » Reducing access to spaces

  » Removing chairs and tables

- Ensure physical distancing is maintained during programs such as story time or workshops. Consider organizing digital programs.

- Manage the flow of people by implementing one-way walkways or marking off designated walking areas.

- Provide physical barriers, such as plexiglass, at visitor information desks, loan out counters, and other locations where workers cannot maintain the physical distancing requirement.

- Control access to entry points for workers, customers, and deliveries. Consider having limited points of entry. If you have more than one door, considering designating doors for entry and exit.

- Provide hand sanitizing stations at all facility entryways for everyone to use.

- Post COVID-19 protocols using signage for both workers and customers throughout facility.

- Wash your hands using good hygiene practices after touching common items.

- 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.

Additional information

The following links may have additional information, guidance, or resources that may assist you in the development of your plan.

- BC Museum Association

- BC Municipal Safety Association

For more information

The information on this page is based on current recommendations and may change. For the latest guidance, please see the health information from the British Columbia Centre for Disease Control and the latest news from the government of British Columbia.

If you have a question or concern

Workers and employers with questions or concerns about workplace exposure to COVID-19 can call WorkSafeBC's Prevention Information Line at 604.276.3100 in the Lower Mainland (toll-free within B.C. at 1.888.621.SAFE). You'll be able to speak to a prevention officer to get answers to your questions, and if required, a prevention officer will be assigned to assess the health and safety risk at your workplace.

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Resources

COVID-19: A guide to reducing the risk
This resource is for employers, outlining the steps to follow to make sure you are minimizing the risk of COVID-19 so your business can operate safely.

COVID-19 Safety Plan
Employers are required to develop a COVID-19 Safety Plan that outlines the policies, guidelines, and procedures they have put in place to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission. This tool will guide...

Help prevent the spread of COVID-19: Cover coughs and sneezes
This poster reminds workers and visitors to cover their mouths when they cough or sneeze, and to wash their hands afterward.

See more resources

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