



**CARIBOO REGIONAL DISTRICT
CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)
RESPONSE PLAN**

Created: March 20, 2020

Updated: June 10, 2020

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DEFINITIONS

Community Transmission: Means the occurrence of cases of an illness for which the source of infection is unknown.

Pandemic: A pandemic is defined as an epidemic occurring worldwide, or over a very wide area, crossing international boundaries and usually affecting a large number of people.

Self-Distancing: Means lowering the risk of infection by maintaining a distance from other people in accordance with current Provincial Health Officer and WorkSafeBC guidelines. Avoid any situation where you may come in close contact with others, such as social gatherings, work, school, child care/pre-school centres, university and other education providers, faith-based gatherings, aged care and health care facilities, prisons, sports gatherings, restaurants and all public gatherings.

Self-Isolation: Means staying at home, completely avoiding contact with other people and monitoring yourself for symptoms, even if mild, for 14 days. You need to self-isolate if you have been in contact with someone who has tested positive for coronavirus, if you have symptoms of coronavirus, before you get tested for coronavirus, while you wait for test results or if you have had a positive test result for coronavirus.

Self-Monitor: Means monitoring your health and the health of your children or live-in family members for symptoms such as fever, cough and difficulty breathing. Individuals who are self-monitoring are allowed to attend work and participate in regular activities.

BACKGROUND

In January 2020 the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the outbreak of a new coronavirus in Hubei Province, China to be a Public Health Emergency of International Concern. WHO stated there is a high risk of the 2019 coronavirus (COVID-19) spreading to other countries around the world. On March 11, 2020 the WHO made the assessment that COVID-19 can be characterized as a pandemic.

The COVID-19 Response Plan supports the strategies of Interior Health and Northern Health while accommodating the circumstances of the Cariboo Regional District. Where possible, activities will align with regional, provincial, national and World Health Organization guidelines.

This plan is subject to change and discretion depending on emergent conditions and information.

EMPLOYEE COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

Key Messages

- The Cariboo Regional District will follow the advice and guidance of Interior Health and Northern Health which have the expertise to assess the level of risk posed by COVID-19.
- The Cariboo Regional District is preparing for a COVID-19 pandemic. Planning and procedures are open to the community and employees for their information and feedback.
- The Cariboo Regional District's priority during a COVID-19 pandemic is to maintain Essential Service levels. There may be changes to the delivery of services in order to protect the health and safety of workers, and to focus on providing the most necessary services to the community.

Communications with Employees

The Cariboo Regional District will take the lead role in communicating details with its employees. The Cariboo Regional District has the responsibility to educate employees concerning preventive measures. Confronted with a COVID-19 pandemic, the Cariboo Regional District must inform its employees of preventive measures and implement plans to help protect employees against the spread of this virus.

The Cariboo Regional District will work with the Joint Occupational Health & Safety Committee by communicating the health and safety precautions to be followed to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and to educate employees about their responsibility to help protect themselves, their families, and those who become ill.

HOW COVID-19 SPREADS

Human coronaviruses cause infections of the nose, throat and lungs. They are most commonly spread from an infected person through:

- respiratory droplets generated when you cough or sneeze
- close, prolonged personal contact, such as touching or shaking hands
- touching something with the virus on it, then touching your mouth, nose or eyes before washing your hands

Current evidence suggests person-to-person spread is efficient when there is close contact.

Hazard Identification

Available industry information confirms that "front-line" employees such as receptionists and customer service clerks have an increased risk of exposure to the coronavirus through droplet or surface contact transmission.

Employees who work alone in an office and generally do not have in-person contact with members

of public, have a lower risk of occupational exposure to the coronavirus but may still be exposed to contaminated surfaces/objects.

Risk Assessment

The degree or severity of a worker's risk would vary based on the following factors:

- Proximity to people who are or who may be symptomatic
- Frequency and duration of in-person contact with people who are or who may be symptomatic.
- The quality and movement of air within a workplace or area shared with people who are or who may be symptomatic
- Frequency and type of contact with objects or surfaces that may be contaminated

GUIDELINES & PROCEDURES TO CONTROL RISK

Based on the above, the following guidelines and procedures are established for implementation before or during a COVID-19 pandemic to minimize worker exposure:

- *Prevention*
- *COVID-19 Guidelines*
- *Office Sanitization Plan*
- *Self-Monitoring and Isolation of Employees*
- *Restricting Access to Worksites*

PREVENTION

The most important thing employees can do to prevent coronavirus and other illnesses is to **wash their hands regularly** and avoid touching their faces.

There are currently no vaccines available to protect you against human coronavirus infection.

In general, the following advice can help reduce the risk of infection or spreading infection to others:

- stay home if you are sick
- when coughing or sneezing:
 - cover your mouth and nose with your arm to reduce the spread of germs
 - dispose of any tissues you have used as soon as possible and wash your hands afterwards
- wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
- avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands
- avoid visiting people in hospitals or long-term care centres if you are sick

COVID-19 GUIDELINES

To protect the Cariboo Regional District employees from exposure and to limit the spread of COVID-19, the CAO will use the following stages as a guideline to implement the applicable procedures as

recommended below.

