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# COMMUNICABLE DISEASE PREVENTION PLAN

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## PURPOSE

The purpose of this plan is to promote the health and safety of Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA), Kamloops Branch clients, employees, volunteers, students, visitors, and contractors by providing appropriate information that can be used to prevent and reduce the risk of contraction, spread and impact of communicable disease.

Communicable disease control and prevention is important to CMHA, Kamloops Branch. CMHA recognizes the unique risks and challenges that communicable disease present and, we have put measures into place to create a safe workplace for all.

Preventing communicable disease involves ongoing measures to reduce the risk of disease transmission in our workplaces. It also involves implementing additional control measures when advised to do so by Public Health during periods of elevated risk.

This document is intended to be a guide to assist our employees in following policies and procedures designed to decrease the risk of communicable diseases.

## INTRODUCTION - WHAT IS A COMMUNICABLE DISEASE?

WorkSafe BC advises that communicable disease is an illness caused by an infectious agent or its toxic product that can be transmitted by contact with infected individuals or their bodily discharges or fluids, by contact with contaminated surfaces or objects. Examples of communicable diseases that may circulate in a workplace include COVID-19 and seasonal influenza.

Communicable Diseases are most commonly spread from an infected person through:

- Respiratory droplets when you cough or sneeze.
- Close personal contact, such as touching or shaking hands.
- Touching something with a virus on it, then touching your eyes, nose or mouth before washing your hands.

## SCOPE

Communicable diseases included in the scope of this Plan are those typically caused by viruses and normally spread through direct or indirect human contact and when the risk of communicable disease in the region or workplace is elevated, as advised and directed by public health.

Examples of communicable diseases include but are not limited to:

- Coronavirus
- Influenza

## OUR RESPONSIBILITIES

Everyone – clients, employees, employers, volunteers, students, visitors, and contractors - has responsibility for health and safety in the workplace. Stay home if you are sick, get medical guidance and follow public health recommendations and requirements.

CMHA, Kamloops Branch, Human Resources Dept. will advise staff when there is a communicable disease threat affecting staff. In the event of a communicable disease outbreak, CMHA, Kamloops Branch will work with the Interior Health Authority, notify affected staff, take actions to protect the health and safety of clients, staff, volunteers, students, visitors and contractors, and provide additional guidance as necessary.

### Employer Responsibilities

CMHA, Kamloops Branch will:

- Monitor and review communicable disease-related information issued by regional health officers or the Provincial Health Officer.
- Implement policies to support staff who have symptoms of communicable disease.
- Provide hand-hygiene facilities with appropriate supplies and use policies and signage to remind workers to wash their hands regularly and to cover coughs and sneezes.
- Maintain a clean environment through routine cleaning processes appropriate for the workplace.
- Ensure that building ventilation is adequate, and systems are properly maintained.
- Support employees in receiving vaccinations for vaccine-preventable conditions.
- Provide employees with communication and training surrounding safe work practices, including this Communicable Disease Safety Plan and encourage employees to ask questions and provide feedback to managers.

In addition, when advised by Public Health and during a period of elevated risk, we must:

- Follow the directions from medical health officers and the regional health authority.
- Follow all orders, guidance, recommendations, and notices issued by the Provincial Health Officer.
- Reassess policies and practices based on updated guidance from regional or provincial health authorities.

### Employee Responsibilities

Employees will:

- Report any communicable disease safety concerns, unsafe conditions or acts to their manager.
- Wash hands frequently.
- Follow cough/sneeze etiquette.
- Follow established communicable disease prevention plan as directed by the employer.
- Use Personal Protective Equipment as instructed and required.
- Know the location of washing facilities, including hand sanitizer dispensing stations.
- Sanitize shared work surfaces and equipment after use.
- If you become sick with symptoms compatible with a communicable disease you need to stay at home and notify your manager and seek medical health guidance.

## PREVENTION

Preventing communicable disease involves taking ongoing measures to reduce the risk of communicable disease transmission in the workplace. There are a multitude of methods that can be applied to control communicable disease, the primary sources of prevention include hand and surface hygiene, sanitation, isolation and immunization.

