

# COMMUNICABLE DISEASE PREVENTION PLAN

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## 1. Overview

North Vancouver City Library is committed to providing a safe and healthy workplace for all. A combination of preventative and control measures will be used to mitigate the risk of exposure and potential spread of communicable diseases.

### 1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide North Vancouver City Library (NVCL) employees with important information that is required to help prevent communicable diseases. It outlines the policies, guidelines and procedures that have been put in place to reduce the overall risk of COVID-19 transmission and other communicable diseases.

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 diseases that may circulate in a workplace include COVID-19, norovirus, and seasonal influenza (flu).

### 1.2 Public Health

The Provincial Health Officer (PHO) is the senior public health official for British Columbia (BC) and is responsible for monitoring the health of the population across the province, providing independent advice to ministers and public officials on public health issues.

Like all employers, NVCL must be prepared to implement or maintain additional measures at times when the risk of communicable disease in their region or workplace is elevated, as advised and directed by public health. Public Health's specific guidance for a particular communicable disease will be followed where their information differs from this document.

### 1.3 WorkSafeBC

WorkSafeBC is the provincial agency dedicated to promoting safe and healthy workplaces across BC. They partner with employees and employers to prevent work-related injury, disease, and disability.

WorkSafeBC helps businesses meet their obligations under the *Workers Compensation Act* and the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation. All employers in B.C. have a legal obligation under the *Act* to ensure the health and safety of employees and other parties at their workplace. The Regulation contains the legal requirements that must be met by all workplaces.

To assist employers in the fundamental components of communicable disease prevention, WorkSafeBC has developed a communication disease prevention guide for employers to assist in their development of a communicable disease plan.

If employees have any health and safety concerns, they should contact their supervisor and/or manager, or reach out to a Joint Occupational Health and Safety (JOHS) Committee member. Regular workplace inspections will be conducted by the JOHS Committee.

#### **1.4 Recognizing Hazards and Assessing Risks**

North Vancouver City Library will regularly assess all hazards, taking appropriate steps to eliminate or control the associated risk. This process is referred to as a risk assessment.

There are many routine situations where employees will have contact with customers, coworkers, and the physical environment itself (surfaces, doors, equipment etc.). During times of outbreaks, these encounters could give rise to contact with communicable diseases, if not controlled adequately.

Controls to minimize risk include adhering to current public health orders and following WorkSafeBC guidelines and public health advice, as well as implementing best practices to keep employees and customers safe.

##### **Hierarchy of Controls:**

After determining the level of risk, a hierarchy of control helps to minimize identified risks from the highest risk to the lowest.

**Elimination or substitution** is physically removing or replacing the hazard. An example might be offering remote work where appropriate.

**Engineering controls** is isolating the people from the hazard. An example might be the use of physical barriers where practicable.

**Administrative controls** is a change in work practices. An example might be physical distancing and enhanced cleaning protocols.

**Personal protective equipment (PPE)** is the last level of personal protection. An example might be the use of gloves and face masks where none of the above controls are possible or effective.

## 2. Stay Home When Unwell

### 2.1 What Employees Should Know

Employees **must** stay at home when unwell to avoid spreading illness to others and should follow regular sick reporting for work procedures and contact their supervisor and/or manager.

Employees will follow public health recommendations where applicable.

### 2.2 If Employees Become Unwell At Work

Employees who have symptoms upon arriving at work or become unwell during the day should promptly separate themselves from other employees, inform their supervisor/manager and go home.

### 2.3 What Employers Should Know

An important way to reduce the spread of communicable diseases is to keep unwell people away from those who are not unwell. North Vancouver City Library will review and communicate sick leave policies and practices to employees every year before flu season and any time when there is a risk of a communicable disease.

## 3. Hygiene/Cleaning

### 3.1 Personal Hygiene/Cleaning

Depending on the communicable disease, it is possible to become infected by touching contaminated surfaces and then touching the nose, mouth, or eyes.

The most reliable way to prevent infection from surfaces is to wash hands. Washing hands often and practicing good hand hygiene will reduce the chances of catching or spreading germs. Washing hands with soap and hot water for at least 20 seconds is most effective. Soap actively destroys the surface of some viruses and reduces the number of germs left on skin. Alcohol-based hand rubs can be used to disinfect hands when soap and water are not available.

