



Okanagan College Communicable Disease Plan

Introduction

This Communicable Disease Plan is part of Okanagan College's commitment to promote the health and safety of Okanagan College employees, students and visitors by providing information that can be used to prevent the contraction and spread of communicable diseases, and to guide appropriate responses to any communicable disease outbreak. WorkSafeBC defines a communicable disease as an illness caused by an infectious agent or its toxic product that can be transmitted in a workplace from one person to another.

A combination of preventative measures will be used to minimize employee, student, and visitor exposure to communicable diseases, including the most effective control measures available. The College will clearly communicate this plan to employees, students and visitors and encourage everyone to follow the procedures outlined in this plan.

Purpose and alignment with WorkSafeBC and Public Health guidance

The purpose of this Communicable Disease Plan is to protect employees, students, and visitors from harmful exposure to communicable diseases and to reduce the risk of infection in the event of an exposure. WorkSafeBC Occupational Health and Safety Regulation 5.54 and 6.3, Guideline G-P2-21, Communicable Disease Plan and Occupational Health and Safety Regulation 4.85 Hand Hygiene will be adhered to and utilized as the basis of the OC Communicable Disease Plan.

Okanagan College will strive to find ways to control or minimize exposure to communicable diseases by developing and implementing proper risk controls, establishing safe work practices, raising awareness, and providing education and training for its employees, students and visitors. Okanagan College will follow direction, controls and guidance as specified by the BCCDC, the Ministry of Health, the Provincial Health Officer (PHO), Interior Health's Medical Health Officer (MHO) and the First Nations Health Authority.

In the event of a communicable disease threat (or increased risk thereof) or other health emergency, Okanagan College will: work with Interior Health; notify the college community of the threat/emergency; take appropriate action to protect the health and safety of students, employees, and visitors; and provide additional guidance as necessary.

Scope

Communicable diseases falling within the scope of this Plan are those typically caused by bacteria, viruses, fungi, or parasites and normally spread through direct or indirect human contact or through the consumption of contaminated food/water. Examples of communicable diseases include but are not limited to:

- Coronavirus (all variants)
- Hepatitis A
- Norovirus
- Influenza
- Measles
- Meningococcal Meningitis
- Mumps
- Rubella
- Tuberculosis

Prevention

Preventing communicable disease involves taking ongoing measures to reduce the risk of communicable disease transmission in the workplace. Vaccines, antibiotics, antivirals, innate immunity, and/or acquired immunity can provide some protection against certain communicable diseases. Even with these layers of protection in place, it is important to implement additional measures to limit the spread of a communicable disease before it has the potential to cause serious illness/disease:

- Wash your hands or use hand sanitizer frequently.
- Use proper cough & sneeze etiquette.
- Routinely clean and disinfect surfaces.
- Practice a healthy lifestyle: exercise, eat a balanced diet, and get sufficient sleep.
- Handle and prepare food safely: keep foods at a correct temperature, cook foods (especially meat) thoroughly, wash produce, and observe expiration dates.
- Follow universal precautions if working with bloodborne pathogens.
- Avoid coming to campus when sick in order to prevent the spread of communicable disease.
- Maintain appropriate immunization with vaccinations based upon Interior Health guidance and any additional recommendations pertinent to your unique work or study circumstances. Okanagan College will continue to follow the guidance of the PHO and Interior Health and strongly recommend, encourage and promote vaccination among our students, employees and any visitors to campus in line with current public health conditions. If vaccination is required for your study or work, you will be notified directly by Okanagan College. Okanagan College will also clearly communicate which on campus events or services require proof of vaccination to access, following PHO guidelines.
- Follow the College's [current mask directive](#) and any PHO guidance around the wearing of non-medical masks.

- Review guidance from the Ministry and PHO. See the [Province's Post-Secondary studies during COVID-19 page](#) for updates during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Monitoring your health

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, provincial, or national officials. For all other routine, seasonal, or individual health issues, consult your healthcare provider. Routine, seasonal, and individual health issues DO NOT need to be reported to college officials unless advised to do so by your healthcare provider. **All student and employee medical information is treated as private and confidential and will be handled in compliance with legal requirements and professional ethical standards.**

Personal Health Checks

Before employees, students and visitors access any Okanagan College building, they will be required to complete a personal health check. Health check requirements will be communicated out electronically to employees and students, and reminders will be posted at entrances to buildings. The health check involves a self-assessment using the following questions,

- Have you travelled outside of Canada within the last 14 days and are not fully vaccinated?
- Have you been identified by Public Health as a close contact of someone with COVID-19?
- Have you been told to isolate by Public Health?
- Are you experiencing any of the following new or worsening symptoms:
 - o Fever or chills
 - o Cough
 - o Loss of sense of smell
 - o Loss of sense of taste
 - o Difficulty breathing
 - o Sore throat
 - o Loss of appetite
 - o Extreme fatigue or tiredness
 - o Headache
 - o Body aches
 - o Nausea or vomiting
 - o Diarrhea

If the answer is “yes” to any of these questions, do not come to / remain on campus and refer to HealthLink BC by calling 811. If you experience any of these symptoms while on campus, please report to your instructor or supervisor and refer to HealthLink BC by calling 811.