Vaccines and/or acquired immunity can provide some protection against certain communicable disease, therefore it is important to limit the spread of a communicable disease before it has the potential to cause serious illness/disease by implementing the additional measures:

- Daily self-screen for symptoms prior to entering the work environment.
- Do not work when sick with flu like or communicable disease like symptoms, contact a medical professional or 8-1-1 for guidance.
- Frequently wash your hands with soap and water for 20 sec or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, mouth with un-sanitized hands.
- Use proper respiratory/cough sneeze etiquette:
- Avoid close contact with people displaying symptoms of respiratory illnesses.
- Routinely clean and disinfect work surfaces or high traffic touch points.
- Practice a healthy lifestyle; exercise, eat a balanced diet, and get sufficient sleep.
- Avoid public places when sick to prevent the spread of communicable disease.
- Get tested if you have communicable disease symptoms. If confirmed positive cooperate with contact tracing so others may be advised to self-monitor/self-isolate.
- Post communicable disease prevention signs and posters in the workplace.
- Maintain appropriate immunizations and vaccinations.
- Maintain social distance from others when possible.
- Directional arrows and signage in place to reduce congestion and remind patrons to observe social distancing.
- Plexiglass barriers - installed at workstations, counters and other areas within the workplace.
- Use appropriate personal protective equipment.
- Any additional measures as directed by Public Health.

## RISK IDENTIFICATION

The risk of certain communicable diseases, including Coronavirus, may increase from time to time or on a seasonal basis. This may occur at a local or regional level, or within a certain workplace.

Recognizing the signs and symptoms of a communicable disease and understanding the modes of transmission is the first step in reducing the incidence of communicable diseases.

Signs and symptoms will vary depending on the disease, but common characteristics associated at the onset of most communicable diseases typically include fever and other flulike symptoms: achiness, upset stomach, fatigue, fever, and headaches. When traveling abroad, be aware of communicable disease threats; certain communicable diseases are endemic to certain regions of the world.

Name	Vaccine Preventable?	Description of Symptoms
Coronavirus (COVID-19)	Yes	Symptoms: fever, cough, shortness of breath and breathing difficulties. Transmission: Person-to-person via droplets, coughing, sneezing, or talking; sharing items; touching contaminated objects.
Influenza	Yes	Symptoms: fever; cough; sore throat; runny or stuffy nose; muscle/body aches; headaches; fatigue; sometimes vomiting and diarrhea Transmission: person-to-person via droplets, coughing, sneezing, or talking; sharing items; touching contaminated objects.

Seek medical attention from your medical health care provider and contact 8-1-1 for guidance and direction if you are symptomatic or may have come into contact with a communicable disease.

Please follow Canada Public Health Guidelines when traveling abroad.

CMHA, Kamloops Branch will monitor and review communicable disease-related information issued by Interior Health Medical Health Officers or the Provincial Health Officer related to our industry, region, or workplace. This includes orders, guidance, notices, and recommendations issued by a medical health officer or the provincial health officer.

## RISK CONTROLS

Once the risks levels have been identified with guidance from the Interior Health Authority, the principles used to reduce the risk are based upon the Hierarchy of Controls.

The Hierarchy of Controls in order of their effectiveness:

1. **ELIMINATION or SUBSTITUTION:** Has the employer fully considered eliminating or postponing work tasks that may create a risk of exposure? Are there opportunities to work from home or can work processes be changed to eliminate or reduce contact with others?
2. **ENGINEERING CONTROLS:** Are engineering controls, such as physical barriers, practicable?
3. **ADMINISTRATIVE CONTROLS:** Has the employer fully considered how work practices can be altered to minimize exposure, such as physical distancing or enhanced cleaning protocols?
4. **PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE):** This last form of protection should only be considered after careful consideration of the previous control measures. The use of gloves and face masks may be considered where none of the above controls are possible/effective. If gloves and masks are used, proper usage guidelines should be followed.

## COMMUNICATIONS

Communicable disease events require extensive awareness communication to ensure the whole organization is communicating the same facts, risks, and controls to keep people safe. A standardized communication plan that leverages existing organizational communication methods is important.