Other things to consider:

- Cover mouth and nose with a disposable tissue or use the crease of the elbow when sneezing or coughing instead of the hands
- Wear a mask
- Do not share food, drinks, utensils, etc.
- Avoid unnecessary contact
- Consider physical distancing
- Follow hygiene procedures and signage
- Follow cleaning and disinfecting instructions and procedures when required

### 3.2 Cleaning and Disinfecting

North Vancouver City Library will follow standard practices and appropriate regulations specific to our workplaces for cleaning and disinfecting.

Cleaning with products containing soap or detergent reduces germs on surfaces by removing contaminants and decreases risk of infection from surfaces. When confirmed or suspected communicable disease cases are low, cleaning once a day is usually enough to sufficiently remove germs that may be on surfaces and help maintain a healthy workplace.

Disinfecting kills any remaining germs on surfaces, which further reduces any risk of spreading infection. During periods of increased risk of exposure to communicable diseases, NVCL will implement enhanced disinfecting procedures in shared spaces (where required) and if the space is a high traffic area. Enhanced cleaning may be required at least twice a day or more. Examples of high-touch surfaces include: doorknobs, light switches, handles, stair rails, elevator buttons, desks, keyboards, phones, toilets, faucets, and sinks.

Cleaning products and disinfectants are to be used as indicated on the product label, product information sheets, Safety Data Sheet or instructions for use.

Employees who clean must be trained on the proper use of cleaning (and disinfecting, if applicable) products and use any required personal protection equipment (PPE). Employees are to follow safe work procedures.

If there has been an unwell person at NVCL within the last 24 hours, the affected area will be temporarily closed, cleaned and disinfected. At this time, the *Procedure for Presumptive or Confirmed COVID-19 Exposure in the Workplace* will be followed if the unwell person is an employee.

When regular disinfecting is required:

- Clean visibly dirty surfaces with soap or detergent before disinfecting if the disinfectant product label does not specify that it can be used for both cleaning and disinfection.
- Only use disinfectant products that have been approved for use by the City of North Vancouver and that are effective against the communicable disease.
- **Always follow the directions on the label and Safety Data Sheet** to ensure safe and effective use of the product. The label will include safety information and application instructions. Many products recommend keeping the surface wet with a disinfectant for a certain period (see “contact time” on the product label).

#### 4. Ventilation

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

North Vancouver City Library will optimize ventilation system functionality in consideration of the following:

- Maintaining ventilation systems. WorkSafeBC requires employers to ensure that heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems are designed, operated, and maintained as per standards and specifications for ongoing comfort for employees ([Part 4 of the OHS Regulation](#)).
- Ensuring preventative maintenance is conducted (for example, regular filter changes and inspection of critical components).
- Ensuring the system is properly balanced, which means verifying that the system meets its design conditions for air flow, temperature, pressure drop, noise and vibration.

During periods of communicable disease events limiting occupancy in the workplace will be considered.

#### 5. Promotion of Employee Vaccinations

North Vancouver City Library will support Public Health messaging for vaccinations against pandemic or communicable diseases, and recognizes the public health benefits of vaccination programs to reduce illness, disability and death from community acquired diseases.

North Vancouver City Library strongly encourages the vaccination of their employees and may implement a mandatory vaccination policy if supported by an assessment of risk.

## **6. Promotion of Employee Mental Health**

A communicable disease event may cause increased levels of stress or anxiety for employees. This is because some communicable diseases are new or evolving and the scientific facts about the hazards and risks of the disease may be unknown or uncertain. Uncertainty increases stress.

Employees are reminded of the following resource:

- Employee & Family Assistance Program
  - Homewood Health – 1-800-663-1142

## **7. Review and Consultation**

The Communicable Disease Prevention Plan is an evolving document and will be updated as needed and reviewed annually in consultation with the JOHS Committee.

Any employee who perceives a serious, immediate risk to health and safety should take appropriate action and notify a supervisor and/or manager immediately.