Note: *Procedures from higher stages may be implemented sooner at the discretion of the CAO or designate.*

Stage One

The Provincial Health Officer (PHO) advises of an occurrence of COVID-19 in the Province of BC:

The Employer will:

- Make provision for, support and initiate the implementation of this exposure control plan
- Provide necessary materials and other resources
- Provide Internal Communications
- Make a copy of the exposure control plan and all associated information readily available to workers throughout the operation

Department Managers and Supervisors will:

- Ensure all the steps of the exposure control plan are implemented
- Report all incidents of coronavirus among workers to the Employer
- Establish a “*plan don’t panic*” approach to the pandemic
- Provide relevant advice/information to workers on request
- Provide necessary education, training and information to workers via the Crew Talk program
- For the duration of the pandemic, ensure orientation of new, young and returning workers includes a review of the contents of this exposure control plan
- Generate and maintain all records relating to this component of the OHS Program, as evidence of due diligence
- Lead by good example

Workers will:

- Ensure they understand the hazards and the controls as they relate to coronavirus
- Follow all established safe work procedures and practices
- Properly use Personal Protective Equipment as applicable
- Report unsafe acts and conditions to the Department Manager and Supervisor
- Know the signs and symptoms of coronavirus, self-monitor and report illness
- Ask questions if they’re unsure

Stage Two

The Provincial Health Officer (PHO) and Deputy Provincial Health Officer (DPHO) advise of instances of COVID-19 in the local area (Cariboo Regional District Electoral Areas):

- Implement the duties and responsibilities outlined in Stage One
- The Employer will:
 - Initiate the Office Sanitization Plan
 - Implement means to protect employees while maintaining public access to facilities

where employees work (ex. impose proximity limiting measures, install and require use of hand sanitizing stations)

- Restrict access to worksites to employees only, as deemed necessary
- Implement working from home/telecommuting options, when necessary

Stage Three

Stage Three activation will be at the discretion of the Cariboo Regional District CAO and will take into consideration:

1. Whether or not a pandemic has been declared
2. Characteristics of community transmission (such as number of cases and location)
3. Multiple occurrences of COVID-19 in the local area

Procedures during Stage Three may include:

- The duties and responsibilities outlined in Stage One and Stage Two
- The Employer will:
 - Restrict public access to the local government workspaces.
 - Determine any additional measures necessary to protect employees required to perform Essential Services.

OFFICE SANITIZATION PLAN

During Stages Two and Three, all Cariboo Regional District office areas must be sanitized using cleaning supplies suitable to reduce the exposure and spread of COVID-19.

List of disinfecting agents and their working concentrations known to be effective against coronaviruses:

Agent and Concentration	Uses
Chlorine: Household bleach – sodium hypochlorite (5.25%) 1:100 (500 ppm solution) 10 ml bleach to 990 ml water	Used for disinfecting general surfaces, e.g., hand railings, grab handles, doorknobs, cupboard handles.
Chlorine: Household bleach - sodium hypochlorite (5.25%) 1:50 (1,000ppm solution) 20 ml bleach to 980 ml water	Used for disinfecting surfaces contaminated with bodily fluids and waste like vomit, diarrhea, mucus, or feces (after cleaning with soap and water first). Allow surface to air dry naturally.
Accelerated Hydrogen Peroxide 0.5%	Used for disinfecting general surfaces (e.g. counters, handrails, doorknobs).
Quaternary Ammonium Compounds (QUATs)	Used for disinfecting of general surfaces (e.g. floors, walls, furnishings).

Required Levels of Sanitation:

Stage One

The Provincial Health Officer (PHO) advises of an occurrence of COVID-19 in the Province of BC:

- N/A

Stage Two

The Provincial Health Officer advises of instances of COVID-19 in the local area (Cariboo Regional District Electoral Areas):

- Workstations and areas with public access will be provided with sanitizing materials for use by employees.
- All employees will ensure that their own workstations, including equipment, vehicles, and surfaces are cleaned using an appropriate disinfecting agent on a daily basis.
- Janitorial employees will ensure that common high-touch areas such as door handles, washrooms, and light switches are sanitized using an appropriate disinfecting agent on a daily basis.

Stage Three

Stage Three activation will be at the discretion of the CAO and will take into consideration:

1. Whether or not a pandemic has been declared
2. Characteristics of community transmission (such as number of cases and location)
3. Multiple occurrences of COVID-19 in the Cariboo Regional District

Procedures during Stage Three may include:

- Routine practices as per Stage Two continue.
- All surfaces must be sanitized after each use using an appropriate disinfecting agent.

SELF-MONITORING AND ISOLATION OF EMPLOYEES

During the workday, employees will Self-Monitor to determine if they are experiencing any symptoms of COVID- 19.