Awareness posters, written policies and procedures, education and training, safety meeting minutes and regular communication from management will assist in increasing the awareness of the communicable disease plan in our workplaces.

When appropriate, communications to employees with respect to the prevention of communicable diseases will be the following:

- discussed with them by their supervisor or manager
- emailed to them
- posted at worksites

Employees are responsible to read and understand these communications. If you need clarification, then please discuss with your supervisor or manager.

From time to time, through worksite meetings, supervisors and managers are to communicate to employees and remind them of the safety protocols put in place to prevent the transmission of communicable diseases and remind them not come to work when sick.

If CMHA, Kamloops Branch is notified of an exposure to a communicable disease in the workplace, all team members potentially affected by that notification will be provided with appropriate information and direction based on the guidance of the local health authority. In all cases, CMHA, Kamloops Branch will comply with all privacy laws and will provide information to the best of its ability, in compliance with the directions of the local health authority.

## STAY HOME WHEN YOU ARE SICK

### What Employees Should Know

All employees should stay home if they have cold or flu symptoms or other gastrointestinal (vomit or diarrhea) symptoms for at least 24 hours after their fever (temperature of 100 degrees Fahrenheit or 37.8 degrees Celsius or higher) or liquid/droplet symptoms are gone. Temperature should be measured without the use of fever-reducing medicines (medicines that contains ibuprofen or acetaminophen). The employee should contact their medical health provider for further guidance and direction or call 8-1-1.

### If You Become Sick at Work

Employees who have flu symptoms upon arrival at work or become ill during the day should promptly separate themselves from other workers, put on a non-medical mask, inform their manager and go

home. Employees should seek medical attention and only return to the workplace once they have recovered.

### What Employers Should Know

An important way to reduce the spread of flu and COVID-19 is to keep sick people away from those who are not sick. We should review and communicate our sick leave policies and practices to employees every year before flu season begins. It is important to advise all employees to stay home if they are sick for at least 24 hours after their fever is gone without the use of fever-reducing medicines, or after symptoms have improved.

## COMMUNICABLE DISEASE INCIDENT PROCEDURE

The following procedures should be followed whenever a communicable disease emergency such as a regional communicable disease outbreak, pandemic, or public health emergency is declared by local or provincial officials.

### Employees

Any CMHA, Kamloops Branch employee who believes they have a communicable disease should:

- Seek medical attention and get tested if necessary.
- Stay home when sick and avoid close contact with others to the extent possible.
  - Do not return to work until advised to do so by a health care professional or, in the absence of medical consultation, do not return to work for the duration of the illness and 24-hours after symptoms disappear;
  - Notify your manager;
  - Record your time away from work as sick leave.
  - To limit the spread of communicable disease, avoid traveling when sick, unless otherwise deemed appropriate by a health care professional.
- Follow health care providers' treatment plan.
- Cooperate with Public Health.

### Managers

Support employees who have symptoms of a communicable disease (e.g., fever or chills, coughing, diarrhea) so they can avoid being at the workplace when sick. Managers who become aware of an employee under their supervision exhibiting communicable disease symptoms or is diagnosed with a communicable disease must not release the employee's name, identifying information, or condition to other employees. All employee healthcare concerns must be forwarded to Human Resources. Managers and employees can contact Human Resources with any questions or concerns they may have regarding workplace issues surrounding communicable disease. Managers will arrange to have work areas cleaned and sanitized.

## Confidentiality

All employee medical information is treated as private and confidential and will be handled in compliance with legal requirements.

