

**Kootenay Society for Community Living**

**Communicable Disease and Prevention Plan**

**2023**

A communicable disease is an illness caused by an infectious agent or its toxic product that can be transmitted in a workplace from one person to another. Examples of communicable disease that may circulate in a work place include COVID-19, norovirus, and seasonal influenza.

As Covid-19 vaccinations have become widely available to British Columbians, the overall risk of Cvodi-19 transmission and serious consequences has diminished. Despite this, the virus will still circulate like other communicable diseases.

This plan provides information for KSCL employees to reduce risks of transmitting communicable diseases.

**Step 1: Understanding the Risks**

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

The level of risk of certain communicable disease, including COVID-19, may increase from time to time or on a seasonal basis. This may occur at a local or reginal level, or within a certain workplace.

KSCL's Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee is responsible for staying up to date with any and all new information issued by our regional medical health officer or the provincial health officer that pertains to communicable disease-related risks. As an agenda item, the committee reviews and monitors information and decides how to implement any new guidance, at each monthly meeting.

In 2020 and throughout the Covid-19 pandemic KSCL has developed Safety Plans and Safe Work Procedures pertaining to Covid-19 and ensuring universal precautions are followed. In the event these plans are necessary again they will be reviewed and revised based on the most current information shared by the Provincial Health Officer and the British Columbia Centre for Disease Control.

As of April 14, 2022 this plan will be implemented and the Safety plans and Covid-19 safe work procedures archived.

KSCL Policy and Procedures pertaining to this plan include:

* **Infectious Diseases and Universal Precautions 102.70**
* **Seasonal Influenza Vaccine for Individuals and Respiratory Illness Prevention and Outbreaks Management 102.76**
* **Viral Gastroenteritis Prevention and Outbreak Management** **102.90**

Most a recent updated for the plans was completed on Oct 17, 2023

**Step 2: Implementing Measures, Practices and Policies to Reduce the Risk**

KSCL Staff are required to complete a daily health assessment prior to coming to work. If they have any symptoms of a communicable disease, they must stay home and call 811 for guidance on covid testing or self-isolation. KSCL has rapid test that are only to be used when having symptoms for several days.

PPE - Wearing a Mask?:

* **Non-licensed Staffed Homes:**
The use of masks is up to individuals, families and service providers to decide based on their assessment of risk for non-licensed staffed homes, day programs, employment programs, and other CLBC-supported community inclusion programs. We ask service providers to have conversations with those they support and their families to understand health risks and preferences on this matter.
* **Licensed Staffed Homes:**
**Support workers, contractors, volunteers, and visitors must wear a mask in all common areas in licensed staffed homes.** Individuals living in licensed CLBC staffed homes are not required to wear a mask as this is their home. When family and friends visit a resident in the resident’s private room in a licensed staffed home, they are not required to wear a mask unless the resident requests that they do so.
* **Home Sharing:**
Home Sharing providers and home sharing residents are not required to wear masks, and can work out their own protocols for when they might want to wear a mask (e.g. when one of them has symptoms such as a cough or sore throat or a fever).

As an additional measure, participants who receive non-essential services, such as at the Community Inclusion Programs, are required to do complete a temperature check if feeling unwell. If they are exhibiting symptoms of a communicable disease, they are not able to receives services. They will be supported to call 811 for guidance on covid testing and self-isolation. Services can be delivered virtually if appropriate.

All residents of KSCL staffed living homes also required to complete a daily health check and temperature check. If they exhibit symptoms of a communicable disease, staff will follow the Safe Work Procedure and outbreak policy that applies.

Any visitors to the sites also must complete the health screening and sign in before entering a site.

As of Jan 10, 2022 all KSCL staff are required to be fully vaccinated.

Ventilation and Circulation:

* The furnace/air conditioning system is inspected each month at each site.
* Filters are regularly changed and change is recorded.
* Any repairs or maintenance needed at a site is recorded at our monthly SRCW meeting.
* Staff at sites will open windows to get additional fresh air.

**Step 3: Communicate Measure, Practices and Policies**

* KSCL's Communicable Disease Plan was approved by the OH&S Committee and distributed to sites.
* An updated version of KSCL's Communicable Disease Plan will always be available on our internal Sharevision server for employee reference. (updated on Oct 17, 2023)
* Each staff has access to site Safe Work Procedures and KSCL Policies and Procedures on Sharevision.
* Supervisors for sites are informed of measures and practices through the OH&S Committee and through the monthly SRCW meetings.
* Signage used to communicate health measures: occupancy limits posted, hand hygiene, respiratory hygiene, out break signage for residences, mask guidance posted.
* Changes to KSCL communicable disease prevention measures are communicated regularly via the Executive Director report and on the Sharevision homepage.

**Step 4: Monitor your workplace and update your plan as necessary**

* KSCL's Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee are involved in the ongoing evaluation of measures, practices, and policies at each worksite through discussions at monthly meetings and development of Safe Work Procedures.
* Any and all staff are able to notify their site's OH&S Committee member about any health and safety concerns. OH&S issues are discussed at every staff meeting at all sites. Concerns are dealt with through collaboration with staff, the site supervisor, OH&S committee member(s) and/or OH&S committee as a whole.
* Site supervisors (SRCWs and Program Coordinators) ensure that all frontline staff are aware of (read and initial) health measures and Safe Work Procedures. SRCWs and Program Coordinators supervise staff and ensure that all appropriate practices are being followed.

**Reference:**

[**https://www.worksafebc.com/en/covid-19/covid-19-prevention**](https://www.worksafebc.com/en/covid-19/covid-19-prevention)

**https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/health/about-bc-s-health-care-system/office-of-the-provincial-health-officer/covid-19/covid-19-hospital-and-community-vaccination-status-information-preventive-measures.pdf?mc\_cid=c4243c4d6f&mc\_eid=ebe61efd0d**