Employees or students who are concerned that they may have come into contact with someone who may be ill from a communicable disease are to take the following actions:

- Report the incident to your supervisor or instructor.

- Call BC's HealthLink at 8-1-1 to share information regarding the incident and determine if any action needs to be taken.

EMPLOYEES

Employees who are diagnosed with or believe they have a communicable disease should:

- Seek medical attention if necessary.
- Stay home when sick and avoid close contact with others to the extent possible.
- Notify your supervisor if you will be away due to illness or are being advised by public health to self-isolate.
- Take action to limit the spread of communicable disease, avoid traveling when sick, unless otherwise deemed appropriate by a health care professional.
- Follow information and guidance on any communicable disease responses shared by Okanagan College, Interior Health, the BCCDC or the PHO.

Employees who become aware of colleagues or students who exhibit communicable disease symptoms while on campus, should contact their supervisor.

SUPERVISORS

Supervisors who become aware of an employee under their supervision who exhibits communicable disease symptoms or is diagnosed with a communicable disease will maintain the privacy of information as required. If an employee voluntarily discloses they have been tested positive for COVID-19, please email the following information to the Director of Business Services, Manager of Security and Crisis Management and Director of Public Affairs the following information: Department, Campus, Date (no employee name, number, role or other identifying information); this information is used to track general case count information on campuses to support public health. Supervisors and employees can contact Human Resources with any questions or concerns they may have regarding workplace issues surrounding communicable disease. Supervisors are encouraged to familiarize themselves with and guide employees to relevant Health and Well-being supports and benefits available to employees.

STUDENTS

A student who is diagnosed with or believes they have a communicable disease should:

- Seek medical attention from their primary care provider.
- Stay at home or within your residence room when sick and avoid close contact with others to the extent possible.
- Notify your instructors, supervisor, and family as necessary.
- Avoid traveling when sick, unless otherwise deemed appropriate by a health care professional.
- Follow information and guidance on any communicable disease response shared by Okanagan College, Interior Health, BCCDC or PHO.

VISITORS

- Complete the personal daily health check as outlined above.
- Follow all posted signage while on campus.
- Follow information and guidance on any communicable disease responses shared by Okanagan College, Interior Health, BCCDC or PHO.
- A visitor who is diagnosed with or believes they have a communicable disease should:
- Avoid coming to campus.
 - Seek medical attention from their primary care provider.
 - Stay at home when sick and avoid close contact with others to the extent possible.

RISK ASSESSMENT

The following risk assessment table is adapted from WorkSafeBC Occupational Health and Safety Regulation Guideline G6.34-6. Using this guideline as a reference, we have noted the various risk levels for our employees, depending on potential exposure in the workplace.

Table 1: Risk assessment for Communicable Diseases

	Low Risk Students / Employees who typically have no close contact with people.	Moderate risk Students / Workers who may have contact with people from time to time in relatively large, well-ventilated workspaces	High risk Students / Workers who may have contact with people in small, poorly ventilated workspaces
Hand Hygiene	Yes (washing with soap and water, using an alcohol-based hand rub, or using hand wipes that contain effective disinfectant)	Yes (washing with soap and water, using an alcohol-based hand rub, or using hand wipes that contain effective disinfectant)	Yes (washing with soap and water, using an alcohol-based hand rub, or using hand wipes that contain effective disinfectant)
Disposable gloves	Not required	Not required, unless handling contaminated objects on a regular basis	Yes , in some cases, such as when working directly with infected patients/people.
Aprons, gowns, or similar body protection	Not required	Not required	Yes , in some cases, such as when working directly with infected patients/people.
Eye protection – goggles or face shield	Not required	Not required	Yes , in some cases, such as when working directly with infected patients/people.

Respiratory Protection (face masks/face coverings)	Follow Provincial/Regional Public Health Guidance/Orders	Follow Provincial/Regional Public Health Guidance/Orders	Follow Provincial/Regional Public Health Guidance/Orders
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The follow table provides the level of risk and risk controls in place for students and employees.