## PERSONAL HYGIENE/CLEANING

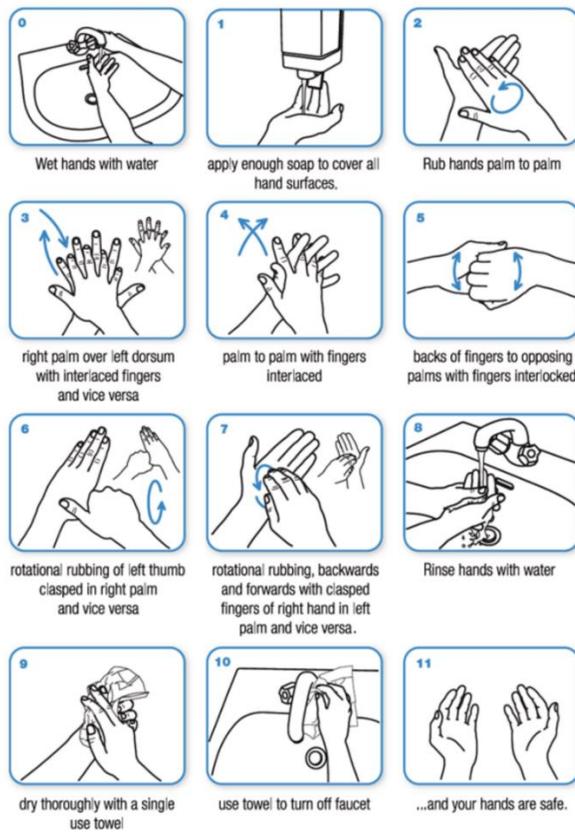
### Hand Washing

Frequent hand washing is one of the best ways to minimize the risk of infection. Proper hand washing helps prevent the transfer of infectious material from the hands to other parts of the body – particularly the eyes, nose and mouth – or to other surfaces that are touched.

Wash your hands immediately:

- Before leaving a work area.
- After handling materials that may be contaminated.
- Before eating, drinking, smoking, handling contact lenses, or applying makeup.
- Wash and rinse your hands for at least twenty seconds.

### Hand Washing Procedure



Use soap and warm running water; it does not have to be hot to be effective. If water is unavailable, use a waterless hand cleanser that has at least 60% alcohol. Follow the manufacturer's instructions on how to use the cleanser.

Hand sanitizing stations have been placed in our work areas for staff and visitors to use. Hand washing signs should be displayed in washrooms for client, employee, and visitor reference.

### Respiratory Cough/Sneeze Etiquette

All employees are expected to follow cough/sneeze etiquettes, which are a combination of preventative measures that minimizes the transmission of diseases via droplet or airborne routes.

Cough/sneeze etiquette includes the following components:

- Cover your mouth and nose with your arm, sleeve or tissue when coughing or sneezing to reduce the spread of germs.
- Immediately dispose of any tissues you have used into the garbage as soon as possible and wash your hands afterwards.
- Turn your head away from others when coughing or sneezing.
- Wash hands regularly.

# Cover your Cough



## USE OF MASKS

A non-medical mask is a protective barrier worn on the face, covering at least the nose and mouth, and is used by the person wearing the mask to contain large droplets generated during coughing and sneezing. Non-medical masks help minimize the spread of potentially infectious material from the infected wearer to other people. Non-medical masks are not considered full protection.

Masks are to be worn at a minimum according to recommendation/ guidelines from:

- Provincial Health Officer
- WorkSafe BC

Visitors and contractors will also be required to follow workplace mask protocols. They may also be refused entry or service if they do not comply. Masks will be available and offered at all sites.

Masks are no longer mandatory indoors. Wearing a mask is optional for all fully vaccinated employees, wearing a mask indoors is recommended for those that are not fully vaccinated.

If an employee chooses to wear a face mask it is important that the mask is worn correctly. Improper putting on and removal of a face mask creates a greater risk of infection. Always follow product instructions on the use and storage of a mask and procedures for how to put on and remove the mask.



## CLEANING AND DISINFECTING

Part of our role in keeping our workplace healthy and safe for clients, employees, volunteers, students, and visitors means that routine cleaning and disinfecting is of great importance. Cleaning and disinfecting surfaces can also reduce the risk of infection.

Always follow standard practices and appropriate regulations specific to programming for minimum standards for cleaning and disinfection.

Communicable disease safety measures that need to be in place include:

- Cleaning and disinfection of highly touched surfaces
- Frequent handwashing
- Providing hand hygiene options for clients, employees, volunteers, students, visitors, and contractors

### When to Clean and When to Disinfect

Cleaning with products containing soap or detergent reduces germs on surfaces by removing contaminants and decreases risk of infection from surfaces.

When no people with confirmed or suspected viruses are known to have been in a space, cleaning once a day is usually sufficient enough to remove viruses that may be on surfaces and help maintain a healthy facility.

