

Okanagan College Communicable Disease Prevention Plan

INTRODUCTION

This Communicable Disease Prevention Plan is part of Okanagan College's commitment to promote the health and safety of Okanagan College employees, students, and visitors. WorkSafeBC defines a communicable disease as an illness caused by an infectious agent or its toxic product that can be transmitted from one person to another. This plan details the standard control measures used to prevent the spread of communicable diseases in the workplace, along with additional measures that may be implemented under the direction of the Public Health during a period of elevated risk.

Purpose and Alignment with WorkSafeBC and Public Health

The purpose of this Communicable Disease Prevention Plan is to minimize the risk of spreading communicable diseases in Okanagan College work and learning spaces. This plan has been developed following WorkSafeBC's [Communicable Disease Prevention Guide](#), in alignment with the [BC Centre for Disease Control](#) and the [Public Health Guidance for Post-Secondary Institutions](#). Public Health authorities include the BCCDC, the Ministry of Health, the Provincial Health Officer (PHO), Interior Health's Medical Health Officer (MHO) and the First Nations Health Authority.

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: ONGOING MEASURES

Standard controls are measures used on an ongoing basis to prevent the risks of exposure to communicable diseases in Okanagan College workplaces. Standard controls include:

- Requirements for staff, students, contractors, and visitors to perform personal health checks before entering the workplace and to stay home when sick
- Promotion of effective hand washing procedures and cough and sneeze etiquette
- Provision of hand hygiene facilities with appropriate supplies
- Maintaining clean environments through routine cleaning processes
- Ensuring building ventilation is adequate and ventilation systems are properly maintained and functioning as designed in compliance with OHS Regulation section 4.72
- Promotion and support of employees in receiving vaccinations for communicable diseases

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, students, and visitors as required. Health check reminders will be posted at entrances to buildings. The health check involves a self-assessment using the following questions:

- Have you been told to isolate by Public Health?
- Are you experiencing any of the following new or worsening symptoms:
 - Fever or chills
 - Cough
 - Loss of sense of smell or taste
 - Difficulty breathing
 - Sore throat
 - Loss of appetite
 - Extreme fatigue or tiredness
 - Headache
 - Body aches
 - Nausea or vomiting
 - Diarrhea

If the answer is “yes” to any of these questions you should stay home when you are sick and not return to campus until you feel well enough to resume regular activities. How effectively you can manage your symptoms, and your symptoms impact on others should be considered when deciding to resume your regular activities. For example, a persistent/uncontrolled cough can impact others, whereas a runny nose may be successfully managed without impacting others. Please do not come to campus with flu-like symptoms such as fever, vomiting or diarrhea. If you are unsure

whether to get a COVID-19 test, use the [self-assessment tool](#) or call 8-1-1.

Employees or students who are concerned they may have been exposed to someone with a communicable disease do not need to self-isolate but should monitor themselves closely for symptoms and contact Public Health with any questions or concerns.

Employees should direct any questions or concerns regarding personal health checks to their supervisor. Supervisors can request additional guidance and support from People Services as required.

Hand Hygiene

Hand washing facilities with soap and warm water are available throughout all Okanagan College working and learning spaces. Hand sanitizer stations are also provided in strategic locations such as building entrances and high traffic areas. Hand hygiene facilities are maintained by the Facilities Management Department.

Hand Washing:

It is most effective to wash your hands with warm soap and water for at least 20 seconds:

- 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

Hand Sanitizing:

Sanitize your hands when you are unable to wash them with soap and water and your hands are not visibly soiled. Non-functioning dispensers or expired products should be reported to the Facilities Management Department.

Cough/Sneeze Etiquette

All staff, students, and visitors at Okanagan College are expected to follow cough/sneeze etiquette which entails:

- Covering your mouth and nose with a sleeve or tissue when coughing or sneezing
- Turning your head away from others when coughing or sneezing
- Washing your hands regularly

Cleaning Protocols

Okanagan College is committed to maintaining a clean working and learning environment through routine cleaning and disinfecting practices with a focus on high touch surfaces. During periods of elevated risk Okanagan College will follow enhanced cleaning protocols as directed by Public Health. Cleaning deficiencies should be reported to Facilities Management.