Symptoms

- Clinical symptoms of COVID-19 may be mild or severe, and are similar to other respiratory illnesses, including the flu and common cold.
- Mild symptoms may include some or all of the following: Low-grade fever, cough, malaise, rhinorrhea, fatigue, sore throat, gastro-intestinal symptoms such as nausea, vomiting, and/or diarrhea.
- More severe symptoms may include any of the above as well as fever, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing and/or chest pain.
- Those who are infected with COVID-19 may have little to no symptoms. Symptoms may take up to 14 days to appear after exposure to COVID-19. This is the longest known infectious period for this virus.

Procedures for symptomatic employees:

- Isolate yourself from others as quickly as possible.
- Immediately call your health care professional, a local public health authority, or 8-1-1.
- Describe your symptoms and travel history. They will provide advice on what you should do.

Your health care professional may ask you to self-isolate. People asked to self-isolate should stay home and be prepared to limit contact with others for 14 days.

RESTRICTING EMPLOYEE ACCESS TO WORKSITES

Unless otherwise directed by the Chief Administrative Officer or Management, healthy employees are expected to report for work.

If an employee has cold symptoms such as cough/sneezing/fever, or feels poorly, the employee should request to use his/her sick leave entitlement.

If an employee is coughing/sneezing on a regular basis due to seasonal allergies, close physical contact with coworkers must be avoided and extra precautionary measures taken as mentioned within this plan (such as taking allergy medication, coughing into your arm/elbow).

Please note, an employee with a positive COVID-19 diagnosis can only return to the office after full recovery, with a doctor's note confirming recovery.

An employee must self-isolate for 14 days if he/she has been in contact with someone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19.

An employee who is feeling ill, but is able to work, can request to work from home; however, this will be at the discretion of the CAO or designate and the employee must adhere to the COVID-19 Working From Home Policy.

At the discretion of the CAO or designate, non-essential work-related travel will be restricted.

In-person meetings should be done virtually where possible, especially with non-CRD-related parties (e.g. candidate interviews and partners). If in-person meetings are required, please refer to Section 5 – Plan for Reopening of the attached Appendix.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

The following provides easy to understand information about the coronavirus.

Department Managers and Supervisors are responsible to ensure this information is communicated to workers under their supervision.

Pandemic Vs Epidemic

A pandemic "occurs over a wide geographic area and affects an exceptionally high proportion of the population". In terms of illness, it is an outbreak of any virus such as typhoid or influenza (the "flu"). In comparison, an epidemic is similar, but the virus affects a large number of people within a population, community, or region at the same time whereas a pandemic is the same virus on a much larger more global scale.

Is COVID-19 the same as SARS?

No. The virus that causes COVID-19 and the one that causes Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) are related to each other genetically, but they are different. SARS is more deadly but much less infectious than COVID-19. There have been no outbreaks of SARS anywhere in the world since 2003.

What about vaccine?

There is no vaccine and no specific antiviral medicine to prevent or treat COVID-19. However, those affected should receive care to relieve symptoms. People with serious illness should be hospitalized. Most patients recover thanks to supportive care.

Possible vaccines and some specific drug treatments are under investigation. They are being tested through clinical trials. WHO is coordinating efforts to develop vaccines and medicines to prevent and treat COVID-19.

Can I catch COVID-19 from the feces of someone with the virus?

The risk of catching COVID-19 from the feces of an infected person appears to be low. While initial investigations suggest the virus may be present in feces in some cases, spread through this route is not a main feature of the outbreak. The World Health Organization (WHO) is currently assessing the ways COVID-19 is spread and will continue to share new findings. Because this is a risk, however, it is another reason to clean hands regularly, after using the bathroom and before eating.

What is the incubation period for COVID-19?

The "incubation period" means the time between catching the virus and beginning to have symptoms of the virus. Most estimates of the incubation period for COVID-19 range from 1-14 days, most commonly around five days.

How can I protect myself from the spread of infection?

Standard recommendations from the World Health Organization to the public to prevent the spread of infection include:

- Frequently clean hands by using alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water
- When coughing and sneezing cover mouth and nose with flexed elbow or tissue – throw tissue away immediately and wash hands
- Avoid close contact with anyone who has a fever and cough (No hand shaking or other unnecessary contact).
- If you have fever, cough and difficulty breathing, seek medical care early and share previous travel history with your health care provider.
- When visiting live markets in areas currently experiencing cases of Covid-19, avoid direct unprotected contact with live animals and surfaces that have been in contact with animals

The consumption of raw or undercooked animal products should be avoided. Raw meat, milk or animal organs should be handled with care to avoid cross-contamination with uncooked foods, as per good food safety practices.

For more Information about coronavirus and prevention, please visit our website at:

<https://www.cariboord.ca/covid-19>



John MacLean
Chief Administrative Officer

June 12, 2020

Date