Disinfection kills any remaining germs on surfaces, which further reduces any risk of spreading infection. You may want to either clean more frequently or choose to disinfect (in addition to cleaning) in shared spaces if the space is a high traffic area or if certain conditions apply that can increase the risk of infection from touching surfaces:

- BC COVID Dashboard in your community
- Low vaccination rates in your community
- Infrequent use of other prevention measures, such as hand hygiene
- The space is occupied by people at increased risk for severe illness

If there has been a sick person in your facility within the last 24 hours, you should clean and disinfect the space. Generally, the more people who touch a surface, the higher the risk. Prioritize cleaning high touch surfaces at least once a day. If the space is a high traffic area, or if certain conditions (listed above) apply, you may choose to clean more frequently or disinfect in addition to cleaning.

## BUILDING VENTILATION

For all activities that take place indoors, basic principles of good indoor air quality include supplying outdoor air to replenish indoor air by removing and diluting contaminants that naturally accumulate in indoor settings, especially in well-sealed buildings. Regular maintenance is required.

## PROMOTION OF EMPLOYEE VACCINATIONS

CMHA, Kamloops Branch will support Public Health messaging for vaccinations against pandemic or community diseases and may collaborate with Public Health to offer vaccination clinics at program sites.

CMHA, Kamloops Branch recognizes the public health benefits of vaccination programs to reduce illness, disability and death from community acquired diseases. Employees are encouraged to participate in public health vaccination programs or the agency's annual Flu vaccination clinics.

CMHA, Kamloops recognizes every employee's right to determine their own health choices and will not mandate or discriminate against employees who choose not to get vaccinated.

### Reasons to get Vaccinated\*

#### **Vaccine-preventable diseases have not gone away**

The viruses and bacteria that cause illness and death still exist and can be passed on to those who are not protected by vaccines.

#### 1. **Vaccines will help keep you healthy**

Vaccines can prevent short term illnesses and prevent long term chronic disability or increased risk of cancer depending on the disease.

#### 2. **Vaccines are as important to your overall health as diet and exercise**

Like eating healthy foods, exercising, and getting regular check-ups, vaccines play a vital role in keeping you healthy. Vaccines are one of the most convenient and safest preventive care measures available.

#### 3. **Vaccination can mean the difference between life and death**

Vaccine-preventable infections can be deadly. Example: Every year in the US, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, approximately 50,000 adults died from vaccine-preventable diseases.

#### 4. **Vaccines are safe**

Potential side effects associated with vaccines are uncommon and much less severe than the diseases they prevent.

#### 5. **Vaccines will not cause the diseases they are designed to prevent**

Vaccines contain either killed or weakened viruses, making it impossible to get the disease from the vaccine.

6. **Young and healthy people can get very sick, too**  
Infants and older adults are at increased risk for serious infections and complications, but vaccine-preventable diseases can strike anyone. If you are young and healthy, getting vaccinated can help you stay that way.
7. **Vaccine-preventable diseases are expensive**  
Diseases not only have a direct impact on individuals and their families, but also carry a high price tag for society as a whole.
8. **When you get sick, your children, grandchildren, and parents may be at risk, too**  
Adults are the most common source of pertussis (whooping cough) infection in infants which can be deadly for babies. When you get vaccinated, you are protecting yourself and your family as well as those in your community who may not be able to be vaccinated.
9. **Your family and co-workers need you**  
Millions of adults get sick from vaccine-preventable diseases, causing them to miss work and leaving them unable to care for those who depend on them, including their children and/or aging parents.

\*From BCMSA

## EMPLOYEE WELLBEING

CMHA, Kamloops Branch employees play a major role in helping us cultivate a safe, desirable, engaging workplace where we can do the meaningful work to serve our clients. It is important that everyone focuses on their own health and well-being especially in times of communicable disease events. Like your physical health, your mental health is something to be nurtured, developed and cared for. Your mental health is affected by numerous factors from your daily life, including the stress of balancing work with your health and relationships.

## REVIEW OF PLANS

The communicable disease plan will be reviewed with the Joint Occupational Health & Safety Committee and discussed at team meetings on a regular basis.