Areas which may have specialized cleaning practices due to their activities or regulatory requirements such as shops, laboratories, and food service areas should continue to follow those practices in addition to any other requirements put in place by Public Health.

Cleaning and disinfecting supplies are also available by requisition from the Facilities Management department to support employees in wiping down high touch areas and shared equipment at their discretion.

Building Ventilation

Following the direction of WorkSafeBC and Public Health, Okanagan College will ensure building heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems are operated and maintained in accordance with [WorkSafeBC requirements and relevant ASHRAE Standards](#).

Facilities Management is responsible for the ongoing monitoring and maintenance of HVAC systems. Facilities Management has taken further steps to improve indoor air quality and exceed ASHRAE Standards by:

- Increasing air flow where possible
- Increasing HVAC system inspections and filter change frequency
- Decreasing recirculated air rates and increasing minimum fresh air set points
- Performing daily pre-occupancy air changes
- Ensuring HVAC systems have 24-hour alarm monitoring for equipment failures

Supporting Vaccinations

Okanagan College strongly encourages all staff and students to maintain appropriate immunization with vaccinations based upon public health guidance. Evidence-based immunization information and tools for B.C. residents are available from the [BCCDC](#) and [ImmunizeBC](#).

Where possible, Okanagan College will work with community partners to provide seasonal vaccination clinics on campus to increase accessibility for staff and students. Vaccination awareness and promotional campaigns will be conducted at the start of cold and flu season each fall.

Okanagan College employees are entitled to up to three hours of employer paid leave to be vaccinated against COVID-19. Employees must notify their supervisors in advance if they plan to receive a vaccination during their normal work hours.

RESPONDING TO ELEVATED RISK: ADDITIONAL MEASURES

During a period of elevated risk, additional controls may be implemented at the direction of the BCCDC, the Ministry of Health, the Provincial Health Officer (PHO), Interior Health's Medical Health Officer (MHO) and the First Nations Health Authority. During a period of elevated risk, the medical health officer or provincial health officer will provide information about the level of risk and guidance to reduce it. Additional assessments of the workplace may be required to identify areas, activities, and processes that may pose a risk to workers. Additional controls may include but are not limited to:

- Enhanced cleaning protocols
- Mask mandates
- Social distancing guidelines
- Implementation of physical barriers
- Building occupancy limits
- Event and gathering restrictions
- Remote work

Okanagan College is committed to following all direction, orders, and guidance from Public Health officials.

COMMUNICATION AND MONITORING

This Communicable Disease Prevention Plan is accessible on the Okanagan College website, Teams SharePoint site, and employee intranet. Changes or updates to this plan will be communicated by College Relations directly to staff and students by email and other means as required.

Prevention measures are reinforced through student and employee email, campus signage (digital displays and printed posters), social media, College Matters, and other internal communication tools. Signage is placed in high visibility areas throughout work and learning spaces to enhance messaging.

This Communicable Disease Plan is monitored for accuracy and effectiveness on an ongoing basis by the Health and Safety Department and reviewed annually in consultation with the Joint Occupational Health and Safety (JOHS) committees. Regular workplace inspections also help ensure the presence and effectiveness of this plan.

The Health and Safety Department is responsible for monitoring and reviewing Public Health guidance, notices, orders, and recommendations on an ongoing basis. The Health and Safety Department will update this plan in consultation with the JOHS committees to reflect Public Health updates or changes in the workplace as required.

REFERENCES

[WorkSafeBC - Covid 19 Prevention](#)

[WorkSafeBC - Communicable Disease Prevention Guide](#)

[BCCDC – Post-Secondary Public Health Guidance](#)

[Government of BC - Covid 19 Post-Secondary Guidance](#)

RECORD OF REVISIONS

January 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Version 2.0 • reorganize content to better align with WorkSafeBC guidance • edit for clarity: prevention plan versus exposure control plan – remove ECP elements • edit for clarity: ongoing preventative measures versus additional measures implemented under direction of Public Health – add “responding to elevated risk” section • remove appendixes related to expired Public Health Orders