POSITION	LEVEL OF RISK	CONTROL PROCEDURES
Front Counter Staff Positions - Administration	Low to Moderate	Regular and effective hand hygiene/sneeze guards/masks
Facilities Front Counter Clerks, Instructors	Low to Moderate	Regular and effective hand hygiene/ sneeze barriers/masks
Advisors, Coordinators, Counsellors	Low to Moderate	Regular and effective hand hygiene / sneeze barriers / masks
First Responders	High	As outlined in Operating Guidelines
Engineers	Moderate	Regular and effective hand hygiene, or as outlined in Operating Guideline
Central Stores personnel	Moderate	Regular and effective hand hygiene/sneeze guards/gloves/masks
Supervisors	Low	Regular and effective hand hygiene/masks where required
Faculty/Instructors	Moderate	Regular and effective hand hygiene/masks where required
Students	Low	Regular and effective hand hygiene/masks where required

RISK CONTROL

The Occupational Health and Safety Regulation requires the employer to implement communicable/infectious disease controls in the following order of preference:

- Controls used to mitigate the risks of exposure
- Engineering Controls
- Administrative Controls
- Education and Training
- Personal Protective Equipment
- Safe Work Practices

Controls used to mitigate the risks of exposure: Standard precautions for infection control include frequent and proper hand washing, following cough and sneeze etiquette, avoiding touching the eyes, nose or mouth, and staying home from work/school when sick.

Engineering controls separate or isolate an individual from a hazard. For example, a physical barrier which limits personal human contact. Proper ventilation levels in all Okanagan College buildings are properly maintained and assessed for functionality on an ongoing basis.

Administrative controls include the implementation of safe work procedures to reduce the risk of infection in the workplace. Administrative controls include hand washing and following cough/sneeze etiquette (cover your mouth and nose with a sleeve or tissue when coughing or sneezing), allowing a reasonable personal distance space to reduce human-to-human transmission, and an increase in cleaning frequencies for shared work surfaces and equipment, including College operated vehicles.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is the last level of mitigation and includes measures such as wearing of masks, respirators, coveralls, gloves, goggles and/or face-shields. The use of PPE is required in high-risk situations, such as dealing with infectious people. Please refer to the *Position Risk Assessment* Chart above.

During a communicable/infectious disease outbreak, large gatherings of people should be avoided, and, if possible, employees should be encouraged to work in ways that limit in-person contact. If employees must hold meetings, video conferences and conference calls should be encouraged.

OC encourages the College community to follow instruction from the PHO, MHO, Medical Doctor, WorkSafeBC and other applicable regulatory agencies, regarding the administering of vaccinations and their relationship to communicable disease management.

SAFE WORK PRACTICES

Hand Hygiene

Hand washing, following proper coughing and sneezing etiquette, and not touching your face are the key to the prevention of transmission, which minimizes the likelihood 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 “well” and “often” with soap and water for at least 20 seconds (the time it takes to hum the “Happy Birthday” song twice). If soap and water is not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer to clean your hands.

“Often” includes:

- upon arriving and when leaving work
- after coughing or sneezing
- after bathroom use
- when hands are visibly dirty
- before, during and after you prepare food
- before eating any food (including snacks)

“Well” means:

- wet hands and apply soap

- rub hands together vigorously for at least 20 seconds ensuring the lather covers all areas – palm to palm, back of hands, between fingers, back of fingers, thumbs, fingernails (using palm) and wrists
- rinse hand thoroughly with water
- dry your hands with paper towel (or a hand dryer), use the paper towel to turn off the tap and open the door, then dispose of the paper towel

Additionally:

- avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands
- use utensils: consider using forks, spoons or toothpicks when eating and serving foods (especially snacks or “finger foods”)
- follow proper coughing and sneezing etiquette

See Appendix A for HANDWASHING and HAND HYGIENE TIPS.

Cough/Sneeze Etiquette

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

Following cough/sneeze etiquette includes:

- Covering your mouth and nose with a sleeve or tissue when coughing or sneezing in order to reduce the spread of germs,
- Using tissues to contain secretions, and immediately dispose of any tissues you have used into the garbage as soon as possible and wash your hands afterwards,
- Turning your head away from others when coughing or sneezing.

Use of Non-medical Masks

It is important to emphasize that surgical masks are considered non-medical masks and not equivalent to N95 respirators.

Non-medical masks act as a protective barrier that are used to prevent the spread of large airborne droplets generated by the person wearing the mask. They are not designed to seal tightly against the face and are not certified to prevent inhalation of small droplets/particles.

Use of N95 Respirators

The N95 respirator is typically worn by workers directly involved in an **aerosol** generating medical procedure (as defined by Health Canada). An N95 respirator is a protective barrier that is worn on the face, covers at least the nose and mouth, and is used to contain large droplets generated during coughing and sneezing. N95s help minimize the spread of potentially infectious material. **N95 respirators must be fit tested.**

Hygiene and Decontamination Procedure

First Aid Attendant Procedure and Hygiene and Decontamination Procedure

All OC First Aid Attendants should be provided with a copy of the personal health check for the screening of communicable disease and required decontamination procedures.

