



Blacksmith Bakery manager, Erica Downie and WorkSafeBC occupational safety officer, Joti Dhaliwal review COVID-19 protocols at the bakery's Langley airport location.

New provincial health order brings updated resources

By Kristine Carrick

COVID-19 conditions and provincial health orders are changing; WorkSafeBC is urging employers to stay vigilant and update their safety plans as the pandemic continues.

The landscape of B.C.'s workplaces has shifted in 2020: physical distancing, plexiglass barriers, and an increased number of workers doing their work from home have become the norm as we look for ways to keep workplaces healthy and safe during the global COVID-19 pandemic.

This fall, the province moved into a second wave of COVID-19, prompting new health orders. At the time of this writing, a provincial health officer order issued November 19, and updated November 24, outlined new province-wide requirements for employers at their workplaces.

What employers need to do

The new order includes a requirement for employers to review and update their COVID-19 safety plan, ensuring appropriate protocols are in place to limit the risk of COVID-19 exposure for workers. Employers are also required to conduct daily worker health checks, including prohibiting workers or other visitors with COVID-19 symptoms or a possible exposure, from accessing the workplace.

In addition, through the *Emergency Program Act* an order was issued requiring all members of the public in an indoor public space to wear a mask. Employers must clearly communicate this requirement in the workplace, including reviewing what to do if a customer refuses to wear a mask or becomes abusive.

Enhanced COVID-19 inspections and consultations

WorkSafeBC is conducting enhanced COVID-19 inspections and consultations as cases of COVID-19 continue. “The focus of our inspections is to ensure employers are effectively implementing measures to prevent the transmission of COVID-19 in the workplace, including conducting health screening,” says Al Johnson, head of Prevention Services for WorkSafeBC. “We are urging employers to stay vigilant and revisit and update their COVID-19 safety plan as conditions change.”

Workplaces identified as the highest risk for COVID-19 transmission will be an inspection priority. This includes industries where it is difficult for workers to maintain physical distancing and where workers may interact with a large number of people.

To support employers and supplement the enhanced inspections, WorkSafeBC is also increasing consultations with employers about COVID-19 and helping to effectively identify and manage exposure risks in the workplace.

Public awareness campaign reminds us to do our part

You may also see health and safety messages on TV, on social media, or in print as WorkSafeBC helps to remind workers and employers that we all need to do our part to ensure healthy and safe workplaces and contribute to a safe and healthy province.

“Workplace health and safety is essential to protecting workers and keeping businesses open,” says Johnson. WorkSafeBC’s multi-language public awareness campaign features workers and employers who have committed to doing their part to help stop the spread of COVID-19.

Information and resources for employers

We’ll continue to update information and resources at [worksafebc.com](https://www.worksafebc.com) to help employers and workers understand how to manage COVID-19 risks and meet the requirements in public health orders.

New or recently updated resources include:

- [Reviewing and updating your COVID-19 safety plan: A guide for employers](#)

- [Worker health checks](#)
- [Revised entry-check poster for workers and entry-check poster for visitors](#)
- [Mandatory masks in workplaces](#)
- [Health and safety information in other languages](#)



WorkSafeBC is conducting enhanced workplace inspections and consultations as COVID-19 conditions change.

Did you know?

Everyone in the workplace has a role in health and safety. Find out more on the “Roles, rights & responsibilities” homepage on [worksafebc.com](https://www.worksafebc.com).

WORK SAFE BC

Cleaning and disinfecting

The COVID-19 virus is easily destroyed with mild soap and water. This works well for handwashing, but cleaning surfaces can be a challenge. It is important to clean and disinfect surfaces, especially surfaces that are frequently contacted.

Make a plan for your workplace

When thinking of your workplace, think of the areas that workers and customers commonly touch. Examples include door handles, countertops, keypads, tables, phones, faucets, toilets, and light switches.

Consider how often you will need to clean. Clean at least once a day for most surfaces and twice a day for high-contact surfaces. Your cleaning schedule should consider how many workers use the space; whether customers or other members of the public use the space; and how long they're in the space.

Consider cleaning before and after shifts or before opening and after closing. Make sure workers who are cleaning have been trained to use the cleaning products safely and consider what personal protective equipment they may need.

Two-stage process

Effective cleaning and disinfecting is a two-stage process.

Step 1: Cleaning

To clean and disinfect effectively, first you must remove dirt and debris. Any residue left on work surfaces and equipment may deactivate the disinfectant. Use soap or detergent as a cleaning agent.

Step 2: Disinfecting

After cleaning, apply disinfectant to the surface. The disinfectant needs to be left on for the specified time to neutralize any remaining organisms. Look for the recommended contact times on the product instructions.



What you can use to clean and disinfect

For cleaning, use regular dish soap and water or other cleaning solution. How often surfaces and equipment needs to be cleaned depends on how many people are in the space and how the space is used. You may need to clean some spaces more frequently.

For disinfecting, one of the most common solutions is water and bleach. A 500 ppm bleach solution can be made by adding 42 ml (3 tablespoons) of bleach to 4 L (1 gallon) of water. For other quantities, use the bleach calculator found on [worksafebc.com](https://www.worksafebc.com). Never mix bleach with other disinfecting products. For more information, visit the BC Centre for Disease Control's Cleaning and Disinfecting webpage.

Some sanitizing solutions contain up to 70 percent alcohol and will release flammable vapours. Use these with caution, and don't use them if there are ignition sources nearby.

Handwashing

Regular handwashing is an important part of maintaining clean surfaces. Establish handwashing procedures for your workplace and communicate them to workers. Policies should ensure workers are washing their hands regularly. At a minimum, when they arrive, immediately before any breaks, and just before leaving. This is an important infection control measure for your workplace.

View the complete [Cleaning and disinfecting resource](https://www.worksafebc.com) on [worksafebc.com](https://www.worksafebc.com). 