Additional Safe Work Practices

Additional safe work practices are currently under review. Communication/resources will be provided to stakeholders, as they become available.

Where available, First Aid rooms will be utilized as an isolation room in the event of a perceived exposure or illness.

EDUCATION

Okanagan College, in response to communicable diseases, has established the following means of sharing information across the organization:

- Posting of the full Communicable Disease Plan on the College's website.
- Sending "All Okanagan College staff and student emails" on a regular basis and with pertinent and timely communicable disease information for the OC community.
- Implementing an Okanagan College poster series on campuses (digital displays and print).
- Providing awareness, education and resource materials in print for employees who request them or who don't have convenient access to them electronically
- Providing updates via OC's main social media channels (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and YouTube).

As communicable diseases are a public health matter, the information noted above is intended for all employees, students, and visitors.

Additionally, the OHS Division staff will work with departments in assessing if additional safe work procedures and/or training is required. The OHS Division staff will work in collaboration with Supervisors, Managers, staff and the Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee.

A notification campaign will be organized immediately upon identification of a new communicable disease outbreak. Posters outlining the standard precautions that can be taken to protect against infection will be posted across all campuses. In addition, regular updates will be provided on the [OC webpage](#) and OC's main social media channels (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and YouTube).

Supports

Employees who are feeling stressed or worried can access resources and support through the College's Employee and Family Assistance program confidentially at **1-877-307-0590**.

Students can access support through Counselling Services at OC or 24/7 via Here2Talk.ca, 1.877.857.3397.

Other resources:

- Crisis Centre (1-800.784.2433, crisiscentre.bc.ca)
- Indigenous Mental Health Counselling and Crisis Intervention (1.855.242.3310, hopeforwellness.ca)
- HealthlinkBC (811, healthlinkbc.ca)
- Okanagan College Employee Resources (okanagan.bc.ca/human-resources)
- WorkSafeBC Communicable Disease Plan [page](#)
- The College has also published new mental health resources from Counselling Services to support [employees](#) and [students](#) during the return to campus transition, as well as an employee guide on [3 Steps to Assisting Colleagues in Distress](#) to understand the signs and potential responses.

RECORD KEEPING

Records shall be kept as per Okanagan College's already established processes.

See next page for appendices.

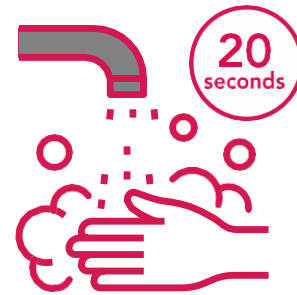
PROTECT AGAINST COVID-19

Help prevent the spread of COVID-19

Wash your hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds. If soap and water aren't available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

Wash your hands:

- When you arrive at work
- Before and after going on a break
- After using the washroom
- After handling cash or other materials that have come into contact with the public
- Before and after handling shared tools and equipment
- Before and after using masks or other personal protective equipment





Masks are required in all indoor common areas.

Thank you for doing your part to keep
OC safe and healthy.



Learn more at
okanagan.bc.ca/maskdirective



PROTECT AGAINST COVID-19

How to wear a mask



Make sure your nose, mouth and chin are covered by your mask with no gaps.

If you don't wear your mask properly, you will be asked to leave.



Cleaning and disinfecting protocols

- Okanagan College is committed to maintaining a clean environment through routine cleaning protocols and implementing enhanced cleaning practices if directed by public health during any periods of elevated risk.
- Following Return to Campus and BCCDC guidance, Okanagan College will continue to clean educational spaces, public spaces and high touch areas daily, and with increased frequency for high-volume, high-touch areas including lecture theatres.
- Individual units or office areas will have cleaning supplies and equipment and signage in place so that employees may clean/wipe down high touch areas (e.g., photocopiers, keyboards, desks, appliances, etc.) after use, but per the BCCDC it is not required in addition to the regular cleaning protocols enacted by Facilities.
- Areas which may have specialized cleaning practices due to their activities or regulatory requirements (e.g., laboratories, health clinics, first aid rooms, food service areas, event hosting etc.) should continue to follow those protocols in addition to any other requirements that may still be in place from the PHO/BCCDC.

Building Ventilation (HVAC Systems)

- Following the direction of WorkSafeBC and the PHO, institutions must ensure that building heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems are operating and maintained in accordance with WorkSafeBC requirements and relevant ASHRAE Standards.
- Ongoing: Facilities Management will continue to assess building HVAC systems to ensure those systems continue to meet WorkSafeBC requirements.
- Okanagan College is also taking extra steps to further improve indoor air quality including upgrading and increasing air flow wherever possible and introducing a daily pre-occupancy air change (flush) which will ensure HVAC systems exceed WSBC requirements.
- As the weather permits, windows may be opened to also improve air circulation and where it does not interfere with the proper functioning of an HVAC system.